

## FRIDAY 10<sup>th</sup> April 2015

The Honourable Speaker, Mr Ajilon Nasiu took the chair at 9.49am.

Prayers.

### ATTENDANCE

All were present with the exception of the Prime Minister; the Ministers for Education and Human Resources Development; National Planning and Aid Coordination and the Members for West Fataleka and South Choiseul.

### **SPEAKER'S ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Mr Speaker:** Honourable Members, I wish to inform you that the Parliamentary House Committee has given approval to the government's request to have today as a government business day since there is no Private Members Motion for today. Thus, the Second Reading Debate of the 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015 will continue today. May I also add that the debate on the Bill will continue on Monday.

### **STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

#### **BILLS**

##### Bills - Second Reading

The 2015 Appropriation Bill, 2015

**Hon PETER SHANEL AGOVAKA** (*Minister for Police, National Security and Correctional Services*): Firstly, I would like to acknowledge and thank the good Minister of Finance and Treasury and Member of Parliament for Marovo Constituency, for tabling the 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015, and for his hard work in ensuring that the budget is on time and on schedule. I would also like to thank the Budget Unit in his Ministry, all Permanent Secretaries, Under Secretaries and

Financial Controllers of all the 24 ministries who have participated in putting together this Bill as it is. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the good Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee and his Members for scrutinising the budget bids and putting together the Committee's Report to Parliament.

I would like to thank the Auditor General's insight and leading questions as part of the Public Accounts Committee scrutiny of the budget bids. I would also like to thank and acknowledge our bilateral and donor partners for their non-appropriated funds and the budget support.

The 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015 has its reasons and objectives, and perhaps, if I may take Parliament to the back of the page of the Bill to read out the objects and reasons:

1. The object of this Bill is to authorise expenditure of \$4,060,253,863 for the services of the Government in respect of the year 2015.
2. There will be no net domestic borrowing in 2015 unless Short-Term Discount Securities are issued in accordance with section 71 (4) of the *Public Financial Management Act 2013* to deal with exceptionally circumstances like a major economic shock or natural disaster.
3. The Bill sets an annual limit on new Government borrowing, as defined in section 63 of the *Public Financial Management Act 2013*. The Bill authorises new Government borrowing, up to the specified annual limit amount, for rehabilitation and development purposes.
4. Provisions relating to the issue by the Ministry of Finance and Treasury of Advance Warrants and Contingencies Warrants during 2015 are also included in the budget.
5. The bills should be read in conjunction with the budget papers provided to parliament including [*Budget paper number 1*] - The Fiscal and economic outlook and [*Budget paper number 2*] - The budget estimate overview.
6. The bills provide authority for a General Warrant issued by the Minister of Finance and Treasury up to \$4,061,564,093 to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury. This further allows the issue of accounting warrants by the permanent secretary in accordance with section 56 and 57 of the public financial management Act 2013. The accounting warrants to be issued are outlined in the *budget paper number 3*; the recurrent budget estimate and budget paper number 4 the development budget estimate.

As you see these are the reasons and object of the 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015 which we are now debating.

The 2015 Budget Speech by the Minister of Finance and treasury outlines the object of how Government wishes to spend this money on economic and social development in our country.

It also outlines how government wishes to spend this money to provide goods and services to our people; education, health, infrastructures, and yesterday I heard a lot of members of Parliament alluding to the point that, infrastructure in this country is important to grow the economy in our country.

Other goods and services, law and order, the justice system, peace and national unity, grants to provincial government, grants to women and youths and children and the list goes on, and not to mention, the 50 constituencies will receive about \$6million each for their constituency work for projects in their constituencies. So this budget as alluded to by the Minister of Finance and Treasury is the people's budget.

Let me take you to my constituency, the Central Guadalcanal has contributed a lot to the economy of this country, and I stand proud and I would like to thank my people for allowing the land to be used for purposes of national interest, and particularly the Gold ridge mining and now the Tina hydro. We have our good fair and share of the economy contribution to this country. I would like to ask the other constituencies, what about you? How much will you contribute to the economy of our country? It is important, if we are to contribute meaningfully, each and every constituency should open up - open up your lands, no road blocks, and no disputes.

*Laughter!*

**Hon Peter Shanel Agovaka:** It is not a joking matter, and I am serious. I am serious that each and every other constituency must contribute meaningfully. I think our country will be in a position to serve its people. When we started Gold Ridge—I am going back to history—none of the governments at that time supported the land owners, nothing, 10.04 not even one cent. Our people depended entirely on the goodness of the company to help them, the landowners. Today I can stand here and say that this government, the DCC Government will see to it that it helps the landowners in terms of asserting that their land dispute is settled to allow economic development to go on. In fact, we want to build a police station at Afio and the Member for Small Malaita agreed to it and I just hope that there is no land dispute

over the area that we are planning to build on it. Such is a good course to make sure that law and order is in place in the Southern tip of Malaita.

On the point of helping the landowners; yesterday we had a very good session at the Paul Tovua complex on the native land title in Fiji.

This is something that we would like to emulate in our country so that we can do away with the alienation of land and registration of land so that native land titles goes to the tribe rather individuals. I think that is the problem that we have, because those five trustees are becoming superior or powerful than the tribes but we can say much as the law allow them to register the land under their name and take control of the title, hence the tribe become helpless. Thus, we need to change that land tenure system and this government is going to do it and we will make sure that land is not a problem but rather is an asset or an commodity that we can use as loans or investment.

In year 2000, Solomon Islands was brought down to its knee because of land issue, nothing else but land issue and if this time around, we sort out the land issue in our country it will safe for the landowners. When we went to Rennell & Bellona, they had a land dispute as well; some of them want the bauxite mine to go ahead while others were not. But they are trying to sort that dispute the mine already have done some destruction to the land, so one of the issues that we want to address in terms of making sure that our minerals are in safe hands, is to do proper reform for them. At the moment every resources in our country belongs to the State while the landowners own the land, so can we bridge these two things and so this is where this government and budget will try to address some of the problems that we have.

Education is a key **10.09** Goods and service in our country and I submitted a report to Parliament Mr Speaker in last House; towards the end of the last House I submitted the committee's report, the Education's Committee report in teacher absenteeism in this country. But as you know Sir, every year we will paying the teachers, every year we will continue in allocating grants in our education authorities, every year under this budget, in fact the Ministry of Education receives the largest cup of the budget Mr Speaker Sir. This government the DCC Government believes in investing in the future of our children that's why we put in largest budget here Sir and my report as Chairman of the Education Committee in Parliament make a lot of recommendations and a lot of these recommendations will be taken up by the Ministry of Education to try and address the problematic issue of teacher absenteeism.

In terms of the health sector, this is one of the most important sectors and I know the Minister of Health and Medical Services will be speaking. Let me just go

back to the issue where some speakers have alluded to regarding our Cuban Doctor graduates. As you know, when the USA is placed an economic sanction over Cuba they created their own system of how to look after health of their people. In fact, they are focussed on primary health care. I stand corrected and the Minister will be speaking; primary health care. So if human beings are human beings Cubans are also human beings so I do not know the difference in terms of what medical knowledge our student doctors are studying there that we cannot utilise here or we cannot use as medicine. I think they are bit different that is why we are complaining about the doctors and if they are employed in our hospitals people will die. I do not believe this; no, I do not. I think Cuba has a very good medical healthcare system for their people and that is why they survive all these time that. That embargo placed by the United States is just a stone's throw away from Cuba, but Cuba still survives and they are doing well, doing very well.

Regarding infrastructures, it is truly ambitious; this budget is ambitious in the sense that we would like to make sure that our people have roads in their provinces. As you know we are embarking on producing a tar sealed road from Mbarande right down to Aola. This will bring economic development in that part of the country and not only that they will contribute to the economic outlook of this country. And we will like to make sure that in Malaita too we have the road that goes up right up to North Malaita, Baegu/Asifola and Lau/Mbaelelea.

*Hear, hear!*

**Hon Peter Shanel Agovaka:** Yes, I am speaking to those two MPs on the other side. In fact we are not joking Mr Speaker, we are not joking we are serious about this budget Sir, that's why we invest a lot of money in infrastructure. The Minister for infrastructure will be speaking and he will let us know. This time around, we will make sure that you have a good road going up to the North and to other areas there.

Mr Speaker, we are young population, we have a young population Sir and if you look at data's from the recent census you will find that our population - more than half of it were the young people. And when you have a young population Mr Speaker, two things must be taken into account: **10.14**

1. They do not have employment,
2. They are very active and volatile.

We have seen that volatility during the riots in China Town and other problematic events in our history like in Lawson Tama during sports activities. We want to make sure that our youths are properly looked after and then find jobs for them.

So, that is why we create fishing projects like the mini lain factory in Isabel, Guadalcanal, and Malaita and so on. This will enhance job creation. Spin off from these projects will help out in ensuring that people can create jobs for themselves, provide services to fishing project, goods and service, transport, food, employment and so forth. So, that is how this budget is going to create jobs for us. Some Members of Parliament have questioned on how this budget will create jobs for our people, and this is how we are going to do it.

The Minister of Commerce, Industries, Labour and Immigration was talking about manufacturing and I am agreeing with him. I was once a minister of Commerce, Industries, Labour and Immigration and I was alluding to the same thing and now we are seeing the same tune. But this time around we will make sure that instead of ordering cheap clothes from China and elsewhere we should manufacture our own cloths. We are going to do it this time around. You know what, when you are ordering cloths from China they easily tear. My body size is small and when I wear some of these cloths they usually tear off so that means these guys must be smaller than me. The Member of Parliament for North Malaita is bigger than me in terms of body size so I think he will not be able to buy clothes from China Town but have to tailor his own cloths. So that is why I told you that we have to do manufacturing. Invite investors to come invest so that they can tailor suits, trousers and shirts. So these are some of the things which this bill would like to do for us.

Coming back to law and order the PAC has report back to us and say, 'the Commissioner of Police is not happy with the budget because there is no funding for the assessment of an effective policing in the country'. If look at the policy statements, we are going to address this issue. If you look at the development budget there are some funding under bilateral and under AusAID; one is \$14million, the other one is \$7million and the other one \$11million. These are funds we can utilise to help us meet some of the policy statements that we wish to implement.

So, be rest assured Chairman of the PAC that our policies will be met and budgets are provided for and we will ensure that we run effective policing in the country. In fact one of the policy talks about community policing. There are many concept of community policing around the world but we would like to have one that is relevant – and I use the word relevant. **10.19** Not something that is relevant to this country and not Australia or New Zealand, no! We do not want that. We want a community policing that is relevant to this country. In fact there is a report

somebody by the name of Sinclair, and we would like to look at this report and the recommendation as to how we can do it.

When the colonial masters came, in fact we were protected. When the first administrator came from Fijis, there were only four police officers from Fiji and they were able to look after the whole country. They used our chiefs as headmen to assist them to assist them in policing our communities. Nowadays the chiefs cannot assist us in community policing because there is not remuneration.

What the government wants to do is to look at how the concept of community policing works so that the house of chiefs can help us in addressing the community policing. This is to make sure that remuneration for the chiefs that are appointed to work with us are properly remunerated.

Coming back to the border between Solomon Islands and PNG, historically the people of Shortlands and southern tip of Bougainville are related. The interexchange and trade in goods and services and they still continue to do that. We would like to make sure that it is properly administered and properly managed. I think the MSG came up with a concept on how to do that. When I was Minister of Foreign Affairs then, we talked about how to mobile between Bougainville and Shortlands borders because they are blood related. Do not forget that there are elements who would like to use this opportunity to do their own agenda. We noted that there are trades of arms, illicit trades of drugs and human trafficking may also happen. They are using those borders for their illicit trades.

One of the policy statements that we would like to do is to ensure that our border police are properly armed.

As we speak, some RAMSI personnel and some of our police officers are going around holding awareness about the limited rearmament of police with use of pistol and two short guns. We asked RAMSI to assist us on how to manage when the guns are available on how to lock them up properly, safekeeping, when to issue, who to issue out guns and who to receive and make sure that guns are kept safe.

We have learned from our history that anybody can go into the armoury. We make sure that that is repeated. We do not repeat ourselves as to what happened in the years 1998, 1999 and 2000. The limited rearmament of police **10.24** an awareness program is underway, from Shortlands right down to the eastern part of our country, so that the ministry hears what people are saying – whether it is still alright for us to do rearmament or not. Do not forget that the drawdown of RAMSI will be in 2017. And as a sovereign nation we need to protect ourselves. We cannot protect ourselves if our law enforcement agency, the police, are not properly equipped or armed to defend our citizens and country and defend the assets of our people. That

is exactly what I would like to do as the Minister of Police, National Security and Correctional Services to make that the police are properly armed to protect not themselves, but also the people of Shortlands at our border. They will be properly trained to manage the arms and our borders. That is something that we would like to do.

Sir, as you know, we do not have any international relationship with the Interpol. That is exactly something that I would like to do. The year 1998 and 1999 had shown us that our Intel information is not properly adhered to. Now there is no proper Intel in our country to advise the Government what to do. So one of the things that I would like to do is to ensure that we have a proper Intel relationship, and that means we have to go back to Interpol. We have to be a member of the Interpol. Proper training must be given to our Intel officers. In fact, I want to tap some places in the world. The United States and Israel would like to help train our Intel people. As you know the only police people we know of in our country are those from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. Other Pacific countries always go to the United Nations, and we have a quota in the United Nations for our police officers to serve under UN.

So this year we are planning to send eight people to the United Nations to serve under the blue hat. Why I want to do this is to ensure that our officers have the maximum benefit in terms of the knowledge and experience which will be gained from serving under the United Nations. That knowledge and experience will be brought back and will be utilised in our circumstances. That is one of the important things that I want to do, and we will continue to do that. Fiji, Vanuatu, PNG and Samoa have benefited why not Solomon Islands. This also gives incentives to our officers. You remember when the Bougainville crisis happened; the people we sent to the border are not army. They are just ordinary police officers, not trained in combat. The problem we have is that there was no proper counselling when those officers came back. When they heard guns firing and bombs burst, as ordinary police officers who only look for criminals in our city that is a different ball game.

That is why we need to have a unit in the system that does proper counselling those officers to be rehabilitated back into the police force and communities. That is what the ministry would like to do **10: 29** after they have returned. When they heard all the artillery exploding, as an original police officer that is a different ball game, that's why we need to have a unit somewhere in the system that do proper counselling on those officers for longer period of at least 3 months, counselling them properly, rehabilitating them into their communities and the police force, that is the



thing my Ministry wanted to do, so that when our police force go to the United Nations and come back there is a proper system of rehabilitation for them.

Sir as you know world war came and left a lot of unexploded ordinances in our country, and the USA wanted to support us in building a centre at the Hells point, I was very surprise the Government lost the land court case at the Hells point. We wanted to resume those lands for national interest unfortunately a person having fixed term won whilst we having the perpetual title lost, how can that be? This is where the land law needed to be review to ensure that we do not repeat the same thing in this country. EOD is important, there are a lot of unexploded ordinance around the country so it's an ongoing program and we are support it.

The chairman of the public Accounts Committee alluded that there is no prison facilities for retarded people, women prisoners and the juvenile prisoners, we have identified that place and we will use the funds under the bilateral partners to try to build that place so that it allows women, Juvenile and mentally retarded prisoners. There are a lot of mental retarded people are in the Rove prison, we need to find a place for them and we have identified a place for them and we will use this budget here under our bilateral to assist in building that facilities for them. When I am the minster for commerce, an African national prisoner came out of the prison, he has no relatives and the country wanted to send him out of the country, when he was released he has no place to stay; we have no detention centres for this kind of immigration problem where people come in to our country without a proper visa. So we need to put a detention centre which this kind of people can reside in. last time we rented the airport motel to accommodate the African national. This is expensive but if we build a centre will remain there to serve its intended purpose, so the place in which we have identify will house all this people.

Just going back to the police stations **10.34** but before I speak about the police stations, let me make the overview of my ministry. The objectives of the Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Service, is to contribute to the safe and secure Solomon Island environment to the provision of high quality policing service, human containment and prisoner rehabilitation while our missions are stated in our policy statement.

Let me go back to the 2014 budget analysis, the analysis stated that our recurrent expenditure for 2014 was an average of 93 per cent of the real total of the ministry's expenditure, which means that we spent it really well. On average the ministry's expenditure accounted for six per cent of the total SIG consolidated expenditure. The execution of the ministry's recurrent budget average around 98 per cent and the execution of the development budget average around 41 per cent which

is not too good but we could better. Spending on the ministry's headquarter has seen expenditure decline by 20 per cent since 2013 but spending on Royal Solomon Islands Police Force and the Correctional Service of Solomon Islands has increased strongly in year 2014 by 30 per cent and 41 per cent respectively. The ministry's payroll contribute the largest spending item by economic classification, the payroll growth average 10 per cent a year since year 2010 against seven per cent growth in staff.

For year 2015, the Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Service has allocated the total of \$246.9million in the 2015 budget estimates. This includes the payroll estimates of \$110million, other charges \$104.9million, Development Budget \$17.3million and sport budget of less than \$30million. The total of the ministry's recurrent budget is \$214.9million which is further broken down as follows; Headquarter \$37.9million, The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force \$118.9million, the Correctional Service \$58.1million.

In year 2014, the Ministry had constructed police station and accommodation in various locations throughout the country. At Naha we have four accommodations completed, at Aola we have one completed accommodation, at Teharamo police station at Ulawa one has completed; Namuga two accommodation; Komate one accommodation & one Office; Manuapo (Temotu) – one police station & one office and accommodation; Malu'u (North Malaita) – two accommodation & one office; Seghe (Western province) – five accommodation and one office; Kia (Isabel) one accommodation & one office; Pelau (Malaita Outer Island) – one accommodation & one office; Vanikoro (Temotu) - one accommodation & one office; Ringi six accommodation; Harapa (Shortlands) and Mono – one accommodation & office. We will still continue to build these stations, so that we have the presence of police in and around our country and as a result, the law and order is sustained. **10.39** I will elaborate further when we go through committee stages and when our colleagues ask question then I can answer you.

So with this few remarks I support the Bills and resume my seat. Thank you.

**Mr BRADDLEY TOVOSIA** (*East Guadalcanal*): Mr Speaker, thank you for recognising me to contribute briefly to the 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015, I think as from my observations for the last two days Mr Speaker, I have learned a lot of things that have been said.

Mr Speaker, before I touch on two issues I would like to thank the Honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury for bringing this bill to this Honourable House and I would also like to thank the Public Accounts Committee

and the Chairman and the Committee members who have work tirelessly for scrutinising this bill here and its ready for us to debate and then passing it.

Mr Speaker, I stand here not to contribute on a lot of things that has been said, but I would like to contribute on one or two things that I think it's necessary for to contribute too.

This budget was aimed to give 80 per cent to our people living in our rural areas and I like the budget speech of Minister of Finance and Treasury because it's simple and it's easy to some of us to understand it. I think if we are 50 Members of Parliament where in this Chamber if we want to see this country to move forward, I think the Minister Finance' speech have said that, I believe we have greater chance and today than perhaps at any time in the last 37 years this includes last year Mr Speaker, last year that we're the NCRA's time. We need to move further, we can do more and we must do better. The Minister mentioned that, "I believe it is now time to take a good hard and a look at the further of a hard look at future of our nation, to many have to little to hope for and too much compliancy and procrastination has taken root. There is no better more time than now to join in the common effort to make a better Solomon Islands.

Mr Speaker, I think what we are discussing on is healthy. I heard the opinion from this side of the House and that side of the House and we are from this side and I think it's healthy and we still debates on budget it's not passed yet and I think we have to wait and see what will happen. I think that's a bottom line. We can talk about the \$4billion that is borrowed from the reserve. Some from the other side of the house say it is not good. We have borrowed that and we have done that in our last government, the DCC Government is doing it and I am part of this government. And so Mr Speaker, what I suggest is for us to allow this government to rule and we must watch and see what will happen. So let's allow this allow this budget to pass. We must deliver and we must know that our people in this country were waiting. People going around the street are talking about us. They like this government. I think it is true that during the elections of the Prime Minister, Mr Speaker, there was nothing happen. What does that mean? The people like this government and so this is a challenge, it's a challenge. Are we just going to be silent like this because wrong exist? I stand here to say or I would like to emphasise that at least we must deliver. That is the bottom line and I think much has been said about the details of this budget as we have talked about.

Mr Speaker, my constituency is on the other side of Guadalcanal and one of RAMSI's reports says people on the edge. The report sounded somewhat but Mr Speaker, as a Member of Parliament for the last term and now I am here again, I

want to prove somebody wrong. And the \$351billion from the Ministry of Rural Development I want it delivered to me and I will do it to my people.

Give it to me, I like it. And I can assure this Chamber Mr Speaker; the good story from this side of the House is that we are confident. 10.44 The speech the Minister read a few days ago clearly states that. You only gauge a person when you know he did not do it; when says it but he did not do it. I think the Deputy Prime Minister has stated that, "if you say something we must do it."

We have scrutinised this budget and we have been talking about it in the Caucus and it has already been taken up to Cabinet and we have seen what we have discussed here. We have seen the risk part but I think the government is confident. The Minister of Finance and Treasury and the Prime Minister are confident that this budget will deliver. So I think this debate is healthy and it would help us as a stepping stone to move things forward. I thank you for all these debates because it helped us a lot to understand the picture of what this budget will reflect.

If nothing is delivered then only then somebody can talk and say nothing has happened. I am a person who likes to be like that because when you claim an allegation against me and it is true then I will tell you but if it is not then I will deny it to the fullest. So, in general I would like to see this budget that way and then allow this government to go on with this budget so that it benefits people who we represent in Parliament.

Mr Speaker, the government reform agenda indicates a promised growth of the economy. Sometimes I hear Members of Parliament say that the NCRA government did not raise the GDP. It is a challenge to us Members of Parliament on how we do things. I can remember the former Prime Minister, Mr Gordon Darcy Lilo says, 'you close one valve and then open another' down at the Ministry of Finance and Treasury. And I still keep that in my head.

I think the confidence from the speech of the Minister of Finance and Treasury has stated that he will deliver.

In conclusion, some people have different interpretations. Maybe people outside there are voicing out their concern through their Members of Parliament. There may be some scepticism on the amount of this year's budget but in my opinion the budget is realistic and the sense of that is, this is what the country needs go forward. Our people need money and we can find money and help our people with it. Our lazy people cannot believe this budget. We must work and put our heads together in order to achieve this budget.

Mr Speaker, I would like to read a verse in the Bible in the Second Thessalonians Chapter 3 verses 10; "if one does not work he does not deserve to it." I think this is a good story.

So this is what we need. We work; we get the money, give the people and let them do the work back at home and then it will really drive this country forward.

Finally, Mr John Kennedy in his speech says, 'ask not what your country can do for you but ask what you can do for your country.' I support the motion.

**Hon AUGUSTINE AUGA** (*Minister of Agriculture and Livestock*): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Since I came into power the light in front of me here is not working. I am quite old and I would like to look at this paper with the help of this light. Ensure that the next time I come the light in front of me here must be fixed.

Honourable Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to contribute to this important debate on the **10.49** 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015. Being dedicated as the People's Budget, I am pleased as the representative of my good people of Lau and Mbaelelea constituency to be able to stand in this honourable house and say that this budget belongs to everybody in this nation.

As alluded to by the hardworking Minister of Finance and Treasury in the 2015 budget speech on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> of April, the DCC government's primary objective is to achieve broad base economic development by empowering our people to be engage in productive activities and employment opportunities.

We must strive to achieve this objective sooner than later as we all know that unemployment among our youths is a threat to our national security and social harmony.

Before I continue with the reflections on the 2015 budget, on behalf on my people of Lau and Mbaelelea constituency, I would like to you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to once again stand in this honourable house to contribute to the 2015 budget. I must thank and congratulate the hardworking Minister of Finance and Treasury the his hardworking staff given the limited time for preparing the 2015 budget and getting it to parliament in order for us to debate and have it passed within the set timeframe. I would like to thank the honourable Prime Minister and the members of the DCC government for the foresight and dedication in agreeing on the 2015 budget through Caucus and Cabinet, a budget which is reflective o forecasted revenue but also bearing in mind that services to our people is a priority as well as ensuring the productive sector ministries, including my ministry is provided sufficient resources to create employment and livelihoods for our people while at the same time grow the economy. I would very much like to thank the

Members of the Opposition and the Independent benches for their valuable contributions and support for this budget is highly appreciated.

Members of the Public Accounts Committee must also be recommended for a job well-done in scrutinising the budget. I would also like to thank my hardworking staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock for their continuous efforts in implementing programs and projects in the face of difficult challenges over the past year or so in support the implementation of the policy objectives of former governments and now to be soon implementing the DCC government policy objectives and strategic actions.

85percent of the population live in rural areas and expect the government to deliver service to them. Therefore the need for equitable distribution of economic activities for the rural is quality participation and contribution to economic development cannot be ignored. The DCC government through this budget will enable the much needed economic activities in rural areas.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock is a vital ministry and therefore the DCC government places agriculture as one of its highest priority sectors under the reform agenda.

We have heard from the Governor of Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance during the PAC hearing, that commodity, such as cocoa, coconut and oil palm products and others have been continuing to provide stabilisation role for our economic **10.54** stabilisation role for our economy against external shocks such as high oil, food and commodity prices.

Sir, the writing is on the wall, either we adequately provide for development and production of these commodities or we stand to be at the mercy of these external shocks given the narrow export base that we have. Our growing young population must be given opportunity to excel in education, however, we also witness that annual dropout rate is also increasing, which should be a concern for all of us. The need to train and harness the energy of the unemployed population not only rests on the Government, but also the private sector and civil society. Job creation must be made a priority which I am sure this budget will ensure that major projects that stimulate employment opportunities are up and running.

Sir, my ministry is the largest employer in both the informal and formal sectors. Rural farming families make up 75 percent of rural population. If this sector of the population is provided the means to produce for both domestic and export markets, we certainly will see a huge change in economic growth. In so saying, we must start somewhere. Therefore, through this budget, more jobs will be created and livelihoods improved especially in rural areas.

Mr Speaker, my ministry since 2014 has already started working on a structural reform program which aims to strengthen services through industries and market linkage. In keep up with the reform agenda of the Government, it is anticipated that a more specialised object matter oriented workforce will be in place. Working closely with industries and strengthening linkages that had in the past been weak resulting in the sector been underperforming in terms of production and market linking.

Sir, some of the aims of the agriculture development is, to support farming communities achieve food and nutrition security, enhance livelihoods, adaptation of improved production systems that contribute to economic growth.

Mr Speaker Sir, the DCC Government stipulated in its Policy Statement, Strategies and Translations recognise that more than 85 percent of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihood and wellbeing. Thus my ministry is fully focussed on supporting rural development goals and objectives to ensure that sustainable livelihoods for rural households are fully supported.

Mr Speaker Sir, the agriculture sector over the last three decades had bog down with a number of challenges which continues to persist over today. As a result the sector has had progressed to a higher level of productivity, and too few markets are available to farmers and producers. Some of these challenges include; lack of private sector investment, lack of accessible credit to farmers, higher poverty incidence, where a huge portion of the population start self-enterprises, lack of economic opportunities, lack of input, lack of adequate infrastructure, lack of innovation, declining agriculture workforce and land tenure issues.

These challenges need a whole of Government approach to be able to address them effectively **10:59** the 2015 budget will be seen as a spring board for Agriculture development; adequate resources have to be provided to move the sector forward. The whole of government approach which have not been seen down in the past needs to be applied immediately. My Ministry depends very much on the contributions and support of everyone else in order to move Agriculture development in rural areas; infrastructure issues, Land issues and marketing issues are some of the areas that only a whole of the government approach can bring about achievement of set targets. My Ministry alone cannot put in place infrastructure needed by investors or deal with land for that matter, from this point or relevant line ministries and agencies will be expected to provide this support.

Sir the people's budget will support this approach and indicate by the movement of funds between Ministries. Let us therefore address the development



needs and the aspirations of our rural population in implementing the plan 2015 budget and programs.

On this note, allow me to present some of the insights into my ministry' 2015 budget consisting of \$33.3million in recurrent total expenditures and \$34.3million for development programs; a total of \$64.5million which is less than 2% of the overall national budget of \$4.1billion, I do hope that the future budgets Agriculture should be at least allocated 10% of the overall national budget. In doing so, significant outputs and incomes will be realized in increased Agriculture productivity, increase job creations, increase export based expansion, increase foreign exchange, increase livelihoods and improvement of standard of living for our people.

Mr Speaker on the coconut and cocoa industries, the government through the ministry the Agriculture have recognise the importance these two crops have contributed towards the livelihoods of our rural population. Farmers and other stakeholders must be congratulated for the efforts made in the development of these two crops despite the fact that no major resourcing of the sub sectors has taken place over the last decades. No subsidies or stimulate packages to significant impact have being provided farmers in the past since the 1970s subsidies schemes.

We have being assisting farmers on piece mill approach, but I believe that this DCC government will be supporting the sub sectors significantly within the next 3 years at least as stipulated in the policy translation; to bring about real economic boast of our activities in the rural area as we address rural development in a more holistic manner considering the fact that our stake holders are also contributing to the development of this industries. In this regard the next phase of the World Bank, Australia Aid, IFAO and Solomon Islands government rural development program.

The component 2 will focus primary on business partnerships for the cocoa and coconut industry. Cocoa exports recorded the highest; 5481 metric tons in 2010 since then the record still stands and I am pleased, however, with more efforts by my Ministry supported a few innovative farmers, efforts have being made to enhance cocoa productivity by usage of genetic material and pest management strategies to create a cocoa tree that can be used to bear 10 fruits **11.04** this time around it must have 100 or 150 fruits for one tree, this is becoming reality but however, it will take time and resources to get the whole industry to adopt these approaches. The industry had been turned to be marker driven than farmer driven; the coconut industry also has to adapt to the value adding and downstream processing approach than the usual copra exports that we have grown up with. Downstream processing into coconut oil, virgin oil and other coconut products is an employment opportunity along with the value chain. My ministry's development programs for



cocoa and coconut will ensure that these new approaches are developed and supported.

Apart from that, most of our coconut and cocoa trees are needed to be replaced with high yielding types, therefore coconut re-planting is so critical for the ministry and must be done immediately. While on that, I think those coconuts are we used to harvest now were used since the time of late Solomon Mamaloni. Hence, I believe that in the 2016 budget, a standalone coconut and cocoa scheme will be approved; the total allocation for coconut and cocoa support under this budget is about \$8.9million.

Apart from crops, livestock is an important subject which caters for food security and livelihood for family farmers. The livestock program since year 2012 has been concentrated on beef cattle industry rehabilitation assistance, there are two government funded farms at Tenavatu on Guadalcanal and Guanakuku farm on Malaita, the third cattle farm that is privately owned but is also receiving assistance from the program is the Eलो farm in Western province. For 2015, maintenance of these farms will continue while distribution of the animals to selected farmers will begin according to a plan, a plan importation of live cattle will take place around the third quarter of this year depending on the supplier.

Our quest is to diversify livestock and so we are going to look at importing live sheep from the Republic of Fiji, so make sure those 50 constituencies must prepare their fence to cater for these sheep. This particular breed of sheep is breed in Fiji for tropical environment therefore, since it has performed well in other neighbouring countries, two of our provinces have shown interests and requested the program to assist in the importation process. Hopefully, cheap lamp chops will be produced locally.

Pig and poultry industries will also be supported from other programs such Taiwan mission and so a big improvement program is underway currently at KG farm. Moreover, this program will expand to Malaita and the Western province this year and other provinces the following years.

For the honey industry, it is a productive industry therefore **11.09** getting farmers to produce for the domestic markets, needs capital and other inputs which an average hold honey value change to make sure we do the right thing. Sir, a Livestock Bill is due for development to facilitate the important subject.

Mr Speaker Sir, the national oil palm development program has been processes from dealing with land matters to necessary establishment an out-grower association support, land matters have taken up a huge junk of the annual budgets

while other activities remain low, however, important they are this includes infrastructure which is so basic for oil palm development.

So much so that investor require a basic infrastructure to be in place before they can come and establish plantations and processing factories. With the current level of budget for this program, infrastructure will still not to be address significantly. Foreign interests for oil palm development here have been shown by a number of groups and individuals. Due diligence however, is needed to pick out the genuine investors from those with multiple interest. Sir, we do want to repeat the Vangunu experience.

Mr Speaker the bio-security department is providing security for the agriculture sector to ensure that the country is free from exotic pests and disease. The bio-security act 2013 and its regulations was enacted on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015, this piece of legislation supersedes former quarantine acts and has wider scope for penalties fees and powers to the bio-security staff to carry out their duties.

The Giant African Snails is a good example of the exotic species that recently entered the country. Under this law severe penalties will be served on anyone found deliberately facilitating introduction of such pests into the country. My ministry is thankful to the Australian Government for the assistance provided to the facilitation of bio-security strengthening program. Mr Speaker the Extension department can be rightly term the Jack of all trade with 134 staff's station throughout the country. This department implements the food security and livelihoods programs and provide agricultural service to farmers but also attends to disasters from response to recovery. Similarly, staff had been at forefront in the implementation of other national programs such as elections.

Mr Speaker the Research department though address resource is very important for the sector. This department is mandated to introducing a new appropriate technologist into the country for food security, livelihoods and enhancement of growth braced economic growth. However, the department left alone, the agriculture sector is constrain by the lack of support, facilities such as pests, soils, spices and animal analytical laboratories.

Mr Speaker Sir, one of the departments of my ministry which is very important as far as the agriculture planning is concern, is planning and land use department. Planning and decision making for agriculture cannot go without hard facts and data. In this respect the ministry have been **11.14** for resources to fund an Agriculture scene which would be an expensive exercise. However, the data would help the country's planners and development partners for planning purposes. On this note my ministry is grateful for the assistance provided by the Food and

Agriculture organisation (FAO) in providing the technical assistance in the initial planning phase. The next step is to lobby for support for this very important project. Sir, land use management is so vital for sustainable development where land is a key resource. On this note I must congratulate the Land Use section of the department together with funding support from the UNDP SWUP project. A rural land use policy will be going to Cabinet for endorsement soon. Land is a limited resource which needs to be looked after for generations to come. We can fight over it, sell it, dig it, mine it or log you name it. But there will not be enough for us as the population increases. Sir, sustainable land management should be everyone's business.

Rural development must begin with the family unit in the villages and provinces. Let us empower the rural family unit to be able to participate in development right where they live. Let us discourage urban drift otherwise we will find that the good intentions that we have for rural development will not happen because the young labour force has shift to urban changes. Sir, more resources should be provided for income generating Agriculture programs that empower the rural farming families to be self-sufficient and reliant to environmental and economic shocks and to be able to fully participate in growing the economy.

The DCC Government is asking resource owners to make land available for roads, airstrips, wharfs, clinics, schools, townships, economic growth centres and off course agricultural programs to be developed and not lay idol where nobody including you the resource owner benefits. Let us work towards eradicating land disputes and put more efforts in development activities.

On this note I must acknowledge the partnership which my ministry has with many stakeholders in addressing food and nutrition security, livelihoods and economic development of this nation. The 2015 budget will enhance rural agriculture development to give the boost needed to help grow the economy.

Lastly, my ministry needs headquarter. We are only renting on the current office we occupy. So, I want this new government to make a new building for my ministry where all departments can be used under one roof.

Our bid to get funding to kick off this exercise did not get through this year. However, I hope it will be for next year.

Finally, may I once again thank you on behalf of my ministry and my good people of Lau and Mbaelelea for this opportunity. To God be the glory for the great things he has done in granting us leaders as stewards **11.19** the wisdom and knowledge to lead this beautiful, resourceful and blessed nation towards a future

that is bright for our people. May God bless you, thank you very much and I support this Bill.

**Hon JIMSON FIAU TANANGADA** (*Minister of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs*): Thank you Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity. I will speak on behalf of my good people of Gizo-Kolombagara Constituency and the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs to contribute to the 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015.

I rise also to congratulate the honourable Minister of Finance and Treasury for his delivery of the 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015, and especially for taking charge of a record \$4.18billion budget, which is focussed on the government key priorities for 2015.

To take an unfamiliar stance in the size of the 2015 budget itself, which is by far the biggest, can only be best described as an act of determination and courage by my colleague, the honourable Minister of Finance.

The Bill itself desires this. We must face the future with courage. Positive change must happen. As Members of Parliament, we owe that to our people. On this note, I wish to especially to especially commend the Minister of Finance and Treasury for acknowledging the 2015 budget as the People's Budget. Indeed, any work of government that does not place its people at the centre of its focus renders it meaningless.

A people's budget in my opinion is the same as pulling into the centre of public life groups that have been marginalised. I am pleased with this emphasis by the budget as this basically means that efforts will be made to ensure that the execution of the budget fair and impartial.

Each citizen of this country has the right to equality of opportunities and equitable distribution of services and resources. Equitable distribution must mean that we take a careful look at the cross cutting needs of different members of our Solomon Islands community as the needs are usually different from each other, especially in their access to and control over resources. The needs of different groups of people must be separately reflected in policies, plans programs and activities in all sectors as we plan and execute the 2015 budget. I believe that DCC has taken that direction. I am sure all line ministries of government will take these different needs on board respectively as well as collectively.

It will be remise of me not to acknowledge the important role played by the Public Accounts Committee in ensuring that the budget is appropriately examined to serve its purpose.

The view expressed by the committee through the chairman's address to parliament on the 2015 budget clearly outline the number of key areas for improvements will serve as useful guide as we implement DCC government's reform agenda. I am thankful for the report that has been presented through the Chairman. Thank you for highlighting some of the issues that will give leverage for DCC to move forward.

Our development partners and agencies **11.24** and all non-state actors must be acknowledged for their support in assisting the Government to deliver on its promise to the people. I should in particular extend my profound appreciation to all my ministry stakeholders who will continue to provide both financial and technical support towards the advancement of women, youth and children through the 2015 Budget. My ministry looks forward to working with each partner in the execution of this budget.

Mr Speaker there is a saying which says: if you want to see which way our heading is heading, look at the country's budget and how it allocates its resources for women, youth and children. Compared to the overall budget, my ministry's share may seem small but this does not at all mean that less attention is paid to the needs of women, youth and children. In fact this is the first time serious attention is ever paid by any government on those who are marginalised and living at the margins of development, and those are the rural areas we have within the 50 constituencies. Given that the issues and concerns facing women, youth and children are cross cutting. We need to cast our eyes wider to see how much other sectors have and will be investing in the areas for I am responsible. The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, for instance, has the largest budget. The Ministry of Health and Medical Services also has a significant allocation in the 2015 Budget. They are programs by the different sectors which are focussed on addressing the needs of women, youth and children. Together this together, we do have a significant portion of the budget that is actually focussed on the sectors which I represent.

In that respect, I am confident that the Government is moving in the right direction. Through the budget my ministry will continue to strengthen its institutional capacity, coordination, policy mainstreaming role across the machinery of government to ensure that there is increase collaboration between sectors and that sectoral budgets are synthesised on this need to allocate increase funds to address the needs of women, youth and children including families.

In essence, a mainstreaming approach recognises that the needs and concerns of women, youth and children are crosscutting and must be inter grown to the

processes of policy, planning and implementation in all sectors supported by this budget.

Sir, our mainstreaming approach, however, demands cooperation. It demands partnerships.

The approach also request that we share resources so that together we can influence positive change in the lives of our people. The implementation of social reforms through this budget will require that we become increasingly engaged with one another to influence positive change.

Mr Speaker Sir, my ministry's work covers many aspects of human development. We acknowledge that people must be placed at the centre of all development efforts. We recognised the need to improve people's lives and livelihoods. We see a need to enlarge the range of people's choices. We see a need to increase people' opportunities for education, health care, income and employment. We see a need also to exercise justice, equity and equality amongst all our people regardless of our different backgrounds and makeup. We see a great need to promote the kind of development that addresses the root causes of poverty and denial of basic human rights. My ministry's 2015 Budget works towards addressing these needs and will focus on implementing the following strategies: **11.29**

- Establish and develop community engagement, programs that address the needs of women, youth and children.
- Develop, promote and facilitate socio economic development, program that address this specific needs of women, youth, children, including the disable people.
- Strengthen and support gender equality, eliminate gender base violence and stop abuse of women and children.

We cannot deny this and if we looked in the media these issues are alive and they affect the communities and our families today.

- We will also facilitate women and youth, livelihood empowerment programs through direct funding of micro and small and medium enterprise projects.
- We will also work in partnership with organisation, companies, business houses, traders, manufacturers and employer to increase access to labour market for women and youth, and increase gender equality in work places.

We are determining to do this; my ministry's annual work plan will prioritise key activities that need to take place immediately.

My ministry's priority activities for 2015 will be preparatory work for the construction of the national centre for women, youth, children and family affairs.

This is a long outstanding projects which severely affected by budget cuts and sifting of Government priorities.

We hope by the end of the year we will have laid all the ground work to ensure construction work by 2016 and we are thankful that DCC government has approved it in cabinet that this work will progress and I believe soon after the budget is pass it will kick start.

Sir, implementation of family protection Act 2014 which was passed by Parliament in 2014 remains a key among my ministry's priorities, for the benefit of those who are not familiar with the Act. The FPA is basically a domestic violence Act which recognises that domestic violence in all its form is unlawful. The Act will be jointly administered and coordinated by the Ministry of Justice and Legal affairs and the Ministry of women, youth, children and family affairs. Plans are now underway to ensure commencement of the Act.

Mr Speaker, this year the ministry will also focus its attention on the conclusion, observations put forward by the committee on the elimination of all forms discrimination against women known as SIDO. One of the first steps will be to do a scoping exercise to see where special measures can be applied in areas which women and girls are heavily disadvantaged.

On women economic empowerment, focus will be made on getting cabinet approval for Government's first ever national strategy for the economic empowerment of women and girls. Gender issues has not being well articulated or integrated into national economic development policies and strategies in Solomon Islands hence, we are determine to ensure that this will put in place and the need for strategic work to be done soon.

A woman is economically empowered when she has bought the ability to succeed and advance economically and the power to make an Act on economic decisions. The national strategies outline the gender issues in Solomon Islands and identify necessary actions and activities to be undertaking in order to achieve Government policy objectives for the advancement of women and girls.

Sir on the area of youth empowerment my ministry will focus its effort in supporting the youth at work program which is administered by the secretariat to the pacific community known as SPC. Four ministries have partnered in the programs. This year my ministry will increase its support to the youth at work program to the tune of \$600,000. **11.34** Usually for every year we are given \$200,000 but this year it has increased and a total of \$800,000 to support the Youth at work program.



It is encouraging to see that the ministry which are partners under the program have also made allocation to the Youth at work program. This no doubt will ensure the beginning of the sustainability of the program in the long run.

Please allow me to dwell a bit on the Youth-at-work program, the program is designed as a national initiative for unemployment youths who are school leavers or graduate to be mentored in basic skills and values as well as being given practical job experience. In essence, the Youth-at-work program is an initiative that targets disengage youths and wondering youths. Youth-at-work also advocate for youth livelihood and is working towards creating a solid Entrepreneurship program, the core component of Youth-at-work is placing youth entrepreneurship in both the public and private sectors giving youth the job training and experience in the workforce. The programs key goal is to help youth find the potential within themselves by giving them confidence and tools to improve their own lives.

The Youth-at-work program has reached the end of phase five and that the end of phase five the program has worked over a thousand young people and that basically in Honiara and in Choiseul while most them are from Honiara. The program has extended to include youths with disability to provide them with a chance of harnessing their potential, Youth-at-work is now operating in Choiseul Province and it is likely that Malaita province will be next. But let us not wait people with disabilities are suffering within our own eyes, in our villages, communities and constituencies but I am glad that the DCC government is awaken to this long outstanding human right issues. These people just need necessary infrastructure and services to enable them to achieve their potential.

On children's development focus will be made on the Child and Family Welfare Bill, the bill is jointly sponsored by the Ministry of Health and Medical Service and my ministry. The Bill has been completed and it is now with the Ministry of Health and Medical Service for onward submission to the cabinet. The Bill will make provision for the welfare and protection of children and in particular to strengthen families and promote the wellbeing of children, make provisions for families and communities to receive advice and support and caring for the children and make provisions for children who are in need of care and protection.

Solomon Islands is a stake party to a number of Human Rights conventions and treaties, two conventions which my ministry is responsible for the coordination of their implementation are the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and the convention on the rights of the child. In terms of our reporting obligation, Solomon Islands is late by three reports, focus this year is been made on the completion of the second, third and fourth periodic reports



which I hope to table before the Cabinet by May. The report will bring Solomon Islands up –to-date which is reporting obligations.

The combine total of my Ministry's budget for 2015 is \$16.6million, representing 0.46 per cent of my Ministry's share of the total SIG recurrent **11.39** and Development budget. The recurrent budget accounts for \$12.6million throughout the development budget accounts \$4million.

Development grants form quite a substantial portion of the ministry's recurrent budget by amount \$3.8million or 30 per cent of the total recurrent budget.

Grants are allocated to the Women, Youth and Children's sector. These grants are purposely to implement projects and programs at the provincial and community levels. However, about 5.4 per cent of the grant will also be allocated in the form of subventions to a number of national NGOs namely; the Council of Women, the Family Support Centre the Christian Care Centre, the National Youth Congress to support these NGOs to implement government policies for women and youth. And I am also thankful Sir, that the current government also recognizes that there's need to increase on these allocation.

Mr Speaker, as I conclude no one things more highly than I do of patriotism as well as abilities of very worthy individuals to top that this nation is not prepared for the journey that the DCC Government will take us through within the next four years at if God's Will beyond. Many views have been expressed with a shade of doubt and I respect the rights of Members of Parliament who have done so. But Sir, we all know that different people often see the same object from a different angle and in a different lines and therefore, I hope it will not be top disrespectful on my part if entertaining as I do share my inside and demonstrate a character very opposite to there.

Allow me therefore Sir, in my concluding remark to speak forth my sentiment freely and without reserve to support for this bill. The bill before this House begs our attention as this is a critical moment for this country. It is the moment that calls all Leaders and citizen of our beloved country not to do business as usual. We can debate on our economic outlook theories until the cows come home Sir. However, as long as the dignity of our people remains below the poverty line and as long as our achievement in the sustainable development goals that we will soon embraced remains weak, our nation will remain aid dependent and the third world or fourth world country for lifetime.

We do not need a philosopher to explain this; our experiences for the last 37 years will always remind us of that very fact. Sir, the current socio economic

situation of this nation demands this generation of leaders in the tenth parliament to make tough and informed decisions.

Decisions that will either help this nation to be borne or decisions that will result in this nation, still being conceived after thirty plus years since we gained our political independence. If there is time more fitting for us to test the firmest statement by one of our renowned national leaders and former Prime Minister, Honourable Solomon Mamaloni, it is now Mr Speaker Sir, he said, and quote "Solomon Islands is a nation that is conceived but never given a birth" through DCC Government's reform agenda we can make the change Mr Speaker Sir, we can be born after 36 years in the womb Mr Speaker Sir, it may be difficult but not impossible Mr Speaker Sir.

Mr Speaker, the 2015 budget in my humble opinion is a driving force. It is the power that can give birth to a new Solomon Islander, one that is joyful, peaceful and prosperous. It is not used just singing our national anthem. There is more beyond the singing if only we can all join hands and put our acts together. Sir, this budget is the answer to the voice of the silent majority. It is **11.44** the answer to the cry of the mothers who have puddle long distances from Kolombangara to Noro to sell their agriculture produce. This budget is the answer for the ordinary village family which have struggled for many years on the very low price of copra. Through this budget we will now seek alternative value added products such as virgin coconut oil and other coconut products which have been refined and processed. This budget brings new hope for a better tar sealing roads and good drinking water on Gizo Township which has been abundant for ages. This budget brings hope to my good people of Gizo Island who have lost their homes and their loved ones the tragic effect of the tsunami.

Mr Speaker, allow me to say this to my good people of Gizo/Kolombangara constituency, there is a tomorrow and tomorrow can only come when there is unity, peace and spirit of active involvement in all aspects of our development. One does not have to be an economist to understand that our country has been heavily reliant on unsustainable use or exploitation of our natural resources. Sir, since the day of Leavers Pacific Kolombangara Island has exported more than 2 million cubic meters of natural logs. Today, while the natural log supply decreases Kolombangara Forest Product Limited (KFPL) is one of the only sustainable reforestation investments in the country which exported an average of 80 cubic meters per year and will increase in the next five years.

To my good people of Kolombangara I must say that the DCC Government's serious consideration will now be given to the need to build a strong partnership

between government, KFPL and landowning group so that mutual benefit can be reached.

Increase budget to support for investment in the rural areas should be top on our development agenda and I am pleased to see that the 2015 budget will pave the way in that direction.

Sir, more than three decades ago our fathers brought forth on our chain of islands a new nation. Conceive in independence and dedicated to the proposition that; to lead is to serve. That vision and dream still holds through today. There is no better way to serve our people than to resource and empower them through this budget so that they are able to economically help themselves sustainable in all aspects of their lives and livelihoods.

There is only one thing that makes a dream impossible to achieve; the fear to failure. Let us support this bill and let us not be afraid and drive on this wave and so as to give to our people what they deserve. The opportunity is here and now to support the government as best as we could in the implementation of the 2015 budget. The government is serious and committed, and is keen to deliver both effectively and meaningfully. Business as usual must now be a thing of the past. We must move on as leaders how have nothing but our people at heart. Let us all dream together and journey together to make our country the best it can ever be. With these few remarks I support the bill.

*Parliament is suspended at 11.50am*

*Parliament Resumes*

**1.57**

**Hon DUDDLEY KOPU** (*Minister for Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening*): Thank you Mr Speaker for giving this opportunity to contribute and share with other honorable Members of this house to support the 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015, which was presented by the Minister for Finance and Treasury.

Before I continue on, on behalf on my good people of Temotu Pele, in which I am their MP in this highly respected Honourable house, I would like to acknowledge those who prepared this budget and those that scrutinise this budget for debate.

I acknowledge the Prime Minister and his staff, the Honourable Minister of Finance and his staff, all permanent secretaries and staffs of various ministries and donor partners for their assistance towards this budget as their support budget. I would also like to thank the Public Accounts Committee for their splendid work in scrutinising this budget and putting together the Committee Report. A special thanks to my Permanent secretary and staff. I also do not forget the nine provincial government premiers and their executives throughout the provinces. These are the nine provinces that make up Solomon Islands.

This nation of Solomon Islands exists through these provinces and 85percent of rural people live and will die in those provinces. It is well fit to call this budget 'people's budget'.

For this reason, the rationale behind the huge budget allocated in my ministry will be utilised and spent on these nine provinces, which people and my people who..2.02.. voted us to this Honourable House will benefit from this year's budget. I think it is right for us to say that it is the people's budget.

Mr Speaker, I want to thank the former NCRA Government for seeing it fit to build a very important infrastructure in the constituency that I represent, the Lomlom Airport. Though it was completed, some things are not yet done. The former NCRA Government did not solve it, so it comes back to this ruling DCC Government and I am confident that we can solve it. I am hoping that before the end of this year, aeroplanes will fly there. The airport is very important for my people because of the various services which will be provided. Likewise we from Temotu would like to travel to Vanuatu, but you are the ones holding us back. You should open up the airport so that we can trade with Vanuatu. So my plea to this Government is to carry on from when the last Government has left.

Mr Speaker, this is another plea to this ruling Government to build roads to link the airport to my island, reef islands. Assessments and reports were already compiled, you should allocate the funds and we will do it ourselves.

The sentiments raised by the Honourable Minister of Finance in his Budget Speech revealed great commitment and strength by the DCC Government to move forward with the development aspirations of the people of this nation's...2:07...intention of the DCC government. The target of the budget towards fulfilling the social economic and development wellbeing of Solomon Islander truly reveals the budget as the people's budget. That sentiment has caused the DCC to want to follow.

Mr Speaker, let me put it this way Solomon Islands as a country has being struggling for over 36 years and yet our people's desire for development and wellbeing has not being fully addressed over these years, something must be wrong

somewhere. We have encountered difficult and dark period during our 30 years journey, we have witnessed greater need for development in rural parts of Solomon Islands and yet we have not done enough; maybe we us leaders are wrong, so we must change our attitude, when those RCDF funds are with us we should not use it for our personal gain. We should be disseminating the money to where it is suppose to go, so that our people will see that the budget belongs to them. We have encountered difficulties, but despite the difficulties we still continue to linger on and call ourselves Solomon Islanders.

Mr Speaker, what bring us to this day is strength and silences, a strong will to move on and a strong desire to put Solomon Islands on the forefront of economic development and improve livelihoods. Also the strong desire to ensure that our provincial governments, communities and people are strong to endure what challenges lies ahead of us. It is with utmost belief that the DCC government fully supports opportunities which help the people and not opportunities for personal gain.

What I would like to stress here is that there are evidence of appreciation of what the Government has done to our people, what we need here is support and cooperation at the national level and provincial level.

In this regard, I believe we can surely work together to deliver what is required for development and improved livelihood of our rural population.

The government through my ministry will continue to provide the necessary support in terms of quarterly fixed service grants, man power and other resources to provincial governments. The ministry will continue to provide the provincial government's advocacy on sound financial, management practices including adherence to current international and practice in financial management, reporting and auditing. At this present time poor management is huge in all the 9 provinces which I mentioned, all the things that were sent to them...2.12..they just hijack everything. The budget is just abused. The leaders in the nine provincial governments are just like the leaders at the National Parliament. So it is very challenging for all of us. Are we prepared to represent our people in a right way or we are just here for the sake of self-serving? The DCC Government condemns this and so we must not do such practices.

Also in reference to the speech by the Minister of Finance and Treasury, the DCC government through my Ministry and other key stakeholders we will continue to engage in the development of townships including rural, urban and industrial centres for provinces. This budget belongs to the people. And this is what the policy stipulates, and we make sure we fulfil that. So developments really reflect the so

called people's budget. The township development is basically to attract internal investment and stimulate economic activities in the rural communities. When such activities happened, we should have the opportunity to tap the human resources that are attracted to these development centres, creating employment opportunities and reduce social problems.

The development of urban and industrial centres is not an easy task; it requires greater support from resource owners, the community, the provincial government and the national government and equally important it requires financial and technical input and consistent commitment on that part of the National Government.. This, I believe is the vision of the DCC government to ensure that there is development and service delivery to our rural populace.

Again let me register here that a big challenge confronting us is the issue of collaboration and cooperation among national partners in development. The government through my Ministry will surely endeavour to ensure all parties be able to come together through joint planning and alignment of work programs and sharing resources for the sake of service delivery to our communities. The biggest hurdle is where provincial members and Parliament members, chiefs, churches, women and youth groups must come together to work together in order to progress. It is also important for resources, work plans and community programs to be aligned together so that we do not duplicate each other, in terms of service delivery but to complement each other and provide needed services to our people. This is the ambition of the Ministry and we will continue to work with stakeholders in this ministry.

Another important issue is the issue of reform in the provincial government system. Under the DCC government policy statement, this is a key activity of the Ministry as it will try and address issues confronting provincial governments in terms of functions, capacity and resource allocation. Provincial governments would like to be mandated with more responsibilities in terms of proper decision, service delivery channels and addressing core fundamental issues of their own people.

A review of the Provincial Government Act will surely try and address these issues including revenue generation and sharing arrangement and devolution of certain functions and financial. It is of... **2.17...** That the review should prepare Provincial Governments to be able to manage and administer themselves for the coming Federal System of Government.

In concluding Mr Speaker, let me thank you for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this motion and lay forward policy issues and mandated programs that I will believe be implemented during the course of this year.

So the task that were allocated and we do not implement it, you are welcome to summon me the Minister of Provincial Government.

Let me kindly ask my colleague members of this Honourable House that with the support of this year's budget we should put our weight behind the Provincial Government system as an institution that is designed to provide services to the communities and to work together in implementing the sound policies of the DCC Government and, in collaboration with all stakeholders and development partners. Again implementation of this program supported by the outside donors will not be successful. If there is no support from the Solomon Islands government and its leaders, it is therefore important that we must work together for the benefit of our people.

Again the budget is the people's budget, we will surely ensure that it fulfil its purpose by delivering the service through socio economic development to our rural populace so we must be strong minded Honourable members for this country, we must not pocket things belonging to our people. Thank you once again for allowing me to contribute. With those few remarks I support this bill. Thank you.

**Mr. JOHN MOFFAT FUGUI** (*Central Honiara*): I rise to contribute briefly to the debate on the 2015 Appropriation 2015. First, let me thank the Minister for Finance and Treasury, his Permanent Secretary and the Ministry of Finance and Treasury as a whole for the effort vested in and the work done on the 2015 Budget.

As most of the honourable speakers had admitted on floor of this Chamber, the 2015 budget is history in the making. Such a huge budget is welcomed, this is because only with such monies or funds can the government be able to address the multitude of development programs, develop projects, development aspirations and develop hopes that we have.

On behalf of my people in Central Honiara constituency I extend similar gratitude to the Prime Minister as the Leader of the DCC Government, the Cabinet Ministers, members of Caucus especially the hardworking Chairman and his staff, he's not here to take this accolades but he will have them as they are and the overall common cadre in the government's ministry and departments for their contributions toward the budget.

This is a fearless budget, in that vein, it is also a brave new world budget. As the responsible minister had admitted that this budget aims to get adequate resources to the ministries and agencies so that they can deliver the goods and services to achieve our policy objectives. The minister was abundantly clear about the objectives and purpose of the budget. I say it again imputed, this budget is best



described as the People's Budget. He then went on to tag a mammoth \$4.18billion bill to the budget to qualify and sanctify his words.

The Minister mentioned that the budget was fully budgeted through a combination of domestic revenue, external budget support and cash reserves. I must say again congratulate the Minister for having the audacity to use cash reserves for gainful development purposes. 2.22.. Less than a brave minister would have had that cash reserves shelved and then while Parliament is not in session, shifted such funds to other preferred spending. This was the story of recent times. But we are fortunate to have a finance minister who is both a stickler for financial details and experience in money matters. For that we are thankful.

I will now speak on the budget proper. My intention here is to first zoom down on some of the main budgetary intentions; second focus on some of the issues pertinent to Honiara; seeing that we have three Members of Parliament for Honiara constituencies, third speak on the National Parliament office budget, fourth offer some futuristic propositions that we can consider for future budgets and then round off my discussion or contribution.

The first impression one has of the budget is its size. Mr Speaker, \$4.18billion is a lot of money; a billion dollar is a thousand million dollars. That is a lot of money and that is why the Minister of Finance and Treasury is congratulated. As mentioned above it is only with such huge a budget that we can hope to cover parts of our bids that have often been unnecessarily reduced by the budget unit in the ministry of finance and treasury. I think the ministry of finance through the budget unit has the habit of cutting bids and that we lose the intentions in terms of policies and then money is inadequate to carry out our jobs.

Secondly, one must congratulate the DCC Government for having progressive and forward looking policies. Policies are difficult because when you form a government you have to draw up your polices within about a month. No other job around the world is as nice, neat, convenient and easy but only in politics.

It is the government's policies converted into government programs and ministerial projects that have been translated into what we now call the 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015. In this vein we are so grateful that the government is not so reserved in its approach to address government policies through the budget. An example of such progressive policies is the one on customary land reform. I would like to remind Member of Parliament that we are so fortunate to have that audition with one of our resource people who lived in Fiji but have the sacrifice to come over and then talk about this very issue yesterday.



For a long time we have been harping about the fact that 80percent plus of land in the country is under customary land tenure. But for equally too long have we not done anything to give title and ownership of customary lands to our land owners. Now with the new customary land reform policy in place, this will soon change. This policy will secure customary land title to our people then landowners will not fear; we should not operate by fear to allow their land for the government and for other investors too for development purposes.

The DCC Government has gone even further on this policy and it allocates a whopping \$42.8million for the purchase of land for development purposes in the country. In Bina, Kada bina and all the Binas plus other places too, this ...2.27...has not done before and so we are very thankful for this very progressive and futuristic policy that we have so that we do exactly what we need vis-a-vis our lands. We do not give the lands away but still have the title and receive dividends in terms of how we use their land.

Another interesting observation made from the budget, is that some of the ministerial projects and funding support that have been eliminated by the former NCRA government last year are being reintroduced. This is another interesting thing in terms of the government policies. Such projects include downstream processing programs, support for agro-forestry and even a budget allocation for the tailings dam at Gold Ridge. I think if have that fund is available last year; we would have not had this sinister issue of now Gold Ridge Mining having being closed. If we addressed it earlier, we would have averted the problem and would not have lost \$160million in terms of taxation for the government. Those are not small things. It shows that we are working and not to shift funds here and there. We do things according to policy, plans and also the budget.

As demonstrated, this is not only a people's budget; it is also a responsible budget but a responsible and a responsive government. You do not just merely be responsible but you also respond to what people ask. If you are responsible but do not respond, then you are dead. Even though you don't realize that you are already dead. We have to be responsible but also active; putting words into action.

Mr Speaker, allow me to take another detour and look specifically on the implication of the budget on Honiara as our main city. For Honiara, one is encouraged to see that \$60million is allocated for and I quote, 'construction and maintenance of roads for social and economic benefits for our people' unquote. I wish to personally encourage the Minister of Infrastructure Development to ensure that part of such funding or other unappropriated funds in this budget are reserved for the maintenance of Honiara roads.

When one speaks of Honiara roads, one does not refer only to the main roads in town but also includes the main highway and the road capillaries that conjoin the different parts of Honiara suburbs, roads in the settlements and roads that linked Honiara to other constituencies, such as the Central Guadalcanal constituency and the North-West Guadalcanal constituency right on time.

In view of the public/private sector policy of the DCC, the government would do well to realise that the best place to start this policy is in Honiara for the simple reason that we have money in Honiara. We have manioc, potato, cassava, sugar canes in the provinces, but in Honiara we use money to buy food. For instance, one reads that there is \$4.5million allocated and I quote 'Industrial and Commercial Estate Development' unquote. The best place to start is Honiara. I am not encouraging you but putting it clear so that we can see it.

On the same page, \$3.6million was allocated for Private Sector and MSME development. The best place to start is Honiara. Honiara would be the prime candidate for such support for our private sector people. Allow me to mention that we have Solomon Islanders in the private sector that really needs such assistance...**2.32** ..in Honiara. My fear is that in the sea of urban businesses and where competition cut throat and attitude are unforgiving, we might not see them slowly drowning to their slow deaths. That is the fear on that.

So look outside, but first of all, look inside. Why is it important? Because this is how Solomon Islands is aligned or is patterned. Not because we just want to develop, but that is how we are patterned. You firstly patterned things in Honiara and then decentralise to other provinces or constituencies.

To give another example of this; last evening I visited a successful local business individual who had started his business a while back. His name will remain anonymous or silent. Now he owns a number of businesses. I know some of us own businesses, even the Member of Parliament for North West Guadalcanal. But in this case it is specific to this example. He supported a football team. He is a businessman but he put support at the community through our youths playing soccer. Again I mention even the Member for North West Guadalcanal has a successful soccer team. I suggest you go and watch his team because it is already on top. It is one of the best teams in Honiara. I want to encourage that because it zeroed down on this, business but also your services go down to our communities to bless them. It is not budget alone, it is doing things for people through the budget and otherwise or outside of it. That is what I am saying. That businessman owns a very successful soccer team, and he was a soccer star when we were students at Saint Joseph's Tenaru. Just like the Minister of Police, he is not here to get my blessings in

terms of this one. The Minister for Police in this case played for the national soccer team. If you have not seen him in the 1980s, he played for our Solomon Islands national soccer team.

I had asked him for what support did he received from the government, any government whatsoever when he started his business. He emphatically said that he had not received any government assistance whatsoever. Some of us received assistance. Members of Parliament received assistance. This time around it will be much bigger. They will be swallowed in assistance. But this person here doing business for us did not received any assistance whatsoever. It shows that we look but we do not see people, who need our assistance. And it is qualified assistance, if you want to argue that point. I am naming names in terms of businesses, *Island bread* and *Island Tanks* are two of his successful businesses in town. We will be making inference to what we are talking about. Such local business people need our assistance. We should help them if we can.

It is my strong belief that DCCG is on the right track with the right policies just to do this. If they did not do after four years, I will be very sad, more than how felt about NCRA. I am telling you this because I am in both of them. In one I got hurt, not my fault but their mistake, and this one is a huge blessing so far..2:37..Similarly in Honiara we have our furniture companies which need assistance. Our carpenters, Builders and Electrician companies that needs government assistance as well. That's why I've mentioned that its qualified assistance, because it is the government so it's always qualified.

Now we have in place a first ever national urban policy, in time we will have an urban economic development policy besides that. We need that because if you study the policies and the budget itself you will see that all of them are targeting rural development: rural this and rural that, now what's wrong with Urban? When does a Gela man who is rural in the morning and comes over to Honiara and is urban until 6:00 o'clock in the evening then you don't divide it in terms of urban and rural; Again you tell me who is rural and who is urban? We have to put these things in place so that we can address both the rural and urban, that's the point I'm driving here.

We have to remember when dealing with the rural policy we must also address urban policies. Because all the development in the Solomon Islands starts from Honiara and percolates down all the way to other places such as Tikopia, Mono or Alu for that purpose.

I want us to look at the National Parliament office; the NPO budget. When you carefully study the 2015 budget and look at the National Parliament Office, you

will realize that the lion share of the budget is not for NPO administration but it is for Members of Parliament. The important point I want to pose here so that the members of parliament will sink it down in their consciousness. So that they will realize that when they support NPO in terms of administration, they must remember theirs is also in the NPO administration budget. It looks good but not much to work with it, we will be affected; and not for the National Parliament office and it is for Members of Parliament.

If we represent this in statistical terms it will be like this, 71percent of National Parliament budget is for Members of Parliament, the balance of 29percent in the budget is for three important national offices; why do I say 'three national offices is because they are in the constitution. Constituencies are not in the constitution for instance like, Gao/Bugotu and Aoke/Langalanga and West Kwara'ae and all the constituencies within Honiara. It only mentions the 50 constituencies, but in name, the three offices are in the constitutions; specifically named or labelled. That is why they carry importance; constitutional significance.

The National Parliament Office, its name is in the constitution. The Opposition office is in the constitution as well as the Office of the Independent Group is also in the constitution . Even though you disagree with the Independent group, it's in the constitution since 1978. Even before that when they considered it in the 1977 London conference, it's in the constitution. So those are important offices, it seems like you are so enthusiastic about those things and you forget the three important offices which makes sure that you are in parliament, I am so surprise. I mean you talk a discourse that is over our head and we don't know where you stand.

When you speak of a need to maintain or improve good governance, transparency, accountability. You will realize that you have just short changed with a very small budget allocation for the three of the most important government institutions responsible for these three important principles of values, that is, good governance, Transparency and accountability. Small budget not even..2.42...\$100million which is small and most of the money that is allocated in there; most of it is for you guys and not for the administration of the National Parliament office. That is why I mentioned a few times that between these sessions; the Parliament may as well be dead. This is because you just have allocated them a small amount of money.

So lest we forget that these are three constitutional mandated offices when you decide to fight corruption, make laws and pass policies, you better start with these offices. If you talk about Solomon Islands Transparency office that is not in the

constitution, Save the Children is not also in the constitution, and the same goes for the Anti-Corruption Commission; It is not in the constitution until you pass a mere legislation for it. But those three offices that I mentioned are in the constitution and so we must deal with them. I am saying this because I used to be the Secretary of Opposition and you know what? We think that we were strong but it is not, we were just under the authority of Parliament and the Office of the Prime Minister. So we need to separate them so that the Opposition office can do its job better and also the independent office.

What we need to see here is that the National Parliament budget is increased in view of one new Parliament reform. Parliamentary committee's work will increase in terms of number and the vigour of the work they do. Also the proposed Parliamentary Autonomy is also a big work as well, so that we can be separated from the Cabinet or the Executive, so that we are not influenced-have our independence and we can work together. Therefore we need a big budget for it.

We need to make a clear distinction between the national budget, office administration budget and the budgetary allocation for members of Parliament's Entitlements. Budgetary allocation for National Parliament office needs to be increased; this demands a new style of management. A new style of management that we don't file our ideas rather we enable the files to have eyes and ears in order for them to move. And use the Deputy Speaker, because he is a member of parliament at the same time he is Deputy Speaker. It is like he is a hybridized entity. But the facility is there, and that the Deputy Speaker can take our agendas and development plans and can take the agendas to the caucus. From caucus then the Prime Minister as the minister responsible for National Parliament can take it to cabinet to make things happen. We need this kind of connectivity by using the Deputy to shepherd parliamentary agendas and development plans to caucus and the Prime Minister to progress them to cabinet. This is to ensure things are moving and once we achieve this, we will congratulate the whole parliament team for being successful.

Finally how do we look to the future in the next four years. It could be more than four year but that is a contestable idea-a moot point? I want to say that this is the territory of prophets that the Honourable Minister has hesitated to tread because he said 'that he is not prophet nor a dreamer. But personally I want to remind him that, the Deputy speaker is both a dreamer and a prophet is subsequent or by default. So don't be afraid let us enjoy what is good. If you have followed me so far you would appreciate that the DCC government is right on target to move us from

where we are to where we should be. On that point, we need to be a little bit futuristic.

I will randomly pick some of the issues that we can address now or in the future...**2.47**...Sir, I have abbreviated them as follows.

First, we need a new ministry of Youth and Employment, no questions about that, no two ways about that, no wishy washy about that. This is the time bomb and we have to defuse it now, because its time is a bit overdue.

Employment is an important issue for our ever growing population of young people; we cannot wait too long on this one. Second, the government can also look at the possibility of having a Ministry of Church Affairs. Since before we start churches were here but have been treating them as second class citizens in terms of how they cooperate with us in our things in terms of national development and our national issues. Have a ministry for it, why you were afraid, why not we have a Chaplain to help us in this Parliament. Do we need prayers or are we above prayers. You tell me Mr Speaker Sir, so policies must target what we need at that time, so we need it now. Why are we waiting? So include it in, so that we have a department or a ministry of church affairs in the face of globalised humanism, we cannot lose on this, rather we will always win I am telling you Mr Speaker Sir.

On Education Mr Speaker Sir, we need to diversify scholarship for training; we send most of our students to Papua New Guinea and Fiji. But we should them to difference places, since these places gave us scholarships. We should them to India, 1.2 billion and counting plus people. One thousand million people then we throw another two hundred million on top in India then count 10million every month, Mr Speaker Sir. So with the kind of experience you can't go wrong because you in their sea of experience that you will bring back, so that our small things in Solomon Islands clear, because you have been dealing with big things. Are you listening.

Indonesia has almost 254million people, we have an Embassy there, don't send them in West Papua we need to clear that out. The last government said that we will send our Ambassador to West Papua. I told some members of Parliament last year, if you have to send our Ambassador there, you tele- travel, you don't travel in body. You just travel via internet and all this.

**Mr. Matthew Wale** (*interjecting*): Vele!

**Mr. John Moffat Fugui:** Vele is a bit difficult but we have internet. Sending them to Philippines on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2014 Philippines has reached a 100million mark in their population-it's a big experience, so that \$100million looks small. Send them to

Malaysia, Malaysia now is enforcing a law against terrorism. I haven't heard you; maybe when you mention it, I wasn't here. But terrorism is a big thing we need to deal with. Malaysia said, that we can detain people without trial, that's it. Why? Because terrorism is beyond the law, that's it. Go there, so that our students can learn and read about these things. Send them to Thailand Mr Speaker Sir, how are you afraid to send our students to Thailand. At the Nickys Thailand is there and they feed us. Start by eating at the Nicky's so that you can understand a little bit more about their Thai cuisines then you can transport yourselves in body there.

Send our students to Vietnam, in the history of war, one of the few country's that beat US now as a super power is Vietnam. There is no other country that beats the US so far, not since 1788, only Vietnam beats the US .And the US surrendered in 1975 because of Vietnam. Send them there, send them over.

**Mr. Matthew Wale** (*interjecting*): To learn how to fight?

**Mr. John Moffat Fugui:** Learn to fight with the mind, not fight with hands, learn with the mind so that you can know when to fight and you also know when not to fight. So the Member of Parliament for Aoke/Langalanga is correct - fight in general but learn how to fight and when you fight you will know how to fight, that's a big difference.

Sending them to Nepal, Nepal is final one, I am going to run up about two minutes. Why Nepal? Well Nepal is at the roof of the Earth. So send them to go there..2.52..so that they can gaze on Mount Everest and know that God is a good God. Mr Speaker, I am not a lay preacher like you but we can do better on this.

For the Solomon Islands National University (SINU), I congratulate their governing body. Today is the graduation of our students at SINU. The DCC Government has allocated \$60million for support. But when we debate on the SINU Bill last time I told Parliament to allow SINU to create an endowment fund, so that those of us who are former students at SINU can contribute to the fund so that we do not have to depend on government support every year. This is because it is going to be habitual and we want to put a cease to it.

For women, youth and children; my favourite topic, if I am gone I will still remember women, youth and children. Where the Minister of Women, Youth and Children Affairs? Ministers have to be here so that they can hear things that are pertinent to their ministries.

Finally, for women, youth and children do not factor in families. I know that funding is coming through the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs but



that is none of our issue. Our issue as a sovereign nation is to make sure that you put your funding to institutions that are already in place. I have mentioned this before and I will continue to mention it until I am finish from Parliament.

There are families virtually in every village in Solomon Islands because I do not see women, youth and children walking alone in all our villages. Tell me if you have seen that, I have not seen that and I will never ever see that. Put that in families then you can deal with women, youth and children. In Solomon Islands, without family women, youth and children would be to be bold. With those remarks I support the motion.

**Mr ALFRED GHIRO** (*East Makira*): Allow me first to take this time to thank and congratulate the Minister of Finance and Treasury and his hard working staff for presenting the budget to us in Parliament for us to debate is very important because our people are waiting for this budget.

I would also like to seek you indulgence to thank the Chairman of PAC and including members for their timely scrutinising of the budget. I know a lot of effort has been put in that hearing to perform the oversight roles of the committee.

**2.57** The budget has an appropriation amount of \$4.1billion for the services of the 2015 fiscal year. \$3.1billion is for the recurrent and more than \$1billion for the development estimates. This is the biggest budget so far. This is the first ever biggest budget to come to this floor of parliament.

I will not question the credibility of this budget nor the concerns recommended by the chairman of the PAC because he had clearly mentioned the concerns on the budget, in which I believe the government will take into account those very genuine concerns. I will not dwell too much on the essence of the budget. The ministers have clearly outlined what their ministries will cover for our people. They are very excited to state their programs under the budget for the people.

My contribution will be based on some of the fundamental areas and reforms that appear on the policy statement of DCC, in which I agree on as a way forward, but it is not well catered under the 2015 budget. I have to say this otherwise maybe in the future we will continue to put the cart before the horse.

One of the reforms is the revitalisation of DBSI, which is very good in policy intentions. That is what we want if we want to broaden the revenue base of the country. It is good to channel those reserves on where we will get returns.

The other issue is CEMA. It is something that we should address as a priority. As we all know, the budget is a fundamental instrument to achieve government policies. It regulates an allocate funds to carry out priorities.



The Minister of Finance in his speech alluded that the government primary objective is to achieve a broad base economic development. This is what we all want to see, that we broaden the narrow economic base of this country. We should allocate funds where our mouth is...3:02 –to create or broaden our very narrow economic base. That is what I want to emphasize here. I am not criticising the budget, but I hope I can add some good strategic approach and opinion for the government to take into account. I do not want to blame the Government now because I know the time factor they are faced with to compile this budget. It only took them three months to actually come up with the policy statement which is then translated into the 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015 – well done.

Mr Speaker, one area that must be done is the strengthening of the RCDF Act. We have been talking about \$335million going towards the constituency. Accountable mechanism is what is yet to be regulated. That is when we will call the budget, the people's budget. So it must be looked after well by the ministries for our people. Whilst I agree that people are entitled to the funds, but just one thing, the funds will go and very little or none will come back in the form of tax for our country. It must be properly looked after. The accountable mechanism should be there. What I heard in parliament is that, normal government procedures will be suspended so that funds can be released.

The regulations for CDF Act must be brought here because the focus of the DCC Government is the rural populous. So we need to strengthen the accountable mechanisms and we continue on. Maybe increase it in 2016, so that it will be justified because accountable mechanisms are in place for us to work within. That is the revitalisation of CEMA and DBSI must also come. Give \$4million of the \$6million for East Makira Constituency to DBSI, so that serious entrepreneurs in East Makira Constituency can come and borrow. This is a sustainable approach.

If I can remember when CEMA was operating, price did not fluctuate too much. Because when prices went down CEMA subsidise it. Put \$1million belonging to the East Makira Constituency with CEMA. Those are reforms which I think will help to create the revenue base of our country.

My concern is that we should address those institutions before we channel the people's fund there, and make sure increase it. But make it remains sustainable for them. Otherwise we give them bush knives and when they break it, they come to ask for another one. ...3:07...And in the long run we will only be spoon feeding them and this is the syndrome that we want to avoid; spoon feeding, dependency syndrome.

So I want the government to take a good look into it. Not now as I have alluded to earlier. I don't blame the government but the time factor is the problem. Maybe next year we will try to address this.

The other thing is the Political party integrity bill, it is enough for us to stabilize the government in the budget. We should bring it in now so that we can stabilize the government by law. What I have seen in the recent years is that the government is stabilizing their government through the budget. Enough of that! Enough of that! Bring the legislation so that we can create a political environment that the government will be stabilised through legislation.

As I have said I don't blame the government, I'm just giving some opinions for your future consideration and planning. When we try to invest in the areas; the productive sectors, we are actually creating employment for our people. So we must try to look at productive sectors such as land. I want to commend the minister for Lands, he has the passion to do programs within his ministry, like yesterday the budget hasn't yet passed but we went and attend that workshop on land reform. So thank you minister and I am placing my confidence in you, that what we have talked about here is that the hindrance of development is Land, but we are beginning to see and address; the land reform. We have to solve disputes. The Minister for Women and children said it can be difficult but it is not impossible.

We need to put an attention on agriculture like the minister for Agriculture had mentioned, this bio-security Act is not strong enough, this giant African snail, beetle which have just came in. We should strengthen that area of service, otherwise we will invite pests to come in and we will spend money to eradicate them. So that is very important so the Agricultural sector is strengthened especially the research. I know that the Minister mentioned that he's under-resources in this particular area of Research. After Dodo creek closed down all the things have run out. So we looked in strengthening that, because that is the area in which we can invest to create or increase our revenue base of the Government...3.12...

I also want to touch on tourism infrastructure programs; it is true that tourism is one of the areas that we should invest more on it. This is because tourism is like a key, once it is strengthened then Agriculture will be strengthened and, if tourism is strengthen then the transport will also grow. Or in other words we should tap the right keys that can spin off development. So that is why tourism is very, very important industry as it can grow economy and create employment for our people. Thus, more attention should be given to that area.

The other area that I want to talk on is fisheries; it is one of the productive sectors. We have said so many times in here that it is important as we experience the

decline of revenue from logging. So we need to invest more on it so that in return we can collect the much needed revenue to provide services to our people in terms of education and health. Hence, I encourage the government to continue to invest on this sector and while on that, I am happy to hear that the Fisheries Management Bill will go into its second reading as it is the way forward for us. We need such legislation to avoid the people from over harvesting our resources and for them to remain sustainable.

I also want to praise the government for increasing its budget in the Ministry of Infrastructure Development. As alluded by other colleagues, without infrastructure there will no economic development and so this is where we should put more money into it, so that the capable Minister of Infrastructure and Development run his programs. I know that the Minister for Infrastructure and Development had lived in Makira for six years and he also know that East Makira constituency does not have road. It is not because of geographical location because in the place is just right to make a road on it, so I want the Minister of Infrastructure to make some consideration towards building a road at East Makira. Besides that, for the East Makira Constituency we only have one wharf and only one airport. This is not funny.

**Hon. Bodo Dettke** (*interjecting*): But NCRA forgets it.

**Mr. Alfred Ghiro**: No, NCRA gave a ship because there is no ship. **..3.17** and on that, we welcome it. But you just imagine it's half of the Island with two outlying islands with no road connections. Mr Speaker 36 years there is no infrastructure project in East Makira, which is a sad thing. It is lucky I joined the NCRA Government in the Ninth Parliament if not I think there won't be ship to my constituency.

So now Mr Speaker, we were merely using the outboard motors. So this \$6.1million for East Makira maybe I will use that for that project because there is no other access Mr Speaker, when a child sick where will they go? Children to go to school, where will they go? If you climb the hill a wild pig will attack you.

Mr Speaker, this is very important I am trying to inform the Parliament that we need roads and we also contribute immensely to our country's economy by producing copra, cocoa in our constituency, but not logging, we are conservationists.

Those I would like to make mentioned and I would like to thank Government to seeing it fit to increase a bit the budget of MID because that one is really important .As some speakers said earlier, without road there will be no access to market and so forth, this is a very important sector for us seriously look into.

With regards to Aviation I would like to inform my good Honourable Minister for Aviation that there is only one airport in East Makira and that is in Santa Ana but it has no terminal since it was constructed till now. When passengers arrives there, and when it's raining oh, it is a problem then but we in East Makira have the tourism potential area. I say this because we have some very rich life culture in our areas and if you want to see this you go and attend the Vogasia festival in June and see for yourself. This one is a festival which you did not set a calendar for it, itself sets its own calendar and so we need that some upgrading for it and a terminal because both of us are from the East. So please don't forget to think of your brother's constituency to carry out a bit of upgrade because whilst speaking I have sighted a big allocation in the budget.

I will very brief as I have said and I will make mention on some areas which I think government should at least look into for us to achieve this primary objective of DCC Government to create and broadening the economic base of the country.

Lastly, I like to recommend government of one reform which I have mentioned to the last government and they don't want to hear me and I will mention it again. That it is crucially important to support our investors endeavours and that is to review of the current tax regime. Our tax 3.22 is not conducive for investment in the country. In fact, our tax is discouraging export. We are the only country in the region, if not in the world that charged tax on exported processed manufactured items in the country. So, this issue is a must, otherwise all our investment endeavours will not be achieved. So, this reform on reviewing the current tax regime is a prerequisite to fulfilling our investment intentions.

Lastly, I would like to once again thank the Government for bringing this budget. As the Deputy Speaker has stated, it is a history in the making. I would like to thank the Minister of Finance and Treasury again and staff including all ministers for detailing the programs of their ministries. I support the Bill.

**Hon SAMSON MANEKA** (*Minister for Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification*): I would like to join my colleagues to congratulate the Minister of Finance and Treasury for presenting to this Honourable House the first budget for the DCC Government. The Government's noble intention is to achieve broad base economic development by empowering and encouraging our people to be engaged in economic productive activities. As you would note this budget is focused on major reform programs and to enable ministries to maintain services for the people of Solomon Islands and at the same time build the foundation for future growth.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Honourable Chairman of the PAC and members who have work tirelessly over the past weeks and weekends to scrutinise this Bill. I thank the Chairman for the PAC report and I take note of your recommendations especially those directed to my ministry.

Before I proceed with my debate on this budget, I would like to take this time to say a few things to my constituency; my beloved North Guadalcanal constituency and my people.

I would like put to this House two things which my Honourable Colleagues have alluded to and that is, "the budget for the people." 3.27 I know that this budget is a budget for my people of North Guadalcanal constituency. They are aware that this budget is theirs.

I would like to talk on things here. One is that I am happy that the DCC government put aside funds for roads. North Guadalcanal constituency has no hills. On North Guadalcanal you can find that the road network can be connected everywhere. I believe that the DCC Government will allocate some fund for North Guadalcanal constituency for road maintenance.

The roads on North Guadalcanal are not for passengers. The roads on North Guadalcanal are money making roads. I am proud to stand here and inform this honourable house that my constituency also contributes to the economy of this country. And I believe that we contribute 15percent to the GDP of Solomon Islands government through Palm Oil that is centred in my constituency. I am happy that DCC has allocated funds for roads so that roads can be built on North Guadalcanal to transport oil palms that is produced by out growers.

I would like to inform this house that North Guadalcanal constituency gives 6,000hectares for palm oil. Apart from that, we have more than a hundred out grower farmers that are scattered in the North Guadalcanal constituency but there is problem with road network to transport oil palm bunches to the factory at Tetera. I am happy that there is funds to build roads. This is why I mentioned earlier that the North Guadalcanal roads are not only for passenger but it transports money for this country. It carries oil and gold. Thank you DCC for the heart to allocate a budget for building roads.

Secondly, I would like to highlight the tailings dam. The people that face the risk of the tailing dam is the people of constituency and also myself. I am thankful to the DCC government for allocating funds to assist the investor that lease Gold Ridge to solve the problem with the tailings dam in order to get rid of the risk from my people. I am happy that the DCC government allocated \$4million to support Gold

Ridge and also to solve the problem with tailings dam so that my people are free from that risk. I thank my people of North Guadalcanal for being patient and to support the projects such as the Gold Ridge Mining. Thank you to the people of North Guadalcanal for being patient and for supporting the national projects.

My good people, I am thankful to the DCC for allocating a budget to support the people of Solomon Islands who own the budget. I would like to say that the budget is really the budget for the people of this country.

This is what I would like to highlight here in terms of the contributions of the people of my constituency to the national projects and their patience. Thank you DCC government for allocating funds to assist the owner of the lease to sort out the problem so that Gold Ridge can be reopened.

The Minister of Finance on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April presented the \$4.18 billion budget 3.32 in our history, but let us not be alarmed by this huge sum against all expectations and the needed services expected from the Government by our very people. This is still not enough. This budget as you can see is not for business as usual. Some might think that this Government actually wants change. This Government wants to see change in how programs are executed. To advance change we need to know our current status. We need to review what strategies have worked and those that have not worked over the years. That is why reform is the priority for this Government.

Mr Speaker, I agree with the Minister for Development Planning and Aid Coordination, when he made reference that all planned programs to support policy objectives are being allocated budgetary allocations. This in fact are reflected in the translation document, and this Government has taken that huge bold step to adequately resource our ministries and agencies to achieve our policy objectives.

As the Minister of Finance has highlighted when presenting this budget, there is a total of 36 major initiatives in the priority reform areas and targeted sectors of the Government. And they are all outlined under fundamental and central reforms. That is the commitment and vision of this Government. This Government intends to be constructive, action oriented and rural focus, and we are keen to see some good results. Both the DCC Government Policy and Implementation Strategy Framework have provided the road mark and we all need to work together if we care for this great country of ours.

Sir, this 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015 is historical, not because of the huge sum, but because it is quite realistic and practical. I too believe that this is a credible budget. A one that is balanced as you could see on page 11 of the 2015 budget document. These bold stand steps taken by the Government to utilise its domestic revenue to fund this



budget must be commended. It is a bold decision that this Government has considered to make a difference.

Mr Speaker, I must thank the Prime Minister and the Honourable Minister for Finance and Treasury, and the Minister for Development Planning and Aid Coordination, for the foresight and vision to anticipate our revenue resources and made this hard decision.

Under the DCC Government, the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification falls under the resources sector. The ministry focuses on development our natural non-living resources in a sustainable manner for the socioeconomic advancement of the people of Solomon Islands. These resources are non-renewable, 3:37 once they are extracted they are gone.

On the legislature front, this is the first time we have admitted that our current legislations have been fully tested. Sadly, these laws are way out of date. Time has really put our laws to the test. It took this country more than 37 years to realise that the current Mines and Minerals Act did not cater for certain minerals including nickel and bauxite. But on a more positive note, I am honoured that we are going to be part of the history to make the relevant amendments.

Yes, we must admit we changes in time our existing processes and mechanisms which are set out to administer our laws have being tested and we need to review and ensure that our laws are amended to remain relevant. That is why the Ministry is prioritizing these legislative reforms to develop and safe guide our resources. We also aimed to ensure the country and its people get the maximum benefit from these resources. It is therefore, in the best interest of this country and its people that the DCC Government through my ministry has committed to ensure that the legislative framework that are in placed are relevant to safe guard the country's economic interest as well as the welfare of our people and environment that we are living in.

The vision of the Ministry of Mines, Energy and rural electrification is to develop natural non-living resources in a sustainable manner for the socio economic advancement of the Solomon Islands people. Our Ministry's mission is to extend the availability of grid connected electricity to provide electricity to the rural areas and to encourage and promote new and renewable resources of energy such as Hydro power, geothermal solar power and other clean energy resources. Apart from the normal function of the ministry of mines, energy and rural electrification for this year the government through my ministry has outlined the following program to achieve, the priorities outlined by the DCC government.



On petroleum the ministry will utilize the allocated \$700,000 in the recurrent budget allocation to engage a technical advisor to commence a desk review and provide a comparative review and the recommendations will be tabled to cabinet for endorsement on the urgent amendment.

Both the current petroleum exploration Act cap44 and the Petroleum Act cap 81 will be reviewed concurrently. This is to ensure we have stronger provisions in place to deal with environment risk. We also need to have some stronger provisions that deal with non-compliance by investors; penalty for the breaches of the Act are very minimal.

In fact, 3.42 current penalties for alleged breach of the Act or its regulations ranges from \$50 to \$500, which is very small. In regards to the review of the Mines and Minerals Act, we will ensure that the experiences of Gold Ridge are addressed and that a stronger provision will be made to force a mining operator to deal with environmental and safety risk to be place.

A provision to establish a rehabilitation fund to rehabilitate the mining after a forced or unforeseen closure of a mine is put in place, this because it is one of the problems that we faced in Gold Ridge, after it exercise the force majeure. When Gold Ridge went out, the people at the downstream of the mine site were affected but there nothing much we can do so we need to have such fund.

Also, after the closure of Gold Ridge Mine, we suggest that any mining that want to operate here in the Solomon Islands must have environment bond and rehabilitation fund. So that when any unforeseen situation that occur then we use such funds or bond to address the problem of the people. But for the current problem that the people who lived at the downstream of the Gold Ridge mine will be addressed by the current government. That is, the government has allocated money to help the people who are affected from the Gold Ridge Mine. Thus, if any new mining company comes in; my ministry will have to deal with them to uphold the necessary requirement of the Ministry, and such as having an environmental bond and Rehabilitation fund that will help the landowners when the company left.

The current impasse with St. Barbara Mining Limited over responsibly to deal with the tailing dam and its toxic waste material is a classic example of the Scenario. Had a clear and specific provision is in place for the creation of the rehabilitation fund could rightly be put to good use to address the care and maintenance of an abundant mining site.

At this juncture, on Gold Ridge I would like to inform this Honourable House that this government is fully committed to ensure that all avenues must be explored to deal with St. Barbara mining and it's tailing dam. In fact, the cabinet has approved

the establishment of a Solomon Island negotiation taskforce to deal with this very delicate and sensitive issue, given the seriousness of the government a \$4million allocation is committed for that purpose in the development budget. Let me also clarify to this Honourable House that 3.47...in the paper that appeared today Mr Speaker, that St Barbara is offering AUD\$1million to the Solomon Islands Government but the SIG refused to receive it. That is not true, Australia did not offer any AUD\$1million to the government to work on the tailings dam. That paper is not telling the truth today.

Another obvious shortfall of the Mines and Minerals Act is in its application to other minerals such as nickel and bauxite. This is particularly serious as the current method of extraction of bauxite ore is by extraction of tonnes of raw earth. Currently, if this method of extraction is allowed to continue for a duration of 25, years we might end up with a reef instead of an island called Rennell.

Mr Speaker, 25 years granting mining lease for a mining company to mine a small island, my ministry sees that if that happens then we will have reefs left in Rennell after all the bauxites are extracted. My ministry is looking at the length of time for a mining company. It is also the same with Gold Ridge, 25 years but the amount of ounces left to take out from that place is about five to seven years so why give them a lengthy time. We should have given them what is enough to carry a viable feasibility study that they are doing.

This is a serious and very practical scenario that this DCC Government is grappling with. This government will address this and it is my aim to bring to Cabinet some urgent amendments to address these weaknesses and address the issue of appropriate duration of mining lease for specific minerals.

A substantive allocation from my ministry recurrent budget of \$1.4million is in place purposely to fast track this review, so that the proposed recommendation for amendments is brought before cabinet in the coming month.

Sir, some quick gains that I can foresee in the coming months in the finalisation of the national Mineral policy. We have two versions so far. The year 2000 draft and the revised version of the 2013 has been reviewed in July last year. This policy roadmap search out the direction for mining in the country. This government will review this draft for the final time. So that the Government's thinking can be reflected in the final version.

I am confident that together with the expertise provided by World Bank and SOPAC, we can finalise and have this endorsed by cabinet by the end of this second quarter of this year.

Sir, we have the allocations of \$1.4million referred to earlier to assist us to convene another round of consultations before finalising this national minerals policy.

In order to establish the full potential of the country's natural non living resources, we rely heavily on prospecting results. These results for minerals occurrence in the country are provided by companies that undertook prospecting activities. 3.52 Do not get me wrong on this one; let me make this very clear. It is the policy of the government to review minerals exploration and mining operations in the country. Apart from the mineral occurrence results provided by the current prospecting companies, ministry officials are actively taking field trips to collect samples from our islands. I am thankful that the ministry has been allocated a sum of \$2million in our development budget to construct and develop a fully computerised national minerals and petroleum information centre. It would be the first time this country will have a database that will accurately provide us with what minerals are in your respective areas or provinces and the potential mineral deposits. It would also provide us the current activities on the ground. A Global Information System (GIS) software would also be installed to provide accurate and update boundaries of prospecting or mining tenement areas. This National Mineral Petroleum (NPM) Information centre will assist the ministry in monitoring operations for compliance. All minerals and exploration operators will be conveniently monitored with a press of a button.

I wish to inform the House that so far a total 107 existing license for both inshore and offshore prospecting in the country. Right now it is simply quite difficult to monitor and plan our monitoring activities. With the completion of the national mineral information centre the ministry could strategise their work plan to monitor and oversee these operations in the country.

Mr Speaker, against all that has been said about my ministry on certain companies and the status of the licenses I would like to inform this House that the ministry is strengthening its process and had map out the process clearly. This is to ensure that all information that is to be made available before the mines and minerals board are accurate.

Sadly, that is our weakness in the past but we are going to change that. We will deal with corruption and discipline officers who have comprise in their work. However, some past decisions will attract legal challenges against the Government and we are fully aware of that.

Mr Speaker, as we all know only 15percent of our population has access to grid connected electricity which is provided by the Solomon Island Electricity Authority

(SIEA) in Honiara, parts of Auki and Gizo and so forth and this has been the case for so many years now.

What this means is that we are very vulnerable to the fluctuating fuel cost in the global market. Listening to cries of our people on the street sometimes people have to make difficult choices. Some sacrifice and forgo their SIEA bills for food on the table. As the ministry responsible I am deeply concerned about 3.57 the high electricity tariff. I will write to the SIEA board to inform them of this concern. My officials have been tasked to undertake the review of this tariff since the last review was done in 2001.

With the assistance from my colleague Minister for Commerce, Industry, Employment and Immigration, the DCC government will ensure that the price control advisory unit is closely monitoring the fuel pricing annually submitted by the two oil suppliers with the view to negotiate price reduction. In the meantime, I strongly encourage SIEA to continue their weekly radio programs in raising awareness for our people and tips on how customers will save on the power usage.

In the long term, this government is committed to build upon what has been made so far by previous governments since 2009 for Tina Hydro Project but with a more strategic approach. The aim now is to ensure that the Tina Hydro Project office is fully supported so that the US\$120million Hydro Project is completed and fully operational by 2018. Once in full operation, it could supply a 15 to 20megawatts. Hopefully this could reduce the cost of the power and our SIEA bills. The progress so far has been very promising. In fact if all goes well and according to the plan with the landowners, a construction of the main Tina road could commence by August 2015.

I would like to thank the New Zealand government for assisting the World Bank to provide funds for the Tina Hydro. This government has committed \$6.2million out of the \$10million under the Renewable Energy Development Program to support the project office. A further \$2.1million is earmarked for the Fiu Hydro Project on Malaita. The remaining balance is aimed to support solar programs for schools and clinics.

Also on the development budget, I would also like to thank the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Planning for the provision of \$5.16million towards Constituency Renewable Rural Electrification. The ministry is reviewing this program to see how best we can deliver the same support to our people.

We want to improve the technical issues currently faced by CDOs..4.02 my ministry has planned some training workshops for our CDOs. This will assist them in simple

installation and maintenance. We could work with them on how we could dispose all batteries from our communities.

Mr Speaker, my ministry is seriously serious about reviewing our solar program. This is because this program contributed to power for the majority who live outside of the SIEA grid. And we will work closely with the Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Development Planning, so that all solar programs are complementary to each other to achieve maximum benefit from the solar program.

Mr Speaker, the ministry with the assistance from the ADB will revisit the National Energy Plan and make feasibility studies to establish energy needs across the country to support and facilitate our development and economic growth.

Sir, on water, as the saying goes - water is life. For any establishment of any village community, town, provincial centre, economic growth centre or city, we need water, and easy access to water supply. The Government has allocated \$3.1million as our support towards the Solomon Water to ensure better and reliable water supply in Honiara and the provincial centres. The current network of pipe installed during early 1970s need replacement. This is our contribution towards that. Under the 11 EDF Urban Water Supply Program, EU, UNDP and AusAid and the Government of Japan have come to our rescue and they will continue to assist us to address water supply and trial models for water and sanitation system for some of our communities.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I would like conclude, my acknowledgement of thanking all the Permanent Secretaries and Government officials for their understanding and commitment to ensure that this budget is formulated in good time. I would like to thank the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Independent Group, and those from that side of the House for their support to this budget.

I must also join my colleagues to acknowledge and thank our developments for their support and programs which are aimed to complement the Government to develop this country. With these few remarks, I support the 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015.

**Hon TAUTAI ANGIKIMUA KAITU'U** (*Minister for Health and Medical Services*): Thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity to contribute to this very important motion, the 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015. My contribution will be brief. I will talk on issues relating to my Constituency - Rennell/Bellona, and some issues relating to my ministry. I would also thank the Honourable Prime Minister and his Deputy for their strong leadership in the DCC Government. 4:07 I would also like to thank the

Prime Minister in particular for giving me the opportunity and my PS to attend a meeting in Fiji next week during the sitting of Parliament. This meeting is the Pacific Ministers Meeting, and this is its 20<sup>th</sup> year and so the Prime Minister has seen the importance of us attending this meeting.

In 1995 when this meeting was convened, the theme was 'healthy islands' and this year is the 20<sup>th</sup> year and the theme is 'island wellness'. I will be away in Fiji next week and that is why I have to speak today. I will be thinking of my two good ministers; the Minister for Mines and the Minister for Tourism when I am in Fiji next week. I would also like to thank my permanent secretary, other PSs and other officers in other ministries for putting together the 2015 Appropriation bill 2015. I would also like to thank our development partners for their contribution to this budget and without them we wouldn't have this big budget for the first time.

I would also like to thank the Public Accounts Committee, the Chairman and the members for highlighting some issues relating to the Budget. I thank the Minister for Finance for tabling this very important Bill, the Appropriation Bill 2015, which you have dedicated to the people of Solomon Islands as the people's budget.

Having read through it and listening to his second reading, it is clearly the people's budget. And I add on to it, it is the people's fair and friendly budget, this is what I called this budget. Why I said fair, it's been said from previous speakers, my honorable ministers that some of them were left out last year, this budget includes all MPs, and it does not disregard whoever on which side of the house you are on. All MPs will be allocated fair shares of this budget.

Why I called it a friendly budget, I am not an economist but see no increase taxes in this budget, in other places when you have a friendly budget it means there is no socio welfare payment cut or reduced but at least in this budget there is no new taxes, or new companies so that's why I said it's a friendly budget.

With the policy of rural development this will implement throughout the 50 constituencies, the development of this rural economic development centre will obviously simulate economic activities in our rural areas and as I said before all constituencies will be allocated the same share in this budget. It was raised in this debate about employment and if we have all the constituencies have this development of the centres we will provide employment to our people in the villages. Let me elaborate on few issues pertaining to my constituency; Rennell and Bellona. The DCC government has a very excellent shipping policy or the sea transport policy. Obviously my 2 remote islands will be benefited from this important policy and it will be the first time that a government in its short period 4.12 of ruling, three months, the people of Rennel & Bellona will have a ship to



serve our islands. At the moment to let you know, our islands are being served by a fishing boat but I thank them for the service. Previous government have also seen the importance of the sea transportation to remote islands and I know regrettably that funding for our ship is not made available to me and I think the constituency fund should returned to where it should be, that is to the people of Rennel & Bellona.

There is also another benefit that will come in this budget for my people and that is, there will be a proper housing scheme rollout. My people can proudly owned a finished built house for the first time and I can assure you my good people from Rennell & Bellona that we will rollout this policy and built complete houses for them and their children. I think this housing scheme will also be carried out in all the other constituencies and if so, it will definitely touch the lives of our people who live in the rural areas.

In the DCC policy statement, it says that rural clinics will be built and old clinics will be renovated. Also, mini hospital will be built in the provinces that do not have hospitals like Rennell & Bellona. I would also like to mention here about the term “mini hospital”, I do not think that we should call mini hospitals because in that way, it lowers the functional status of the hospital but rather give them names for example; Tingoa hospital or West Are’ Are hospital. I think currently some of the ministers have already built their clinics; namely the Minister of Education and the Minister of Agriculture, so I think we should all follow the same way.

But before you do so, please come and see us in my ministry so that the infrastructure team can go have a look at the site and does feasibility study as we need staff in this clinics as well. Personally the clinic area health centre for my constituency will be renovated in couple of months’ time, so I am very thankful to the DCC government for this. Beside that clinic there are also some work to renovate two other clinics; one in East Rennel and one in Bellona, so thank you for that as these services will definitely benefit my people.

I would also like to inform this house that there is a new investor, called the NASA group. We met this group at Honiara hotel on Wednesday afternoon at lunch time and they are investing in a lot of things. They are going to build hotels but in particular pertain to health that is they are going to build a new hospital at Auki, Kilu’ufi hospital and staff houses and as it falls in line with the DCC government’s policy to make Kilu’ufi hospital to be a Referral Hospital. So we are very thankful to this group called NASA group as they are investing in this country and I am so thankful...4.17...for their contribution to developing our country. For us all Members of Parliament this budget is very important, we must use it as a stepping



stone it is a gift to all of us. Wealth cannot be given to us, we have to use this budget to create wealth and raise standard of living of our people.

Mr Speaker Sir, with Education the MPs scholarships unfortunately in Renbel we don't have a form seven and that shot of put us in disadvantage place and I am glad this MPs scholarship scheme has come in. And this year I have already sent four students thankful to the DCC Government policy on education and they are studying at various universities abroad.

I want to publically thank one of the ministers in the DCC Government for giving me one of his spaces for this scholarship. That is very considerate and I am preparing another student to go in the second semester or next year. So thank you very much.

May I touch on tourism briefly. I am very thankful the DCC Government is putting a lot of effort to look into tourism in Solomon Islands. I see tourism like a bag of water hanging up there, and you pricking it with a pin, and it shoots out. There is a lot of potential in tourism that we just need to develop and I am happy that my good Minister for Tourism will take this into heart and start building infrastructure for tourism in this country.

I mention tourism because of one particular reason to my constituency, we have one of the world heritage site. Let me tell you the mentality of tourists when they hear about world heritage sites they do not care what it is, they just hear the word world heritage site and say let us go and see. Some people say it is very far in Rennell but it is between Solomons and Australia. For tourists they can go anyway as long as there is world heritage site, good infrastructure and they will go.

I had a little experience in travelling as a tourist and I mentioned this because I am emphasizing on the world heritage site, few places people go just because of the name just to go and see what it is. I can tell you Lake Tengano is a beautiful site and I am planning to take a trip there with a few ministers. The Minister for Education we have already plan this, my two good ministers here, the Minister for Tourism, the Minister for Mines and other ministers to come with me. Let us go and have a look at this place. I can tell you, you will come back and tell a very convincing story to the DCC Government.

Let me turn to something more serious. There is a saying that goes "A healthy community is a productive community". We must stay healthy in order to fulfil the aspirations of our people through what this Budget is for and deliver the services to our people.

Let me turn to my ministry, my ministry has a first share of this budget and is the second highest in the social sector. Health why is in a country is determined by a

few things, one of which is the millennium development goals. These goals are set out by the UN 4.22 and these have to be achieved by the end of 2015. My Permanent Secretary will be attending a meeting in New York later this year to see how well we are doing.

My ministry cannot achieve these goals alone because it needs the input from the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Ministry of Commerce, Industries, Labour and Immigration to name a few. An example of this goal is maternal motility rate, infant mortality rate, to improve seb water and sanitation coverage in Solomon Islands. We are still sitting below the regional average.

I must thank this budget for allocating \$12.2million for improvement in maternal child infant motility. I must also thank our development partners; DEFAT, WHO and UN agency for the input in this very important part of the budget.

For the sanitation program I am very thankful on behalf of the DCC Government and the people of Solomon Islands to the European Union (EU) for the funds allocated for this very important program; the Rural Water And Sanitation (RWAS) hygiene.

*Point of Order*

*Standing Order 10 suspended in accordance with Standing Order 81*

**Hon Tautai Angikimua Kaitu'u:** Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Deputy Prime Minister for allowing me to continue.

For sanitation, the European Union has put in \$21million for our programs for 2015 and next year there will be another \$25million for the same program. So, by the end of four years or more, majority of our people in rural areas will have clean safe water and good sanitation.

My ministry is not only at the receiving end we also support economic activities and we have provided \$600thousand for the competent authority. This is in order for us Solomon Islands to maintain our access to EU fish market which is one of our main customers in our fisheries resources.

Mr Speaker, there was lot being said a lot about my ministry. Let me clarify the issue about our Cuban graduates. These doctors are qualified medically. The issue here is that they are trained in a different system including different language and a different system but they are doctors...4.27...if you go to Australia and I have done

that in 1999 and 2000, it is a lengthy process because I am an overseas trained doctor, I have to go through the same process as what our doctors are doing here. I have to go through courses and sit some exams before I am allowed to work there and I have done that.

I am thankful that the Solomon Islands government has put in place some mechanism that we must make sure that those who ever is trained overseas is fitting into our system so that they know about what we have here. They know about what sort of diseases we have. In Australia, if someone has malaria, they will have to run all the place. They call the infectious disease department in order to deal with it. They do not know how to deal with it. I know that there is no malaria in Cuba. We need to train them to get use to the system and to our pattern and diseases and they can be working as normal doctors. Thankfully we have twenty graduates this year and we will have another twenty next year. We will have a lot of doctors who will provide the needed services in rural areas.

I must make it clear and this has been said few times by few speakers, not to go to them otherwise you die. This is not the right attitude to these doctors. We give them six to eight months and they will be suitable to work in Solomon Islands. I give the doctors and their families my full support and will give the training necessary to be able to work in Solomon Islands. After the six to eight months, they can do their internship and two years after that they can work as normal doctors.

These young doctors are not different from us but it is the system that is different. We have to give them the support and let them complete their training and there will be doctors just as good as any of us. It is more economical to give them six to eight months before they can join the workforce rather than sending another five or six doctors this year, and they will join us in six years time. We have doctors ready to work. We just train them to fit us.

I note in the Public Accounts Committee Report the lack of equipments. Yes, I must admit that we do have the necessary equipments at our hospital. In particular there was mentioned on the ECG machines, CT machines and MRI scan. We have ECGs at the hospital. CT scan is an x-ray which is better than just a normal plain x-ray. We are in our plan that together with the relocation of the hospital, we are looking into purchasing one CT scan. As you know, they are expensive machines. They are very good for diagnosis of diseases but they are not for treatment. We also need the human resources to man these very expensive machines.

The question of owning an MRI scan is out of the question. This is a very delicate machine. It shows better picture than the CT scan but it is very expensive, I do not think it is cost effective for us to own one.

It was mentioned by previous speakers on the issue of waiting time at the emergency. I must admit that we do not have the manpower to man that department. I am glad to say here and let the honourable house know that we have three doctors in their final stages in completing their specialist trainings in emergency medicine. They will be qualified by 2016. They will return and maybe we will post one in Honiara, one in Auki and one in Gizo but we are yet to decide. We have three ready to come back with specialist training in emergency medicine. 4.32 ..And I am happy to thank the Ministry of Forestry and the member for North West Guadalcanal for helping sponsoring one of these Doctors, who is completing his training and he will be here next year working in the emergency department.

Sir, may I turn your attention to few other issues highlighted in the Public Accounts committee relating to my island-the Rennell island. And this has caused me a lot of grief, stress, psychological disturbance regarding the mining issue in Rennell. And I thank you for member of Aoke/Langalanga for highlighting this issue during the PAC enquiry.

My homeland is being mined by investors and that officers in Ministries have knowingly let them mine. They did not follow the procedures and they know that correct procedures were not followed. I don't know this question has been answered by the officers themselves. In addition to this illegal mining activities in Rennell, one company is sending officers to reach other lands under five trustees. He came for two meetings and if we do stoning as a punishment, he would be stoned on the spot. There was a lot of opposition to this two meetings. But I am afraid to say, it may be the same as the mining leases how they were given. Eventhough they were opposed to it but some officers might continue and register this land under this five trustees.

I have shared this with the Minister of Finance that make sure this does not happen again. In my Island the things are done illegally and officer who is planning to involve in this registration, I strongly warn you not to do it. I as a member for Rennell/Bellona and a principal landowner oppose in the strongest term the illegal mining on my land and the registration under these five trustees. I hope the officers or whoever are involved in this are not put into positions where they will do this again to some other landowners. I must thank the Prime Minister and Ministers for his strong stand against this illegal mining. They are breaking our laws.

Before I resume my seat, let me mention again something about my Ministry, in the next five years we will focus on reducing maternal, child, and infant mortality rates. And increase coverage of good sanitation which is below the regional average. Reducing malaria and other vector borne diseases. And improving outbreaks like ziza, dengue and measles. And you all know this have affected us recently. Also

addressing the current non communicable disease epidemics, that is diabetes, malnutrition, high blood pressure and heart attacks.

My Ministry also support the private and public collaboration to reduce malnutrition and we do this by fortifying rice with flour with some micro nutrients. And this includes the work between DFAT, my Ministry and two private companies namely Solrice and Solomon flour. I must thank them for the input.

In addition to our mandate of improving health to all Solomon Islanders, my Ministry also strongly committed to stopping fraud and corruption in my Ministry. Some officers are in suspension because of this. And now if there is a little suspicion arising, we carry out investigation.

My ministry's overall aims are to increase to efficiency, efficacy, quality and equality in delivering the much needed health services to our people. We also aim at doing more with the decreasing budget allocation trend and improving our effective management of our human resources, both medical and ministerial level.

In conclusion, I reiterate the words by the Minister of Finance that this budget is responsible, credible, balance, sustainable and fully funded and forward looking and I call it a fair and friendly budget.

The problem of the DCC Government is to do the balance. Our job is to use this and help our people in rural Solomon Islands. With these few remarks, I resume my seat and I support the Bill.

*The House adjourned at 4.39pm*