

# Evaluation of Commonwealth Secretariat Support to Solomon Islands 2007/08-2012/13

March 2014



The Commonwealth



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EVALUATION SERIES No. 96

# Evaluation of Commonwealth Secretariat Support to Solomon Islands 2007/8-2012/13

March 2014



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# Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>ACP</b>	The African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
<b>AFD</b>	Asian Development Bank
<b>AIA</b>	Association of Internal Auditors
<b>APPTP</b>	Commonwealth Asia-Pacific Prosecutors Training Programme
<b>ARTEMIS</b>	Activity Results Tracking and Expenditure Management Information System
<b>AUSAID</b>	Australian Government Overseas Aids Programme
<b>BHC</b>	British High Commission
<b>CBA</b>	Cost-Benefit Analysis
<b>CFTC</b>	Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation
<b>CHOGM</b>	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
<b>CLMM</b>	Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting
<b>COG</b>	Commonwealth Observer Group
<b>COMSEC</b>	Commonwealth Secretariat Fund
<b>CPGF</b>	Commonwealth Pacific Governance Facility
<b>CPIS</b>	Commonwealth Pacific Island States
<b>CPPPN</b>	Commonwealth Pacific Public Procurement Network
<b>CROP</b>	Pacific Regional Government Agencies
<b>CS-DRMS</b>	Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System
<b>CS-SAS</b>	Commonwealth Secretariat Securities Auction System
<b>CYMM</b>	Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting
<b>CYP</b>	Commonwealth Youth Programme
<b>CYP Pacific</b>	CYP Pacific Centre
<b>DAC</b>	OECD's Development Assistance Committee
<b>DFID</b>	UK Department for International Development
<b>ECS</b>	Extended Continental Shelf
<b>EPA</b>	Economic Partnership Agreement
<b>ERE</b>	Environmental Resource Economist
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FATF</b>	Financial Action Task Force
<b>FIC</b>	Pacific Forum Island Country
<b>GIDD</b>	Governance and Institutional Development Division, Commonwealth Secretariat
<b>GYDN</b>	Governance, Development and Youth Networks
<b>ITC</b>	International Trade Centre
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goals



<b>MOFT</b>	Ministry of Finance and Treasury
<b>MSG</b>	Melanesian Spearhead Group
<b>MSME</b>	Micro, small and medium enterprises
<b>NCRA</b>	National Coalition for Reform and Advancement
<b>NDS</b>	National Development Strategy
<b>NHRAP</b>	National Action Plan on Human Rights
<b>NHRIs</b>	National Human Rights Institutions
<b>NZAID</b>	New Zealand Aid Programme
<b>PCP</b>	Primary Contact Point
<b>PHAMA</b>	Pacific Horticulture and Market Access project
<b>PIC</b>	Pacific Island Country
<b>PPA</b>	Pacific Prosecutors Association
<b>PPC</b>	Pacific Prosecutors Conference
<b>PIMS</b>	Project Information Management System
<b>PYDF</b>	Pacific Youth Development Framework
<b>OCO</b>	Oceania Customs Organisation
<b>OCTA</b>	Office of the Chief Trade Adviser
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PIMS</b>	Project Information Management System
<b>POC</b>	Points of Contact
<b>RAMSI</b>	The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
<b>RECCS</b>	Regional Economics of Climate Change
<b>SIG</b>	Solomon Islands Government
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium-size Enterprises
<b>SOLM</b>	Senior Officials of the Law Ministers meetings
<b>SPEITT</b>	Strengthening Pacific Economic Integration through Trade
<b>SPREP</b>	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
<b>TACOS</b>	Terms and Conditions of Services
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCTAD</b>	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UPR</b>	Universal Periodic Review Processes
<b>VRCs</b>	Voter Registration Centres
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organisation
<b>YESL</b>	Youth Enterprise and Sustainable Livelihoods
<b>YWET</b>	Youth Work Education and Training



# Executive Summary

This evaluation provides a report on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of Secretariat assistance to Solomon Islands during 2007/8-2012/13. The evaluation is one in a series of country evaluations being undertaken by the Secretariat. The choice of Solomon Islands was guided by several factors, which among others included the resources spent through various country, regional and pan-Commonwealth projects and the diversity of the project portfolio implemented in the country as well the presence of the Commonwealth Youth Programme for South Pacific and the Commonwealth Pacific Governance Facility in Honiara.

The evaluation is forward looking and, as well as assessing the impact and effectiveness of past assistance, seeks to identify lessons that can be drawn upon to improve the design and delivery of future Secretariat assistance to its members.

## Methodology and Approach

The evaluation took a phased approach to collect information for this study. The country projects were assessed according to the standard OECD DAC evaluation criteria covering relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Data was collected using a systemic review of reports and existing evidence. This was supplemented with primary research consisting of semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with Secretariat staff, senior officials from various ministries and departments and key stakeholders and beneficiaries engaged with the Secretariat projects during field visits to Honiara, Solomon Islands. Some of the stakeholders and long term consultants in the region who could not be contacted directly, were approached through a series of survey questionnaires and telephone discussions.

## Findings of the evaluation

Solomon Islands has long-benefited from Secretariat's assistance in support of the country's development objectives and continues to do so. Assistance is provided by the Secretariat from all three funds, - the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC), Commonwealth Secretariat Fund (COMSEC) and Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) Funds, with projects delivered at national, regional and pan-Commonwealth levels. Assistance is coordinated at the national level in consultation with the country's Primary Contact Point and through a network of Points of Contact in various line ministries. In addition, Solomon Islands in particular and the Pacific region in general also benefits from the assistance received through the CYP Pacific Centre and the Commonwealth Pacific Governance Facility (CPGF), both based in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

Over the five-year period 2007-2012, direct CFTC assistance to Solomon Islands in support of its national development agenda was valued at approximately £771,000. In addition to the direct CFTC assistance, Solomon Islands continued to benefit from the pan-Commonwealth programme of assistance, valued at £9 million per annum, as well as a substantive regional programme of assistance to the Pacific, notably through CPGF and CYP valued at approximately £4 million per annum. Through these programmes, the Secretariat continues to provide institutional strengthening and capacity building assistance, including the training of Solomon Islanders in priority areas of need.

## Relevance

The majority of the assistance to Solomon Islands during the evaluation period focussed on

the Secretariat's development goal *"to support pro-poor policies for economic growth and sustainable development in member countries"*, especially on the programmes on Public Sector Development and Economic Development. It also received assistance in the areas of promoting Democracy, Rule of Law, Human Rights and Human Development thereby contributing to the Secretariat's goal *"to support member countries to prevent or resolve conflicts, strengthen democratic practices and the rule of law, and enhance the protection of human rights"*.

The regional projects are contributing in assisting members, especially small and least developed countries, to manage risk and identify opportunities for environmentally sustainable economic development and pro-poor growth. Assistance under the Commonwealth Youth Programme was found to be highly valued and extremely relevant to supporting the Solomon Island Government's development goal to mainstream young people in every sphere of growth and development.

Overall the evaluation found that most of the projects that have been implemented in Solomon Islands were highly relevant to the country's development needs and priorities and conformed very well to the Commonwealth Secretariat's strategic plan priorities and results. The evaluation, however, noted that while being relevant, there was very limited understanding of what the Commonwealth is and does in the country and the region. Not many were aware of the diverse portfolio of work that the Secretariat has implemented in the country and how this work contributes to building capacity and strengthening institutions in Solomon Islands. The Secretariat needs to address the visibility issue perhaps by "re-introducing" the Commonwealth in the country and the region.

### Effectiveness

Most of the projects reviewed under this evaluation barring a few, did meet their output objectives and to some extent the outcome objectives and were found effective. This was widely recognised and

acknowledged by most of the stakeholders, who appreciated the support and the outputs resulting from the Secretariat's projects. However, it was difficult to show a direct correlation between the outputs and the project outcomes as described in the project logical frameworks. Beyond the outputs, the logical link to establish its contribution to outcome seemed too ambitious or farfetched. Much of this is attributed to the smaller size and short term nature of Secretariat intervention, which results in a great deal more emphasis on project activities and outputs rather than short and longer term outcomes.

The mode of service delivery, especially where training or networking events alone were used without adequate monitoring and follow-up support, had a compromising effect on the effectiveness of the projects. It was evident that unless these are part of a wider capacity building strategy and the higher level objective is kept in mind at the conceptualization stage of these interventions and followed upon, participation in these trainings and workshops will not yield desirable results. The coordination of the Secretariat's assistance to the country through the Primary Contact Point and the Point of Contacts continues to be another critical issue that has a bearing on the effectiveness of Secretariat assistance.

### Efficiency

Given the small size of projects implemented in Solomon Islands and the absence of integrated project monitoring mechanisms, it was very difficult to assess the quality and quantity of inputs and outcomes required to assess the actual efficiency of projects. Analysis of Secretariat's business model, however, that involves providing in-house expert advice to member countries appeared to be more cost efficient than hiring external experts as the Secretariat appointed consultants often operated at fees that were below the comparable market rates.

Apart from a handful of projects, the Secretariat has done very little to explore and develop

strategic partnerships with a large number of other regional and international development actors and bi-lateral donors present in the country and the region all of which are working towards similar goals of advancing economic growth and good governance in the Solomon's and the region. Secretariat should invest in exploring these partnerships to optimise its resources for maximum impact.

Commonwealth Youth Programme in the region has operated with a strong focus on building strategic partnerships with national, regional and international agencies. While being cost effective, this has yielded the desired results and increased the outreach and visibility of youth programme. Commonwealth Pacific Governance Facility on the other hand has very high operational costs and has grappled with finding its focus and niche. The presence of several regional and international organisations in the region who are in a much stronger position to advance the governance agenda appeared to be one of the reasons.

Some of the Secretariat's long term experts were found to leave their assignments mid-way, which not only affected the work flow but led to wastage of investment made in recruitment, relocation and establishment of these experts in the member countries. Secretariat's Terms and Conditions of Services for CFTC Experts, were cited as the reasons, as they are considered far below those of other comparable international and regional level organisations. This raises a question on recruitment and retention of qualified international experts by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

### Impact and Sustainability

Impact is the extent to which the work of the Secretariat has effected change- positive or negative- directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. While determining the impact of projects (with clear attribution) can be challenging owing to the complex political, social and economic nature of the development, it is further exacerbated by the size of short term small

projects implemented by the Secretariat, which usually tend to limit their scope to the activities and outputs, rarely extending to outcomes. The evaluation, however, did find that some of the Secretariat's work has been highly effective and has had a positive impact.

Several of the recommendations from the Commonwealth Election Observation Group to the National Parliamentary Elections of 2010 have now been implemented including the passing of the National Parliament Electoral Provisions (Amendment) Act 2013 to strengthen the voter registration process. The support to judiciary has reduced the backlog of civil cases by nearly twenty five percent and improved court efficiency improving the image of the judiciary. Institutional strengthening of the Internal Audit Bureau has led to a stronger, more accountable public sector which is under scrutiny by trained internal and external auditors.

Support in debt management has not only helped consolidate the debt portfolio in the region, but has had a positive impact among decision makers and raised the profile of the Secretariat in the region. Legal and technical assistance on maritime boundary delimitation has enabled Solomon Islands together with Papua New Guinea and Federated States of Micronesia to prepare and lodge a claim for over 602,000 square km of additional seabed area in the Ontong Java Plateau. Advice on re-opening of the Gold Ridge Mine has contributed to economic recovery of Solomon Islands and contributes to nearly 20 percent of country's GDP.

As the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are engaging in trade negotiations with the EU for an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and with Australia and New Zealand for a PACER Plus agreement, Secretariat's support to the Office of the Chief Trade Adviser (OCTA) and the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat are helping countries with a sound analytical basis to underpin the inputs that are being channelled into the negotiations.

CYP's support has led to the implementation of the Solomon Islands National Youth Policy and

nine Provincial Governments (out of ten) have increased their youth development budget.

Advocacy and initiatives in youth development and empowerment have not only promoted regional cooperation between governments, regional and national agencies, but have resulted in the development of Pacific Youth Development Framework and the Pacific Youth Employment Strategy. Sustained efforts from the CYP Pacific Centre have led to the revival of the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme in Solomon Islands after nearly 20 years and many young people are now benefitting from it. Professionalization of youth development work has led to Governments and national institutions giving greater recognition to the profession of youth work and qualified youth workers. Solomon Islands Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs, for example, now requires all their youth officers to have the Diploma in Youth Development Work. This is enhancing the opportunities for Pacific Islanders to contribute to youth development in the region.

While the Secretariat has been highly relevant to Solomon Islands and has led to some significant outcomes in a number of areas, the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of its work can be significantly improved if it is harmonised with the efforts of other development partners who are active in the country and region and are working towards similar goals. This may mean, in some cases, either expanding the Secretariat's work programme or working differently based on its comparative advantage. In some instances this would mean identifying strategic partners and collaborating or withdrawing completely from areas where others are well resourced and have an advantage over the Secretariat.

## Recommendations

### Cross cutting

**Recommendation 1:** The Secretariat should invest more time and resources in building staff capacity on good project design and management in line with results based

management philosophy and principles so that projects have clear, realistic, measurable and time bound outcomes and indicators supported by an integral project monitoring and evaluation Plan.

**Recommendation 2:** The Secretariat should identify opportunities and invest in raising the visibility and awareness of the Commonwealth, its comparative advantages and work so that it is relevant to a wider group of stakeholders and seen as a strong international player in supporting the country development goals and objectives.

**Recommendation 3:** As the Secretariat embarks on the implementation of its new Strategic Plan, it needs to immediately develop an organization wide capacity building strategy and seriously consider the implementation of the Training Evaluation Recommendations. This will bring value for money and increase the effectiveness and impact of its work.

**Recommendation 4:** It is recommended that all future Secretariat's assistance to the country is directed through the office of the Primary Contact Point (PCP). This will prevent any lost opportunities for collaboration and cost sharing as well as duplication of activities and promote a more coordinated approach to country assistance that demonstrates impact.

**Recommendation 5:** The Secretariat should explore strategic partnerships with other international development partners active in Solomon Islands to harmonise resources, build on each other's comparative advantages to get the maximum value for money. Possible partners include- AUSAID, NZAID, RAMSI, the European Commission, ADB, UNDP and the World Bank Group.

**Recommendation 6:** In order to be competitive and be able to retain high calibre international experts, the Commonwealth Secretariat should review the Terms and Conditions of Services (TACOS) for its CFTC Experts to align them with other similar Regional and International Organisations.

## Programme specific

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### **Recommendation 7:** Commonwealth

Secretariat should reconsider the value for money and viability of the Commonwealth Pacific Governance Facility (CPGF) in its current form. Consideration should be given to the placement of a Regional Adviser with the Governance Division of PIFS to support the Commonwealth governance agenda.

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### **Recommendation 8:** Given the huge demand

and past success, the Secretariat should reconsider its Regional Debt Adviser Programme. The Regional Adviser/ Long term expert could be placed in one of the Regional Institutions. While addressing the immediate needs, this would contribute to building sustained institutional capacity and also contribute to raising the profile of the Commonwealth in the Region.

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### **Recommendation 9:** The Secretariat should

undertake a critical review of its innovative Pacific Prosecutors Training Programme, especially the voluntary e-mentoring component so that it delivers the desired results. It should include structured monitoring and follow-up mechanisms in the programme design and budget with flexibility for additional capacity building and institutional support, if needed, so that the impact can be sustained.

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### **Recommendation 10:** Given the significant long

term potential for enhancing the economic prospects of Solomon Islands through delimitation of its maritime boundaries and exploitation of the natural resources from the extended continental shelf, the Secretariat should continue the legal and technical advice to the Government of Solomon Islands on maritime boundary and ocean governance.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Evaluations in the Commonwealth Secretariat's are designed to fulfil a number of key functions. As an instrument of accountability to member governments, they provide an objective assessment of the effectiveness in delivering results, the efficiency of implementation and the impact of Secretariat projects and programmes in member states; at the management level, they assist the management in making policy and planning decisions; at the programme level they guide decisions related to design and implementation of projects and activities; and finally they provide an opportunity to build on experiences to establish corporate lessons that can guide the future work of the Secretariat.

Over the years, greater focus of the evaluations in the Secretariat has been on thematic and regional reviews of programmes. In 2012, the Secretariat initiated a series of country evaluations to assess the relevance and impact of Secretariat assistance in a selection of member states. The idea is to assess the performance of the entire (as far as possible) Secretariat's portfolio of assistance in a particular country, across several sectors and programme areas over a given period of time.

This evaluation provides a report on the relevance and impact of Secretariat assistance to Solomon Islands during 2007/08-2012/13. The evaluation is one in the series of country evaluations being undertaken by the Secretariat. The choice of Solomon Islands was guided by several factors, which among others included the resources spent through various country, regional and pan-Commonwealth Projects, the diversity of the project portfolio implemented in the country and the presence of Commonwealth Flagship programmes- CPGF and CYP-SP- in Honiara.

The evaluation is forward looking and, as well as assessing the impact and effectiveness of past assistance, seeks to identify lessons that can be drawn upon to improve the design and delivery of future Secretariat assistance to its member states. The study aims to recommend any strategic and operational changes that may be required by the Secretariat to make the delivery more focussed, relevant and sustainable, specifically in light of the member country's national development priorities.

## 1.2 Methodology and Approach

The evaluation took a phased approach to collect information for this study. The country projects were assessed according to the standard OECD DAC evaluation criteria covering relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Data was collected using a systemic review of reports and existing evidence. This included rigorous analysis of project documents, which included the project design and planning documents from Project Information Management System (PIMS) and Activity Results Tracking and Expenditure Management Information System (ARTEMIS), project completion reports, back to office reports, consultant reports from projects, where applicable, and a review of recently concluded evaluation studies.

This was supplemented with primary research consisting of semi-structured in-depth interviews with the Secretariat staff involved with project operations in Solomon Islands. The findings of the evaluation were triangulated and validated by field visit to Solomon Islands to assess the results/impact of the Secretariat's interventions in Solomon Islands. During the field visit, semi-structured and focus group discussions were held with the Primary Contact

Point (PCP) and senior officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade, Points of Contacts (POCs) in various ministries and departments and key stakeholders and beneficiaries engaged with the Secretariat projects. Given the geographical landscape of the Pacific, some of the stakeholders and CFTC long term consultants in the region who could not be contacted directly were approached through a series of survey questionnaires, with follow up through telephone discussions.

The focus of the evaluation was to look at **Process and Relevance** (how the intervention was delivered and its relevance to country needs); **Effectiveness and Efficiency** (whether the projects achieved their set objectives and whether the benefits justified the costs); **Impact and Sustainability** (what the projects achieved that wouldn't have otherwise been achieved and to what extent that is sustainable).

### 1.3 Report Structure

The remainder of the report is structured as follows: Section 2 provides the country context that defines the Secretariat's programme of assistance. Section 3 provides an overview of Secretariat's assistance to Solomon Islands during the evaluation period and Section 4 discusses the evaluation findings. The final section analyses the findings, makes conclusions and suggests recommendations for the future work of the Secretariat.



## 2. Country context

### 2.0. General<sup>1</sup>

**Area:** 28,896km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 597,248 (July 2013 est. CIA Fact Book)

**Capital City:** Honiara (Population 72,000, 2009 CIA Fact book)

Party (PFP); Ownership, Unity, and Responsibility Party (OUR); Reform Democratic Party (RDP); Rural and Urban Political Party (RUPP); Solomon Islands Democratic Party (SIDP); Solomon Islands Liberal Party (SILP); Solomon Islands National Party (SINP); Solomon Islands Party for Rural Advancement (SIPRA); United Party

Figure 1: Location map of Solomon Islands



Source: <http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/oceania/sbnewz.gif>

**Ethnic Groups:** Melanesian 94.5%, Polynesian 3%, Micronesian 1.2%, other 1.1%, unspecified 0.2% (1999 census)

**Languages:** Melanesian pidgin (lingua franca in much of the country), English (official but spoken by only 1%-2% of the population), 120 indigenous languages

**Administrative Divisions:** 9 provinces Central, Choiseul, Guadalcanal, Isabel, Makira, Malaita, Rennell and Bellona, Western and Temotu, and 1 capital territory Honiara

**Major political parties:** Direct Development Party (DDP); Independent Democratic Party (IDP); People's Alliance Party (PAP); People's Congress Party (PCP); People's Federation

**Type of Government:** Parliamentary Democracy

**Head of State:** Queen ELIZABETH II (since 6 February 1952); represented by Governor General Sir Frank KABUI (since 7 July 2009)

**Head of Government:** Prime Minister Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo MP (since 16 November 2011)

**Cabinet:** Cabinet consists of 20 members appointed by the governor general on the advice of the prime minister from among the members of parliament Legislative Branch: Unicameral National Parliament (50 seats; members elected from single-member constituencies by popular vote to serve four-year terms). Last elections held on 4 August 2010 (next to be held in 2014)

1 www.cia.gov

## 2.1. Development Context

Despite an abundance of natural resources, Solomon Islands has faced ongoing development challenges since attaining its independence from the UK in 1978. Owing to its relatively small size, geographic isolation and exposure to natural disasters, the island archipelago's development has been constrained by many of the same inherent natural vulnerabilities faced by other Pacific neighbours. The bulk of the population remains dependent upon agriculture, fishing and forestry for at least part of its livelihood and most manufactured goods and petroleum products are imported.

In recent years, political stability has been hampered by civil unrest and ethnic tensions. In 2003, this led to the intervention of an Australian-led multinational force, the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI), to help restore peace. RAMSI's efforts to restore law and order and economic stability have been generally effective and this has led to improved economic performance. In 2010, the country achieved a historical earning of more than \$1 billion Solomon Islands Dollars (£86 million) in revenue. However, the economy remains heavily reliant on timber exports, which are declining, and much of the recent economic growth has been offset by population increase. This has raised pressure on infrastructure and employment, as well as growing environmental concerns for the islands' future sustainable development. The government therefore is working towards diversifying the economy.

With an estimated GDP per capita of US \$1,400, Solomon Islands is amongst the poorest countries in the Pacific. Social indicators are low and the provision of adequate social infrastructure and services, especially in rural areas, remains a challenge. Solomon Islands is highly dependent on overseas aid to deliver development results. Development assistance to Solomon Islands is not specifically pecuniary and much of it involves technical assistance for capacity building and capacity supplementation. Key development partners to Solomon Islands are noted in Annex 1.

## 2.2 Government Development Strategy<sup>2</sup>

Following general elections in December 2010, the National Coalition for Reform and Advancement (NCRA), developed its policy framework, *Building a new Solomon Islands in the 21st Century*, outlining a comprehensive programme of reform to be implemented over the coming four years.

The framework outlines several constitutional reforms, including the development of a Customary Land Institutionalisation Bill, to reform the customary land tenure system to help unlock the country's natural resources, as well as proposals for political and electoral reform. It also highlights economic reforms with proposals to shift the real economy away from its heavy reliance on the logging industry to the development of other sectors such as tourism, agriculture, fisheries and minerals. As a priority, it proposes to review the country's macro-economic framework and fiscal policy with the aim of reducing the key factors inhibiting growth in production and consumption. On fiscal policy, it seeks to address identified weaknesses in the areas of public sector reform, state owned enterprises, development planning, monetary and exchange rate policy.

This policy framework was further elaborated and incorporated into a National Development Strategy (NDS) for 2011–2020. Under its overarching theme, *To Build Better Lives for All Solomon Islanders*, the proposed NDS identifies two central focus areas: *Taking Better Care of the People*, and; *Improving the Livelihoods of the People*. The former is concerned with fulfilling social needs of the people such as better access to education and health care. The latter is about improving the economic benefits to the people through achieving higher economic growth rates, a diversified economy and the distribution of the benefits of development. An additional, underlining, focus area of the NDS is **Creating the Enabling Environment**, which covers areas such as Good Governance and Environmental Protection.

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2 CFTC Technical Cooperation Framework- Solomon Islands, 2011-13

SIG views an appropriate enabling environment as essential to achieving and fulfilling the wider objectives of the NDS. Furthermore, it recognises that good governance is underpinned by strengthened public sector performance and more efficient and effective public service mechanisms, without which there will be very little impetus for the private sector to develop and flourish.

In summary, the NDS has eight development objectives:

**1. Alleviating poverty:** Develop and implement programmes to alleviate poverty; improve equity in social service provision; manage the rate of population growth; and promote and foster national unity and sustainable peace.

**2. Supporting vulnerable groups:** Establish a social security system; support people with disabilities; provide food security; protect and develop the interests and rights of children; promote the development of youth; and improve gender equality and opportunities for women.

**3. Ensuring access to quality health care:** Provide quality health service, including by ensuring adequate supply of medicine; building and maintaining health infrastructure; and promoting healthy diets.

**4. Ensuring access to quality education:** Promote effective implementation of the National Education Action Plan and the Education Sector Framework; prepare and implement education infrastructure development plan; and ensure that the education and training systems develop skills required for the labour market.

**5. Increasing economic growth and equitably distributing employment:** support private sector led growth; increase opportunities for trade; increase opportunities for employment; develop economic growth centres; and promote sustainable use of natural resources.

**6. Developing physical infrastructure and utilities:** Improve water supply and sanitation; ensure availability and efficient use of energy; develop efficient and cost effective communication

services; develop air services and infrastructures; rehabilitate road infrastructure; and improve local transport services.

**7. Responding to climate change and managing the environment:** Mainstream climate change into national development planning; promote a holistic and sustainable approach to natural resources management; and develop measures to manage and reduce natural disaster risks.

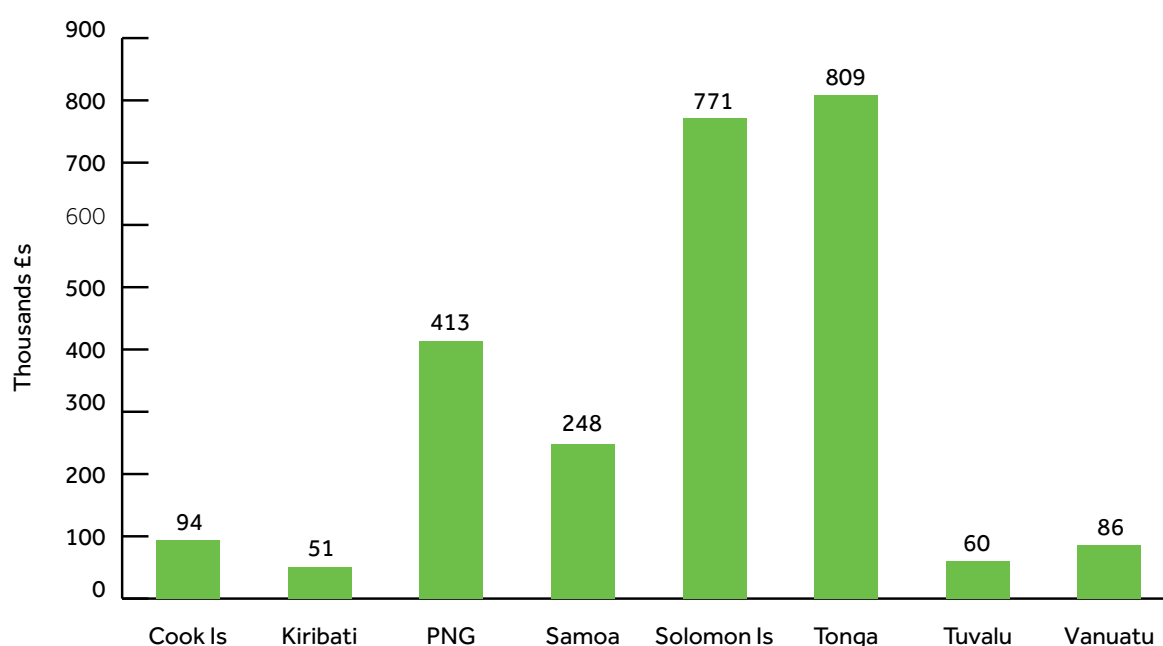
**8. Improving governance and law and order:** Improve standards of governance and service delivery by public servants; increase effectiveness, reliability, and efficiency of electoral processes; strengthen the provincial government; promote a safe, secure, and stable living environment; strengthen the capacity of legal system; and improve border security.

### 3. Overview of Secretariat's assistance to Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands has long-benefited from Secretariat assistance in support of the country's development objectives and continues to do so. Assistance is provided by the Secretariat from all three funds- the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC), Commonwealth Secretariat Fund (COMSEC) and Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) Funds, with projects delivered at national, regional and pan-Commonwealth levels. Assistance is coordinated

Over the five-year period 2007-2012, direct CFTC assistance to Solomon Islands in support of its national development agenda was valued at approximately £771,000 (Figure 3) and included: capacity building assistance to the Solomon Islands judiciary; institutional strengthening of the Solomon Islands Internal Audit Bureau; capacity building in election observation; support with preparations for the 2011 Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations Human Rights

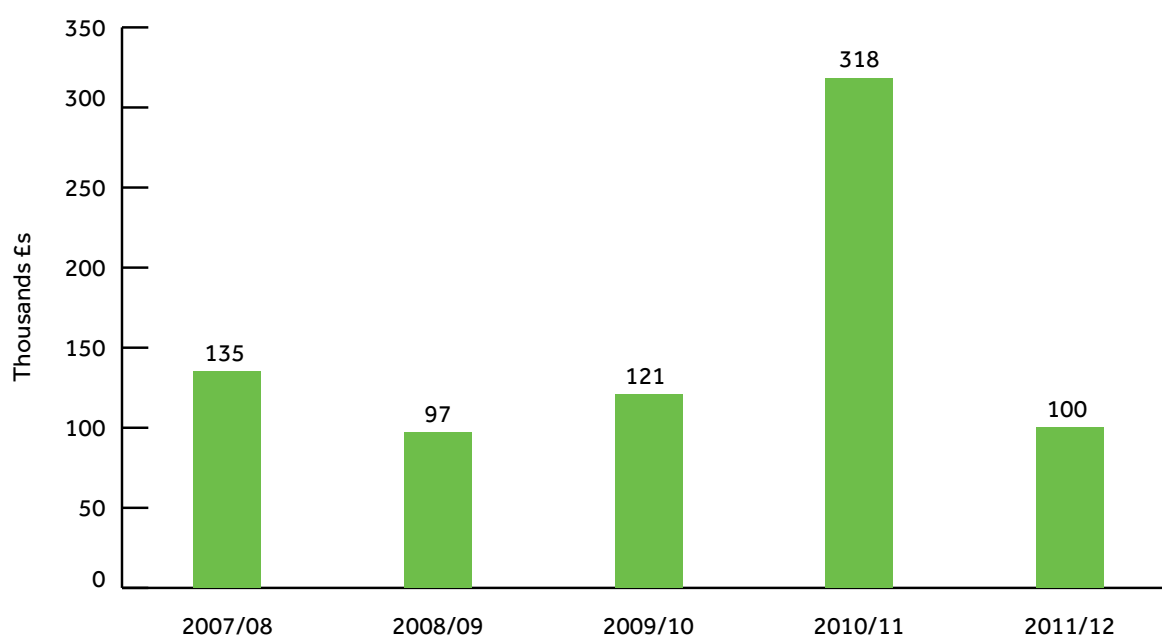
**Figure 2: The Secretariat's direct country assistance in the Pacific region (2007/08-2011/12)**



at the national level in consultation with the country's Primary Contact Point (PCP) and through a network of Points of Contact (POCs) in various line ministries. Within the Pacific region, over recent years Solomon Islands has been one of the largest recipient of Secretariat assistance after Tonga (Figure 2). This does not include assistance provided by the Secretariat through the regional and pan-Commonwealth programmes.

Council; and legal and technical assistance to support the re-opening of the Gold Ridge Mine in Guadalcanal and Solomon Islands' submissions to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

Figure 3: Value of the Secretariat's Assistance to Solomon Islands (2007/08-2011/12)



In addition, Solomon Islands continues to benefit from the pan-Commonwealth programme of assistance, valued at £9 million per annum, as well as a substantive regional programme of assistance to the Pacific. Through these programmes, the CFTC continues to provide institutional strengthening and capacity building assistance, including the training of Solomon Islanders in priority areas of need.

An important feature of the Pacific regional programme is the establishment of the Commonwealth Pacific Governance Facility (CPGF) in Honiara, Solomon Islands, launched in March 2010 as the Commonwealth's flagship programme in the region for promoting good governance in Pacific member countries.

Solomon Islands is also host to the Regional Office of the Commonwealth Youth Programme in the South Pacific. CYP, which was established by Commonwealth Heads of Government in 1973, advocates for the effective participation of young people in the development process and their full engagement at all levels of decision-making. The programme is financed by a special fund consisting of voluntary contributions from member governments to the tune of £3 million

per annum and is further supplemented by the Secretariat through projects and partnerships with other organisations and networks. CYP works to engage and empower young people aged 15-29 to enhance their contribution to development. The programme is implemented in partnership with young people, governments and other key stakeholders.

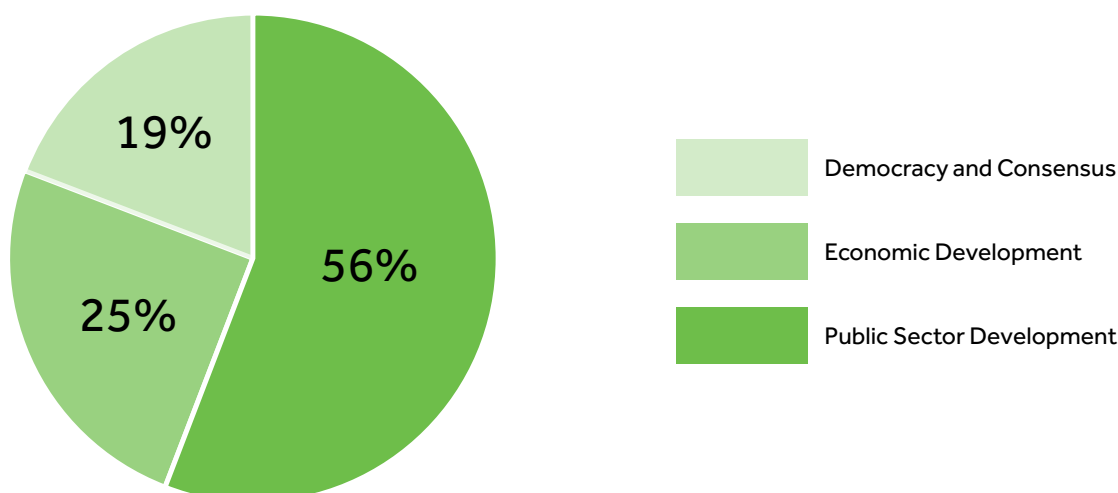
**Figure 4: Thematic Distribution of the Secretariat's Assistance to Solomon Islands (2007/08-2011/12)**

Figure 4 shows the thematic distribution of the Secretariat's assistance to Solomon Islands over the past five years. It is noteworthy that almost 56 percent of Secretariat assistance has been provided under the Governance and Institutional Development Programme followed by support on Economic Development, which constituted 25 percent of the total, and support to strengthen democracy and consensus building (19 percent). An overview of the Secretariat's assistance to Solomon Islands is provided in the next section of the report.

### 3.1 Overview of Assistance to Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands benefits from a broad programme of assistance from the CFTC, ComSec as well as CYP funds, with projects delivered at the national, regional and pan-Commonwealth levels. This section gives an overview of the assistance to Solomon Islands over the past six years.

#### National Projects

Direct assistance to Solomon Islands is being provided at the national level in the following areas:

##### Democracy

In 2010, following an invitation from the Solomon Islands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

External Trade, The Commonwealth Secretary General constituted an Observer Group for the Solomon Islands National Parliamentary Elections to observe the elections and present a report of their findings including conclusions and recommendations. The purpose of the observer team is to ensure that the democratic arrangements meet the Commonwealth and internationally accepted standards and assess the overall conduct of the electoral process and the environment in which the election is conducted.

##### Rule of Law

#### Strengthening the Administration of Justice

Technical assistance has been provided, through the placement of a Puisne Judge to the High Court, to improve the flow of cases to the court through improved processes including checking all civil and criminal papers filed at the Registry of the High Court, and strengthening the capacity of the judiciary. The assignment concluded in August 2012.

#### Public Sector Development

##### Institutional Strengthening of the Internal Audit Bureau, Ministry of Finance & Treasury

Assistance was provided to enhance the capacity of Solomon Islands' Internal Audit Bureau through the placement of an Internal

Audit Technical Adviser. The Adviser has helped in strengthening the Internal Audit Division to maximize its role and build the capacity of a core team of practitioners to be able to train other officials across government.

## Economic Development

### Maritime Boundary Delimitation

Legal and technical assistance was provided to Solomon Islands Government (SIG) concerning the delimitation of maritime boundaries with neighbouring countries and includes the preparation of submissions to the United Nations for areas of extended continental shelf. The purpose of this assistance was to position Solomon Islands to secure rights to areas of ocean space and thereby provide access to potentially lucrative marine resources including oil, gas, mineral deposits and fisheries.

### Assistance to Reopening the Gold Ridge Mine

Technical assistance has been provided to Solomon Islands on a range of legal, economic, environmental and social issues associated with the reopening of the Gold ridge mine in Guadalcanal. This has included the commissioning of an environmental and technical review of a proposal for the de-watering of a mine tailings dam, and a comprehensive review of the bankable feasibility study for the reopening of the mine which has been submitted to the SIG by the Australian-based mining company.

### Strengthening Debt and Cash Management

Solomon Islands continues to benefit from capacity building assistance in debt and cash management. The Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System (CS-DRMS 2000+) has been installed at the Central Bank of Solomon Islands and the Ministry of Finance, with training provided on the latest version of the software. SIG is also being assisted in managing the auctioning of treasury bills and bonds through the installation of the Commonwealth Secretariat Securities Auction System (CS-SAS) and the

provision of training to Central bank staff on the functionality of the system.

## Regional Projects

Solomon Islands is also benefitting from a number of regional projects being delivered in the Pacific.

## Rule of Law

### Strengthening Capacity and Networks of Prosecutors in the Pacific

In order to build the capacity and networks of prosecutors in the Pacific, Solomon Islands has benefited from a number of regional and pan-Commonwealth programmes under the Rule of Law Programme of the Secretariat. These included participation at the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Typologies Workshop and the Secretariat's Workshop on Addressing the Policy Gap in Proceeds of Crime and Investigating and Prosecuting Money Laundering (ML)/Financing of Terrorism (FT) in Busan, Korea. Solomon Islands also participated in the Secretariat's Pacific Judicial Forum on 'Corruption and Other Financial Crimes' to enhance the Capacity of Commonwealth Judiciaries to Adjudicate on Corruption, Money Laundering and other Financial Crimes, held in Sydney, Australia. Solomon Islands has also been a part of the Pacific Drafters' Technical Forum on Legislative Drafting, which was held in Canberra in 2009 in conjunction with the Australian Attorney General's Department. Two Senior Crown Counsel from the Solomon Islands' Attorney General's Chambers attended the Forum. In addition, it participated actively in the Pacific Seminar on Developing a Code of Conduct for Public Officials in Auckland, New Zealand in November 2011.

### Hosting the 4th Pacific Prosecutors Annual Conference (PPC) in 2012

Solomon Islands is a member of the Pacific Prosecutors Association (PPA), which was established in 2009, with the Secretariat being one of its supporters. The PPA meets annually



at the Pacific Prosecutors Conference (PPC). Solomon Islands participated in the 2011 Annual PPC in Vanuatu and in 2012 Solomon Islands hosted the PPC with support from the Secretariat. The PPC is held to discuss and examine relevant and current topics related to transnational crime and other related issues. The Secretariat has funded, facilitated and participated in all PPCs from 2009 onwards.

### Public Sector Development

#### Promoting Good Governance in the Pacific-Commonwealth Pacific Governance Facility

The Commonwealth Pacific Governance Facility (CPGF) was launched in March 2010 as the Commonwealth's flagship programme in the region for promoting good governance in Pacific member countries. The CPGF focuses on four thematic areas under governance:

1. Democratic institutions: to strengthen democratic Institutional frameworks, capacity and processes in accordance with national circumstances;
2. Anti-corruption institutions: to strengthen human resources and institutional capacity for combating corruption;
3. Information dissemination and accessibility: to promote open and transparent government through better dissemination of and access to information; and
4. Land management and development: to strengthen land management capacity, records management, filing and registration systems.

The Facility, based in Honiara, provides assistance on a request basis and is developing a regional project under each of the four thematic areas as informed by regional and national priorities.

#### Strengthening Public Institutions for Improved Service Delivery in the Pacific Region

This regional programme advances good governance by strengthening public institutional frameworks and enhancing human resource

capacity to deliver public services more effectively and efficiently. It is anticipated that Solomon Islands will benefit from various aspects of this programme, including:

1. Professional Development Programmes for Civil Servants: (a) Business Administration Programme: for nine months full-time, tenable at University of the South Pacific (USP), Suva, or 18 months part-time, tenable at the national USP extension centre; and (b) Community Development and Leadership Programme: provided by the Secretariat for Pacific Communities (SPC), Community and Education and Training Centre (CETC).
2. Pacific Village Site for Human Resource Managers. This project aims to develop national websites for communities of HR practitioners, and is facilitated by the national public service office/commission. Solomon Islands now has a national website.
3. Annual Consultative Meeting of Public Service Secretaries and Cabinet Secretaries.
4. Regional Human Resource Management Kit. Developed in response to the outcome of a meeting of public service secretaries and senior human resource officers in 2009. The Management Kit is tailored to the Pacific and intended to help guide officers in executing their role effectively.

### Economic Development

#### Debt Management Assistance to South Pacific Region

Assistance is being provided to strengthen debt management capacity through training in debt data quality and standards, debt restructuring and analysis, domestic debt management, portfolio review and strategy formulation. Institutional arrangements for debt management are also supported.

#### MSME Capacity Building Initiatives in the Pacific Region

This project supported the Community Education and Training Centre (CETC) in the



Pacific to develop a comprehensive and coherent strategy for strengthening its institutional and human capacity to deliver relevant regional MSME capacity building programmes.

### **Promoting Trade**

Assistance is being provided to increase trade in the region. A two part study is being conducted to identify: i) Means of improving intra-regional sea trade within the Commonwealth Pacific Island States (CPIS) and ii) Means of increasing the port operations efficiency of CPIS.

### **Strengthening Negotiating Capacity for a Comprehensive Trade Agreement in the Pacific (PACER+)**

Support is being provided to enhance the capacity of the Pacific Forum Island Countries (FICs) to effectively formulate negotiating positions and trade agreements. FICs are being assisted to successfully conclude PACER+ negotiations with Australia and New Zealand.

### **Strengthening Capacity on Trade Policy and Negotiations**

The Secretariat through the Hubs and Spokes Project has been supporting the Pacific Forum Secretariat and selected countries including Solomon Islands in the area of trade policy and negotiations. In addition it has recently provided a long-term expert at the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) to strengthen the capacity of the members of the MSG to effectively address regional and multilateral trade issues, including the conclusion of trade agreements that reflect their trade and development interests.

## **Environmentally Sustainable Development**

### **Technical Assistance Build Capacity and Respond to Climate Change in the Pacific**

The CFTC is supporting the Secretariat of the Pacific Environmental Programme (SPREP) through the provision of an Environmental Resource Economist to build strategic and technical capacity of the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) to develop and implement evidence

based climate change policies with emphasis on environmental resource economics.

## **Pan-Commonwealth Projects**

In addition to national and regional assistance, a significant proportion of Commonwealth Secretariat assistance is pan-Commonwealth in orientation and Solomon Islands continues to benefit from a variety of such projects. Examples include:

### **Enhancing Professional Development in Multi-grade Education and Development of Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders**

Technical assistance has been provided through a joint ComSec-Commonwealth of Learning (CoL) programme to reach multi-grade teachers not usually covered by the traditional teacher training methods, utilising open and distance learning platforms. Commonwealth Secretariat Modules on Multi-grade Teaching are being adapted to build teachers' capabilities to handle multi-grade teaching approaches.

The Secretariat has also supported the member country to contribute to the development of the Commonwealth Teachers and School Leaders' Professional Standards Framework which will provide a mechanism for the improvement of quality education and teaching and learning.

### **Promoting Human Rights Standards and Capacity Building in the Commonwealth**

In order to respect the protection and promotion of human rights in the Commonwealth, the Secretariat assists member countries to: improve the ratification and implementation of international human rights instruments; strengthen the capacity of key institutions to monitor and protect human rights; adopt and apply best practices, specifically on the development of integrated and comprehensive approaches to human rights; promote awareness of human rights and human rights dimensions of current issues; participate effectively in the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic

Review; and participate in and strengthen the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and regional networks of human rights institutions. Solomon Islands has been an active participant in several of these workshops and training programmes since 2007 especially on strengthening the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and capacity building on the Universal Periodic Review Processes (UPR).

### **Commonwealth Youth Programme**

Solomon Islands is host to the Regional Office of the Commonwealth Youth Programme in the Pacific. CYP which was established by Commonwealth Heads of Government in 1973, advocates for the effective participation of young people in the development process and their full engagement at all levels of decision-making. Solomon Islands has been an active participant in and benefits from a number of regional and pan-Commonwealth activities of the Youth Affairs Programme within the framework of its Youth Enterprise and Sustainable Livelihoods (YESL), Governance, Development and Youth Networks (GYDN) and Youth Work Education and Training (YWET) programmes.

## 4. Evaluation findings

This section discusses the evaluation findings from different projects implemented by the Secretariat in Solomon Islands during 2007/08-2012/13. This includes projects implemented by the Secretariat in the past as well as projects currently operational in the country.

### 4.1 Election Observation: Solomon Islands National Parliamentary Elections

In 2010, following an invitation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade, the Commonwealth Secretary General constituted a Commonwealth Observer Group (COG) to observe the Solomon Islands National Parliamentary Elections. The purpose of the group was to observe the preparations, conduct and the overall electoral environment and, where appropriate, make recommendations for the future strengthening of the electoral process in Solomon Islands.

The COG was led by Dr Arthur Donahoe QC, former Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (Canada), and comprised of eight members including Hon Taomati Iuta, MP, Speaker of Parliament (Kiribati), Eng Dr Badru Kiggundu, Chairperson, Electoral Commission of Uganda (Uganda), Ambassador James Aggrey-Orleans, Former High Commissioner to the United Kingdom (Ghana), Mr Chronox Manek, Chief Ombudsman (Papua New Guinea), Ms Rita Payne, Chairperson, Commonwealth Journalists Association- UK Branch (India), Mr Ahmed Fayaz Hassan, Vice-Chairperson, Electoral Commission (Maldives), Ms Andie Fong Toy, Former Director Political Security Programme, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (New Zealand) and Ms Shahreen Tilottoma, Regional Youth Caucus Representative, Commonwealth Youth Programme (Bangladesh).

The Group was supported by a four-person staff team from the Commonwealth Secretariat.

The COG acting impartially and independently with no executive role, observed and assessed the process as a whole, formed its judgement and submitted its report to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, who forwarded it to the Government of Solomon Islands, the National Electoral Commission of Solomon Islands and political parties, and eventually to all Commonwealth Governments.

The elections were described as peaceful and the group found that many of the key benchmarks for democratic elections were met, but recognised a number of issues that could be addressed to strengthen the electoral and democratic framework of the country. COG's main concern was regarding the accuracy of the voter register, the low level of participation by women in political and electoral processes, and allegations surrounding the use of money to influence voter behaviour.<sup>3</sup> Presenting the report following the elections, the Commonwealth Secretary General encouraged the Solomon Islands' authorities to consider positively the recommendations made by the group on measures which could help to strengthen the electoral and democratic framework of the country as it continues to review and reform its electoral and related laws.

Discussions at the Office of the National Electoral Commission of Solomon Islands reaffirmed the value the member governments place on the Commonwealth Election Observer Groups. It was noted that while the elections were observed by a number of other regional and international observer groups, the respect and value that was accorded to the COG and its recommendations is unparalleled. One of the main reasons quoted was the diversity and experience the COG brings

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<sup>3</sup> [http://thecommonwealth.org/document/229709/2010\\_solomon\\_islands\\_election\\_\\_\\_final\\_report.htm](http://thecommonwealth.org/document/229709/2010_solomon_islands_election___final_report.htm)

from all Commonwealth regions which leaves very little room for any bias in the election observation report.

The evaluation found that since the 2010 parliamentary elections several of the COG's recommendations have been implemented. In order to strengthen the voter registration process, the National Parliament Electoral Provisions (Amendment) Act 2013 (NPEP) was passed by the Parliament in March 2013. While there have been some issues linked to planning and budgeting, the use of biometric technology in voter registration process has been agreed and office of the Solomon Islands Election Commission has been mandated to undertake its next voter registration exercise using biometric technology by the end of 2013.

In 2012, to identify and assess the Voter Registration Centres (VRCs), the government launched a nationwide programme to assess and review all the polling places used in the 2010 general elections. The idea was to review the available VRCs and their suitability, identify alternate VRCs, review and re-establish fixed wards and constituency boundary lines and plot the VRCs on the maps and catchment areas. This was preceded with a massive recruitment drive of registration officers, managers, accountants, data operators and assistant registration officers and their training on the operational aspects of the new voter registration programme and its outcomes. A budget of SBD \$4.9 million has been assigned to streamline the voter registration on the Islands. It is anticipated that with this new approach to register voters, a significant change will be felt within the Solomon Islands electoral environment. It was recommended that the Secretariat should continue to provide this valued support to strengthen democratic processes, institutions and culture in Commonwealth countries.

## 4.2 Strengthening Administration and Justice

The Commonwealth Secretariat, since 2002, has provided assistance to Solomon Islands through

the placement of a Puisne Judge. The purpose of the assistance is to develop and strengthen the capacity of judiciary to effectively administer justice in the country. The placement of an external Judge was considered to be of critical importance by the Secretariat because of the fact that most of the cases had arisen from internal conflict and that some local judges might not in the best position to hear them owing to conflict of interest.

In addition to hearing the cases, it was envisaged that the Puisne Judge would also support the Chief Judge in judicial responsibilities; mentor and coach appropriately qualified judicial officials; identify appropriate professional development opportunities for the protégées; and work with the Government of the Solomon Islands and the CFTC to develop an appropriate professional training programme for senior local judicial officials with a view to transferring and building judicial skills.

The Secretariat responded with the recruitment and placement of Justice John Brown in Solomon Islands from 2002 to 2007. Towards the end of Justice Brown's contract, the Government of the Solomon Islands sought an extension which was rejected after consultation with the office of the Secretary General and Political Affairs Division on the basis that the project had reached a conclusive end after five years and there were insufficient funds in the CFTC to support the project. However, the request was revisited following a meeting between the Commonwealth DSG and the New Zealand and Australian High Commissions to continue support for the Solomon Islands High Court. It was felt that the technical assistance would further enhance security and peace and strengthen state structures.

In 2008, following consultations with the Government of Solomon Islands, Justice Nkem Izuako was appointed for a period of two years, however, after a year at post, Justice Izuako resigned due to personal circumstances. This was followed by the recruitment and placement of Justice David Chetwynd in 2009, who left the post in August 2012.

Discussions with Hon Chief Justice and the Registrar, High Court & Court of Appeal highlighted the value the Government of Solomon Islands accords to the Commonwealth Secretariat's support. Particular reference was made to the wealth of experience the expatriate Judges bring from other Commonwealth jurisdictions.

One of the key outcomes of this assistance, as highlighted during the discussions, has been the reduction in the backlog of civil cases by about 25%. Particular reduction has been observed in the number of cases that have been ongoing for several years. It was mentioned that there are very few cases now that are over 3-4 years old. A side-effect of the Puisne Judge placement has been the availability of extra judge hours for other judges, who could now concentrate on the criminal cases.

Particular reference was made to the work done by Justice Chetwand on updating the court records, which has contributed to the efficiency of court administration. As a result, the Registrar is now able to reasonably assess outstanding cases and those that are not accurately being pursued, and either identify and appropriate action or strike them off. The evaluation confirmed that the proactive case management approach adopted by some of the Puisne Judges has also contributed to improving court efficiency with more cases being properly prepared and heard. Lawyers are now also required to pursue cases beyond the interim order stage so that all issues are finally disposed. Accountability has increased as lawyers are now better prepared for hearings.

The evaluation found that an immediate outcome of the Puisne Judge placement is that access to justice has improved overall due to efficient court administration and proactive case management. It was mentioned that this has also improved the image of judiciary as more and more people are now showing confidence in the judiciary due to its ability to deal with cases in a timely manner, and this has been made possible because of the joint efforts of the Commonwealth Puisne Judges together with the leadership from the

Chief Justice (who has strongly promoted mediation and alternative dispute resolution), staff and officers of the national Judiciary who are continuously working to make the High Court more effective and efficient.

Given the availability of Judges in Solomon Islands, it can be stated with confidence that there will be a need for expatriate Judges in the island over the coming years. One of the reasons is the poor terms and conditions of service for High Court judges, which are even less attractive for judges in the lower courts, i.e. the Magistrates' courts, from where the pool of future judges is expected to come. Given the experience with Puisne Judges leaving their assignments midway, it was recommended that even the Commonwealth Secretariat should review the terms and conditions of service for its long-term experts, since a judge leaving before their term disrupts the entire system and processes and all the efforts to establish the incumbent in the country are also wasted. It was also noted that while the Puisne Judge is supposed to play multiple roles as envisaged in the TOR, in reality the main focus is clearing the backlog of cases. Future expatriate judges should play a more proactive role in knowledge and skills transfer, while also clearing the backlog of cases. This will contribute to sustainability of efforts and improve business and investor confidence in the judicial system through effective judicial processes and adoption of internationally required good practice in the administration of justice.

### 4.3 Strengthening Capacity and Networks of Prosecutors in the Pacific

In order to build the capacity and networks of prosecutors in the Pacific, Solomon Islands has benefited from a number of regional and pan-Commonwealth programmes under the Rule of Law Programme of the Secretariat. These have included participation at the Commonwealth Asia-Pacific Prosecutors Training Programme (APPTP) designed to build capacity within the prosecution departments under the overarching

theme of preventing transnational organised crime; participation at the FATF Typologies Workshop; and the Secretariat's Workshop on Addressing the Policy Gap in Proceeds of Crime and Investigating and Prosecuting Money Laundering (ML)/Financing of Terrorism (FT) in Busan, Korea. Solomon Islands also participated in the Secretariat's Pacific Judicial Forum on 'Corruption and Other Financial Crimes' to enhance the capacity of Commonwealth judiciaries to adjudicate on corruption, money laundering and other financial crimes, held in Sydney, Australia. Solomon Islands has also been a part of the Pacific Drafters' Technical Forum on Legislative Drafting, which was held in Canberra in 2009, and in conjunction with the Australian Attorney General's Department, two Senior Crown Counsel from the Solomon Islands' Attorney General's Chambers attended the forum. In addition, it participated actively in the Pacific Seminar on Developing a Code of Conduct for Public Officials in Auckland, New Zealand in November 2011.

Solomon Islands is a member of the Pacific Prosecutors Association (PPA), which was established in 2009, with the Secretariat being one of its supporters. The PPA meets annually at the Pacific Prosecutors Conference (PPC) to discuss and examine relevant and current topics related to transnational crime and other related issues. Solomon Islands participated at the 2011 Annual PPC in Vanuatu and hosted the 2012 Annual PPC with support from the Secretariat. The Secretariat has funded, facilitated and participated in all PPCs from 2009 onwards. In addition, Solomon Islands has regularly participated in the Commonwealth Law Ministers Meetings (CLMMs) and Senior Officials of the Law Ministers meetings (SOLM).

The evaluation found that the majority of the support to Solomon Islands in this area has been aimed to facilitate international cooperation in the prevention of crime and support capacity building to enhance the rule of law and the quality of criminal justice systems in the country. This has mainly been through participation in events and workshops organised by the Secretariat to address different and emerging thematic

issues from time to time. It was noted during the evaluation that participation in these events certainly raised awareness of new ideas and emerging trends (for example, in transnational crime, criminality and criminal justice, etc.) that need to be addressed to strengthen the rule of law. While these contributed to new knowledge, they also provided opportunity to develop networks and facilitated the exchange of knowledge between participants. However, it was noted that given the diversity of participants in these events (different country contexts) the course content, which is generally based on emerging global issues, seemed much more relevant to some than others depending on the country context. In fact, it was suggested that these workshops could have an even bigger impact if they were designed keeping in mind regional issues, needs and priorities, which differ considerably across the Commonwealth regions—especially related to evolving areas in addressing and preventing crime.

The participation of two senior Crown Prosecutors from Solomon Islands in the Asia Pacific Prosecutors Training Programme (APPTP) was seen as an important step towards sustained capacity building within the prosecution departments. The programme was first piloted in the Asia Pacific region in 2009 and had an eight week interactive web-based component, a four day intensive face to face seminar and a twelve month mentoring component which began at the completion of the training. The programme was generally received positively by the participants, who also made a number of suggestions for improvements. This programme template was subsequently improved upon and used in the East African regional training programme by the Secretariat in 2010-11. The training model was subsequently adopted by the University of Sydney to obtain AUSAID funding to run a similar training programme for countries in West Africa.

The evaluation found that while the methodology adopted has been recognised and perceived as an innovative model with all ingredients for sustainable capacity building, the evaluation could not find any evidence of how the training had an impact on improving or changing the



way criminal prosecutions are conducted. Discussions revealed that among others, this could be possible because of two reasons- the limited success of the mentoring element of the programme and lack of structured follow-up and monitoring mechanisms.

The mentoring component of the programme was a voluntary e-mentoring component with very limited Secretariat involvement. Participants were partnered with mentors and mentoring guidelines were provided. As this was voluntary and the ownership of making this work was left solely on the participants and their mentors, this only had limited success for various reasons, which among others included issues related to time commitment by mentors, coordination issues, poor response from mentors, discontinuation after few months, mismatch in expectations and at times lack of persuasion by the participants. Similar findings were also reported by the recently concluded evaluation of the Secretariat's support to member countries on criminal law. Suggestions were made that the Secretariat should critically review the e-mentoring component of the programme, so that this innovative aspect can yield desirable results.

The other important factor was linked to a lack of structured follow-up and monitoring mechanisms. One could argue that the Secretariat's regional programmes in the Pacific that unfolded after the pilot APPTP through the Pacific Prosecutors Association and Conferences as well as the regional judicial forums, were organised and/or supported by the Secretariat with the good intention of follow-up driven by the assumption that following the events the member countries would take ownership and continue their development to have a sustained impact. However, the evaluation found that besides building a network of prosecutors and convening them every year at their annual conference to share experience and knowledge, these have contributed little to sustaining the impact of the innovative APPTP, at least in Solomon Islands. Discussions also highlighted that this was perhaps due to little direct follow-up with the participants of these training

programmes and workshops, and in most cases different people attended different events. For the higher level events, the evaluation found this was otherwise, and only the DPP attended most of the senior level meetings and forums. However, being a small island state, at such higher levels sometimes the same person is engaged in and part of so many portfolios that efforts to sustain impact are not realised.

The Secretariat should undertake a critical review of its innovative Pacific Prosecutors Training Programme, especially the voluntary e-mentoring component so that it delivers the desired results. It should include structured monitoring and follow-up mechanisms in the programme design and budget with flexibility for additional capacity building and institutional support, if needed, so that the impact can be sustained.

#### 4.4 Institutional Strengthening of the Internal Audit Bureau, Ministry of Finance and Treasury

In 2009, the Government of Solomon's Islands requested technical support for strengthening their Internal Audit Bureau following a peer review of their Public Expenditure Management Systems through the Secretariat's 'Pyramids in the Valley'<sup>4</sup> initiative. The review highlighted recognition by

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4 Building Pyramids in the Valleys is a results oriented approach to build capacity of member countries on Public Expenditure Management pioneered by the Commonwealth Secretariat since 2007. It is an integrated approach to skills enhancement and knowledge transfer through communities of practice to deliver the CHOGM Mandate contained in the Aso Rock Declaration 2003. The mandate aims to transform public finance management systems in developing member countries. Pyramids symbolise skills, knowledge and best practice – it is also a symbol of enlightenment for ancient civilisations. Valleys are institutions in which pyramids must be built. The initiative is a little unconventional – it focuses on deepening technical assistance as well as broadening the scope of intervention in member countries and regions. This is achieved through two main communities of practice: the Thematic Fellowship and the Commonwealth Public Procurement Network (CPPN). The project focuses on creating platforms for professionals within the Commonwealth to intensify and facilitate the sharing of experience at low costs by twinning of institutions. These are done through experiential learning, counterpart shadowing, mentoring on the job, country exchanges, peer reviews, supporting and monitoring the implementation of country action plans.

the Government that effective internal control systems play a critical role in ensuring sound financial managements and good governance. It suggested that strengthening the Internal Audit Division of the ministry responsible for finance and economic policies in the government, the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MOFT), would be the most appropriate vehicle to ensure the effectiveness of internal control systems in the Government. It recognised the need for reform in the Internal Audit Division of MOFT and identified three main elements as critical in establishing a strong internal audit environment: (i) creating a strong Internal Audit Panel or Committee; (ii) institutional strengthening of the Internal Audit Division; and (iii) securing the support of a Technical Assistance to mentor its effectiveness.

In 2010 the Secretariat responded through the placement of a long term CFTC Internal Audit Technical Adviser within the Internal Audit Division of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MOFT) in Honiara, Solomon Islands. The purpose of the technical assistance was to improve financial governance, expenditure control and compliance within the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) through support for institutional strengthening of the Internal Audit Bureau. This meant strengthening the Bureau so as to maximise its role in providing independent assurance of the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control framework to accounting officers, by equipping them to be able to deter, detect, and investigate fraud and corruption in the government, as well as instil fiscal discipline and financial responsibility within the public domain. The project also involved building the capacity of a core team of practitioners in IAB to be able to train other officials across government.

The evaluation noted that during the 20 months the CFTC Internal Audit Technical Adviser was in post, she undertook a range of activities, including but not limited to training, mentoring, the establishment of a cadre of nearly 30 professional internal auditors for public sector internal auditors, building communication and relationships with strategic partners in the government, public sector, professional

bodies and civil societies, and designing and implementing an Internal Audit framework.

Discussions in the MOFT and the Auditor General's Office highlighted Solomon Islands Government's deep appreciation of the Secretariat for this support and the value it has brought. It was widely acknowledged that while the Technical Adviser left prior to completing her full tenure, the project was a huge success in its vision of *Building Pyramids in Valleys* by building proper internal auditing capabilities in the Solomon Islands Government and laid a good foundation for future sustainability of this capacity development initiative.

The MOFT now has a useable Public Sector Internal Audit framework in compliance with international standards for auditing, which meets the Solomon Islands Government SIG and donor requirements. This is supported by a Strategic Internal Audit Development Plan 2011-2014. The training and mentoring has led to the establishment of a cadre of nearly 30 professional internal auditors, many of whom have gained entry level membership to the Institute of Internal Auditors and are seeking to achieve their professional certifications. The Institute of Internal Auditors has now transitioned to the Association of Internal Auditors, Solomon Islands (AIA(SI)), which comprises of members from both Government and state owned enterprises.

Discussions highlighted that while the project built the capacity of internal auditors to a professional level, there is now a community and public sector recognition of the profession and its role in public financial accountability and anti-corruption. The roll on effect of improved public sector financial and operating systems has been that now there is greater public confidence that action will be taken against corrupt public officials. This was evidenced in 2011 when several corrupt public servants were investigated and removed from duty as a direct result of internal auditing. During the same year, the misuse of thousands of dollars of public funds was prevented due to intervention and investigation by internal auditors of corrupt procurement practices. All this has inspired other ministries and state-owned



enterprises to establish Internal Audit Offices and positions. At the time of this evaluation, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Medical Services and Ministry of Provincial Government had also established Internal Audit Offices. Discussions with the Auditor General highlighted that there has been a significant increase in the number of audit reports issued to government entities for improving internal controls over public funds and as a result of the enhanced capacity the auditors are now undertaking risk based audits in contrast to conventional compliance based audits. Overall result is a stronger, more accountable public sector which is under scrutiny by trained internal and external auditors.

The evaluation noted that one of the reasons the technical expert left the position before her tenure was the Secretariat's Terms and Conditions of Services for CFTC Experts, which were cited as far below those of other comparable international and regional level organisations. The same Technical Adviser is now returning to Solomon Islands, however this time on better TACOS with another donor organisation supporting another bi-lateral development programme. While one can argue, that this could be seen as a handover of the support to a regionally active bi-lateral donor, however it raises a question on recruitment and retention of qualified international experts by the Commonwealth Secretariat. The resignation of CFTC funded Puisne Judge is another example.

In order to be competitive and be able to retain high calibre international experts, the Commonwealth Secretariat should review the Terms and Conditions of Services (TACOS) for its CFTC Experts to align them with other similar Regional and International Organisations.

#### 4.5 Promoting Good Governance in the Pacific (CPGF)

The Commonwealth Pacific Governance Facility (CPGF) was formally launched by the Secretariat in 2009 in Honiara, Solomon Islands after nearly eight years of deliberations on the development needs in the Pacific region and Commonwealth

comparative advantage and how a proactive engagement could raise the Commonwealth's visibility in the region.

In 2005 at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in PNG, the leaders endorsed the Pacific Plan around four key pillars- economic growth; sustainable development; good governance; and security. Each pillar represented in many respects the key areas (and challenges) that the Pacific as a region must work to address if it wanted to raise living standards, increase access to opportunities and stimulate pro-poor growth for peoples of the Pacific. While the Pacific Plan proposed a regional response to the challenges that Pacific Island countries face, it did not promote a 'one-size-fits-all' model of regional cooperation, nor did it work to limit the ability of countries in the region to pursue their own nationally based policies.

Following this meeting, the Secretariat decided that the Commonwealth support to the region will draw upon the endorsed Pacific Plan and focus on the implementation of the 'good governance' pillar. It was felt that 'good governance' is not only in line with the Commonwealth's strategic focus, but it is an area where the Commonwealth has a comparative advantage and could provide helpful and leveraging interventions.

Following number of consultative discussions within the Secretariat, in-country and regional design consultations, internal and external reviews between 2005 and 2009, the program steering committee approved the Commonwealth Pacific Governance Facility (CPGF) Framework for implementation in June 2009. The Facility was designed around four governance pillars- democratic institutions; Anti-corruption; Access to public information and; land tenure and development- with the goal to contribute to improving governance in the Pacific, explicitly recognising the link between improved governance, sustainable development and effective poverty reduction. The purpose of the program is to promote good governance in areas of strength and mutual interest to the Commonwealth and the Pacific Forum and its member governments.

The CPGF is implemented in partnership with PIFS as the coordinating regional organisation for the implementation of the Pacific Plan and represents an important Pacific-based presence for the Commonwealth and an enhanced component of its program of assistance to the Pacific Island countries over four years, building upon the Commonwealth's broader governance assistance programs in the region.

The evaluation found that since its launch in 2010, the progress of the CPGF has been very slow and results can best be described as limited. While the Facility, using its two pronged approach, has implemented some short term projects in Tonga, Niue and Samoa (which have been commended by the receiving governments and have had some impact), it has had very limited success in developing long term sustainable regional assistance projects. The Facility, which started with a very ambitious agenda (objectives), has in its first three years grappled with finding its focus and niche area based on Commonwealth comparative advantage. Following a desk review of CPGF in January 2012, a regional consultation with key stakeholders in February 2012 and subsequent Mid Term Review in May 2012, the Facility now focuses on three key interventions in its two pillars out of the original four pillars. The Facility has had its own management and coordination challenges, which have been well documented in the above reviews.

At the moment, within the democracy pillar, the Facility has completed the "Political Integrity Preparatory Phase", which included nationwide consultations on political integrity and stability in the Solomon Islands in partnership with the Solomon Islands Government and the British High Commission and the report has been submitted to the Government. At the time of this evaluation, the report is due for discussion in the Cabinet and if approved, will lead to the implementation phase of the project. The Commonwealth Secretariat certainly has a comparative advantage in this area, and should continue its work in this area. This was evident from the discussions with UNDP and the British High Commission, however this did not come out strongly at the meeting with the Secretary

to the Prime Minister. Probably the recent developments at CPGF internal structure have a role in this development. The Secretariat needs to carefully define its role in the next phase, if there is a Cabinet decision to take this forward.

With regards to other interventions of CPGF, there has been very limited progress. Within the democracy pillar, CPGF has been implementing activities related to 'Civic education for parliamentarians and the youth' in partnership with CYP and a number of regional and international organisations; and within the framework of its Anti-Corruption pillar, CPGF has been working on establishing and formalising a regional public procurement professional agency the Commonwealth Pacific Public Procurement Network (CPPPN) for increased regional coordination and information sharing.

From operational perspective, CPGF is implemented with an established office consisting of a Director, Programme Coordinator, Office/Finance Manager and an Administrative Assistant with operational costs of running the office in Honiara. From the Secretariat in London, CPGF further receives support from the Governance Adviser (Pacific) and a Programme Officer under the overall guidance of the director of GIDD.

While, against the original objective and mandate of CPGF, one can justify the need for an independent office in the region, although the need for an entirely different set-up for CPGF when the Secretariat already had an established Pacific Centre in Honiara can still be argued from cost optimisation and efficiency perspectives as there was a clear opportunity where most of the office services including financial management and administration could have been just strengthened and cost-shared with the existing CYP setup.

Given the current focus of the programme, its limited interventions based on its comparative advantage, it is time that Secretariat looks at the efficiency of implementing CPGF. Does it really need an independent office? Does it really need a Director, a Programme Coordinator and supporting staff to implement just few activities?

OR Is one Governance Adviser (based in HQ or in the Region) not enough?

The Secretariat should seriously think about the future of CPGF and its value for money and reconsider the viability of CPGF in its current form.

## 4.6 Strengthening Debt and Cash Management

The Commonwealth Secretariat has been providing assistance in the area of public debt management to the Solomon Islands since the early 1990s. The Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management Software (CS-DRMS) was installed in 1989 and is used by the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MOFT) and the Central Bank of Solomon Islands (CBSI) for recording and managing debt data. The Ministry of Finance is the primary owner of public debt database and actively use the software to build external debt database and generate reports. The Central Bank of the Solomon Islands is actively using the software to maintain domestic debt database, primarily the Treasury bill. Since installation the necessary support and training on the system has been provided by the Secretariat.

Over the years, the Secretariat has employed various methods to provide the support and training to the country, either through country specific assistance or through regional and pan-Commonwealth programmes and workshops. Mainly the support has been through country and regional trainings, country missions, and during 2005-2008 through the use of Regional Advisers. The regional advisers programme (RA) placed debt experts in the regions who were deployed to quickly address issues relating to public debt management or CS-DRMS. The pilot programme proved to be widely popular by users of CS-DRMS, but came to an end in 2008 as was originally planned.

However, following huge demand by member countries to resume the programme, the Secretariat is still considering the possibility of its re-introduction. To establish the need, the Secretariat, in 2011, conducted a survey to

identify the specific areas where countries in the region needed debt management support.

The overall feedback on this survey from the Solomon Islands was to focus on policy advice and capacity building. While, the re-introduction of the programme continues to be discussed, the evaluation found that the Secretariat has used the outcomes from the survey to focus its support to countries in the region through its in-house Regional Advisers.

Discussions at both, the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MOFT) and the Central Bank of Solomon Islands (CBSI) recognised how useful Secretariat's assistance has been in planning and managing debt in the country. Particular reference was made to the trainings provided and their usefulness and prompt response and resolution of issues and problems with CS-DRMS.

It was mentioned that in 2011, the Ministry of Finance requested Secretariat's assistance with the implementation of multi-currency multi-tranche Loans from the ADB in the CS-DRMS. This was responded by the Secretariat with the placement of an experienced user of CS-DRMS from the National Treasury, Papua New Guinea to implement the loans in the CS-DRMS and train Debt Managers in the Solomon Islands on implementing this category of loans in the system. Discussions revealed that while this was successfully done for all loans where the relevant information was readily available or could be obtained when the expert was in country, it was not completed for the loans which did not have all the required information to enable their implementation. The evaluation noted that while the MOFT now has the required information from the ADB, the capacity to implement the loan in-house still does not exist. Requests have been made to the Secretariat by the MOFT Debt office since 2012 for the return of the expert from PNG to complete the remaining work, however this still remains pending. It was highlighted that this remains an important area of concern and if this can be facilitated soon.

The evaluation noted that the Central Bank of Solomon Islands is the only other site in the Pacific besides Central Bank of Samoa that

currently use the Commonwealth Secretariat Securities Auction System (CS-SAS) to conduct Treasury bills auctions. A number of officials from both the Ministry of Finance have been granted the opportunity through in-country hands on training on CS-DRMS and CS-SAS to enable them use the systems effectively. Additional training on the two systems has been provided to the Debt Managers from the Solomon Islands through invitation to regional workshops, with the most recent being in June 2012 in Sydney, Australia. Both the MOFT and Central Bank sent participants to the Sydney workshop at which the participants were also trained on developing Debt Statistics Bulletin to facilitate dissemination of data on public debt. It was mentioned that the trainings have been extremely useful and skills are now being used for publishing a regular Debt Bulletin for the country.

Overall the evaluation found that Solomon Islands has a very basic debt portfolio and the Secretariat's support has been very effective and has had a positive impact in managing, recording, forecasting, monitoring and reporting country's debt. The Regional Adviser Programme was a huge success and raised the profile of the Secretariat in the region. While more frequent support was available through this programme, it also helped consolidate the debt portfolio in the region, raised awareness among decision makers and had a positive impact among decision makers.

Given the huge demand and past success, the Secretariat should reconsider its Regional Adviser Programme. The Regional Adviser/ Long term expert could be placed in one of the Regional Institutions. While addressing the immediate needs, this would contribute to building sustained institutional capacity and also contribute to raising the profile of the Commonwealth in the Region.

## 4.8 Maritime Boundary Delimitation

In 2007, the Government of Solomon Islands requested Secretariat's assistance in preparing

submissions to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf ('the Commission') concerning the outer limits of the Solomon Island's continental shelf. It is a mandatory requirement that a State seeking to claim extended areas of continental shelf makes a submission to the Commission.

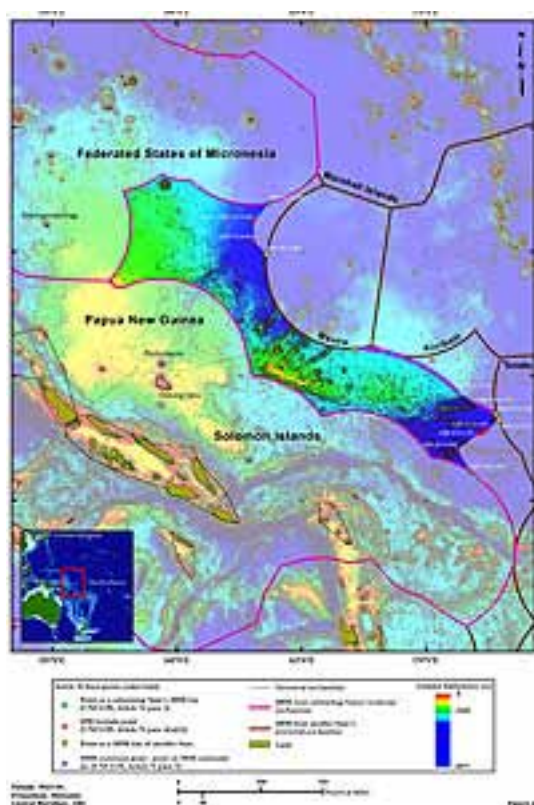
Legal and Technical assistance was provided by the Secretariat, through its in-house legal expertise as well as with the engagement of scientific and technical experts on the delimitation of maritime boundaries and the preparation of submissions to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf concerning the outer limits of the continental shelf of the Solomon Islands.

Work carried out under this project has resulted in the revision of national maritime boundaries legislation in the Solomon Islands (completed in May 2009), the lodgement of a Joint Submission by the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Federated States of Micronesia concerning the Ontong Java Plateau region (lodged May 2009, formally presented before the Commission in March 2010). Through the submission, which was made on 5 May 2009 pursuant to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the three countries jointly claimed an additional 602,000 square kilometre of continental shelf in an area called the Ontong Java Plateau. It also represented the only submission to have been made by three small island states anywhere in the world and the first joint submission that came from the Pacific region.

The Law of the Sea Convention is a multilateral treaty that establishes a framework of rules and principles to govern all ocean space. The Convention has been ratified by more than 160 countries, including some 47 Commonwealth member countries.

Discussions at the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification highlighted the importance of this work and value member States attach to the assistance provided by the Secretariat. It was mentioned that it was because of the sustained efforts and the convening power of the

Secretariat this joint submission involving three States was made possible. From the regional perspective, it was mentioned, this showed what the Pacific Island countries could achieve through dedication, commitment and cooperation. This is further corroborated in the remarks by the Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations, HE Ambassador Robert Aisi, who in his opening address to the UN Commission, said: "The making of the joint submission stands as a testament to the shared commitment to the Convention and underscores the importance of the continental shelf process to small island and developing coastal States." He continued: "This process forms part of the fabric upon which we seek to secure long term improvements to the livelihood of current and future generations of our people."



The project has been seen as a good example of collaboration and sustained regional effort, and together with the Secretariat and the Government of Solomon Islands, involved the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission, UNEP Grid-Arendal, Geoscience Australia, AusAid, Geolimits and the National Oceanography Centre based in Southampton, UK.

The evaluation noted that the Government expects that the Secretariat would continue to provide legal and technical advice for the defense of the submission, which is due next year and support the preparation of the submission concerning the Mussau Ridge and a couple more that are currently being discussed within the Government. It noted that a paper concerning the Review of the Continental Shelf and Maritime Boundary Legislation is currently under review and may be submitted to the Cabinet in near future.

Discussions also highlighted the benefits this and other submissions will bring to the Solomon Islands economy. Solomon Islands is one of the largest archipelagos in the South Pacific and benefits from an extensive maritime jurisdiction and the exclusive rights to explore and exploit the natural and living resources of the water column and the continental shelf that flows from such jurisdiction under the Convention. For example, the exploitation of fisheries already accounts for approximately 18% of its GDP.

The more significant and long-term potential for enhancing the economic prospects of the country lies however in the exploitation of the natural resources of the continental shelf, such as oil, gas and mineral deposits and, potentially, in harvesting of genetic resources and employing renewable energy sources. As technology advances, the practical and economic viability for exploring and exploiting these resources in deeper and more remote waters increases. Indeed, companies are now looking for opportunities to carry out seabed mining and oil and gas exploration and exploitation in new areas and in respect of known mineral deposits and oil and gas resources that were previously considered uneconomic.

It was clear that the Government of the Solomon Islands is aware of these developments, and of the potential long-term economic benefits to the country of offshore oil, gas and minerals exploitation. The Government is keen therefore to confirm its offshore jurisdictional limits and provide a secure basis for the conduct of exploration and exploitation activities.



The establishment of the outer limits of the continental shelf through the making of this submissions to the Commission is a crucial step in this process and offers the real prospect of significantly increasing the continental shelf jurisdiction of the country, thereby opening up new areas for exploration and exploitation.

The Secretariat should continue the legal and technical advice to the Government of Solomon Islands on Maritime Boundary Delimitation and Ocean Governance.

## 4.9 Reopening the Gold Ridge Mine

The Secretariat, has since the 1990s provided support to the Government of Solomon Islands on the launch and re-opening of the Gold Ridge Mine in Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. In the 90s it assisted with the negotiation and conclusion of the agreement under which the Gold Ridge Mine was first launched. The mine was however ransacked and shut down during a violent period of civil unrest in the late 1990s.

Gold Ridge was the first medium-scale mining operation in Solomon Islands, commencing production in 1998. Prior to its closure in 2000 due to civil unrest, the Gold Ridge Mine generated approximately 30 per cent of the country's gross domestic product.

In 2005, a mining investor, Australian Solomon's Gold took over the lease to operate Gold Ridge, with a view to overhauling and re-opening the mine. The re-opening of the Gold Ridge Mine was a key element of the Government's post-conflict strategy for restoring economic growth and making progress towards sustainable development and poverty reduction. However, the Government was constrained with the very limited legal or technical expertise in the management of the mining sector in the country. In 2006 the Government once again requested the assistance from the Secretariat to review proposals from the mining company for the re-opening of the Gold Ridge Mine.

The Secretariat, assisted the Government to evaluate a proposal by the mining investor to dewater the existing Gold Ridge Mine tailings pond, as part of the preparations for re-opening the mine. A report setting out comments and recommendations regarding the dewatering proposal, which had been prepared by a leading international mining consultancy was provided to the Government in November 2006. A further report was provided to the Government in May 2007, following the preparation by the mining investor of a revised dewatering proposal.

To support with the re-opening, the Secretariat in August 2007, engaged the services of an Australian mining consultancy to undertake a comprehensive review of a bankable feasibility study for the re-opening of the Gold Ridge mine, which was prepared by the mining investor in July 2007. The feasibility study outlined the company's plans for the financing and operation of the mine (including environmental and social matters), and provided the basis upon which the Government must decide whether to approve the commencement of operations at the mine.

Following the external experts report and the mining investor's response and Secretariat's advice on legal, economic, environmental and social issues associated with the reopening of the mine, the Government gave approval for the mining project to proceed. The dewatering of the tailings pond was commenced in accordance with Secretariat's recommendations in early 2008 and the production from the Gold-Ridge Mine re-commenced in 2010. In March 2010, Allied Gold acquired the rights to the Gold-Ridge Mine from ASG and announced a 150 million AUD refurbishment and redevelopment program. A company called St Barbara subsequently acquired Allied Gold in September 2012.

During discussions at the Ministry of Mines, the contribution of the Secretariat to assist with the reopening of the mine was highly appreciated. The evaluation was informed that while there are sporadic tensions between the mining company and the local communities from time to time, the re-opening of the mine has been a significant

step in the economic recovery of Solomon Islands. It was mentioned that Government is at the moment considering a revision of its mining legislation. The evaluation noted that the Gold Ridge mine is the only operating mine in the Solomon Islands at this time, and currently contributes approximately 20% of the Gross Domestic Product of the Solomon Islands economy and to this end the Secretariat's has made a significant contribution.

#### 4.10 Strengthening Negotiating Capacity for a Comprehensive Trade Agreement in the Pacific (PACER+)

The Commonwealth Secretariat is providing assistance to the Office of the Chief Trade Adviser (OCTA) through the placement of one Economic and one Legal Adviser to enhance the capacity of the thirteen Pacific Forum Island Countries (FICs) in their PACER Plus negotiations with Australia and New Zealand and build the institutional capacity of the OCTA to be able to continuously provide trade support and coordination to the PIF countries. Specifically the project focuses on providing independent economic and legal expertise on issues ranging from analysis, advice, negotiation and training required to advance the progress on PACER Plus negotiations.

The Solomon Islands are one of the thirteen FICs participating in these negotiations. The Solomon Islands have been a crucial and vocal supporter of the OCTA and currently holds the position of chair of the OCTA Governing Board.

The FICs are committed to negotiating a PACER Plus Agreement with Australia and New Zealand which will go beyond a traditional free trade agreement, and will also cover labour mobility and development assistance. As such, its successful conclusion can be seen as vital for the economic well-being of the FICs.

The evaluation noted that by the placement of two CFTC advisers, as well as funding special

activities such as the workshop on Trade Policy Analysis and Trade Negotiations in February 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat's support has enabled the OCTA to operate at a much higher level than would otherwise be the case. The OCTA is a small regional institution, headed by the Chief Trade Adviser, 3 advisers (of which two are funded by the Secretariat), 2 officers and administrative staff. OCTA's office operations are largely funded by the Australian and New Zealand governments. In the past, World Bank has supported a workshop on Labour Mobility which was convened by the OCTA.

Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are constrained by weak institutional capacity, impinging on the delivery of governance to a level consonant with international best practices. Secretariat's support, which cuts across a broad range of thematic areas, including support to the judiciary, governance, trade promotion, trade negotiations, is enabling the PICs to strengthen institutions and build the capacity of officials. The Secretariat has supported the PICs in the formulation of an Aid for Trade Strategy, aimed at providing an integrated framework for the identification and prioritisation of Aid for Trade needs in the Pacific. In doing so, one of the expectation is that enhanced donor coordination will be achieved to address these issues in future.

The evaluation noted that there are several other development partners that are active in supporting this area of work. The European Union through the European Development Fund- under which funding is allocated to focal areas identified and prioritised by PICs- supports national and regional level projects within the framework, such as the Strengthening Pacific Economic Integration through Trade (SPEITT), and the Pacific Integration Technical Assistance Programme (PITAP). The European Union also provides project funding to the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO), under the EDF funding envelope, which enables the OCO to undertake work on trade facilitation in the PICs. Funding is also provided to the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the South Pacific Environmental Programme (SPREP), which has

facilitated the delivery of various activities by the respective organisations in the PICs.

AusAid provides extensive support in the region, including support to Aid for Trade activities in the PICs. Although most of the support is provided through bilateral frameworks with PIC, some are provided through existing regional institutions, such as the OCO, the Office of the Chief Trade Adviser (OCTA), and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. AusAid also provides project-based assistance with a multi-country focus under the Pacific Horticulture and Market Access project (PHAMA), aimed at assisting PICs overcome the regulatory and bio-security measures hindering the entry of their products into Australian and New Zealand market. The PHAMA has facilitated market access for agricultural produce of beneficiary countries into Australia and New Zealand by assisting them to meet the biosecurity constraints.

AusAid has also been involved in institutional capacity building in various PICs, and in particular, the Solomon Islands, where it places advisers in various government departments to strengthen the capacity of domestic institutions. A similar trend is observable in other PICs where Advisers are placed in key government institutions such as Central Banks, Customs Administration, regulatory bodies, Ministries of Finance, Trade etc. The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade also provides similar support in various PICs.

The World Bank provides targeted support in the area of improving the business environment, by conducting targeted analysis of the regulatory regimes in some PICs, and providing recommendations on reforms. Some PICs have implemented such recommended reform programmes and have recorded marked improvements in the World Bank rankings of the ease of doing business.

The evaluation noted that the nature of the Secretariat's assistance is diverse, ranging from the support provided by Secretariat staff who deliver support in thematic areas, to short-term consultants, but mainly through

the long-term embedded experts who quickly gain the confidence and trust of their host institutions. This is possible, perhaps, through the contractual arrangements the Secretariat concludes with experts who are responsible primarily to the beneficiary countries to whom they are accountable. This affords the host institutions the autonomy to utilise the services of experts according to their national interests, and to share sensitive information in the process. This approach contributes effectively to the development agenda of the host countries as there are, by so doing, minimal endogenous barriers to the effective operation of experts. The seamless assimilation of long-term experts into the milieu of the host organisation is an integral part of any successful programme of embedded technical assistance and such breaking of walls engenders success in any long-term assignment by easing working relations.

The Secretariat commissioned experts have conducted extensive analytical work on the likely impact of trade liberalisation on PICs under PACER Plus. Working together with staff members of OCTA, they provide analytical inputs into a broad-range of negotiating subjects, from Customs Procedures, Rules of Origin, Development Assistance, Trade in Goods, Trade in Services and Investment. Several officials have been trained in trade negotiations and trade data analysis. The outcomes of these initiatives have furnished sound basis upon which to underpin technical assistance being provided to the PICs, as well as inputs being channelled into PACER Plus negotiations. It was noted that the Secretariat has firmly established its credentials as a valuable partner for institutional building and consolidation in the region.

The Secretariat is arguably on the right path in terms of the comprehensive nature of the assistance it provides to the PICs, addressing multiple, interrelated issues, such as law and order, rule of law, international trade negotiations, export promotion, development of sectoral strategies, etc. However, concerted efforts are necessary to establish a linkage among these interventions in pursuit of a holistic



approach to realising an overarching objective, the most pervasive of which seems to be economic growth and sustainable development. This could potentially address the resulting piecemeal approach, devoid of any discernible integrated objective, which may be perceived to characterise present efforts. Given the limits of resources and the consequent difficulty with the simultaneous implementation of support in these thematic areas, especially in areas where wide capacity deficits exist, a phased approach may be required in some countries, while the current approach may need to be fine-tuned for others. It may be necessary to explore avenues to coordinate with other donors to seek synergies in the delivery of programmes of assistance, as well as find niche areas, in which some relative strengths may be possessed.

#### 4.11 Strengthening Capacity on Trade Policy and Negotiations

The Commonwealth Secretariat, through the Hubs and Spokes Project, has been supporting the Pacific Forum Secretariat and selected countries including Solomon Islands in the area of trade policy and negotiations. In addition, it has recently provided a long-term expert at the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) to strengthen the capacity of the members of the MSG to effectively address regional and multilateral trade issues, including the conclusion of trade agreements that reflect their trade and development interests.

The Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) is a sub-regional organisation, established in 1988 with the objective of assisting its members (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu) with their own economic integration as well as supporting them in trade integration initiatives and negotiations.

While the CFTC expert has just started, according to the Director of Trade at the MSG Secretariat, the Commonwealth Secretariat assistance is already being proving valuable for the MSG in the area of trade policy and negotiations mainly through the Hub and Spoke project who

are placed at the Pacific Forum Secretariat and selected Pacific countries including the Solomon Islands. The PICs are engaging in trade negotiations with the EU for an EPA (Economic Partnership Agreement) and with Australia and New Zealand for a PACER Plus agreement. The Hub and Spokes project has been very relevant in that it not only brings expertise and good analytical skills to the Pacific collectively through the Hub and individually through the spokes but more importantly a perspective that is independent of the parties to the negotiations and therefore can objectively provide advice.

The evaluation noted that within the region, there are several international organisations like the WTO, UNCTAD, ITC and the ACP Secretariat who are active and provide support on trade policy, promotion and negotiations, however, this support has primarily been on an ad hoc basis. It was acknowledged that the Secretariat's assistance adds value in that it is able to provide an independent and objective advice to the Pacific which is neutral, trustworthy and sustained (through the in-house expert) compared to ad-hoc assistance by other organisations. This enables capacity building for trade staff at the national level.

It was highlighted that the trainings provided by the Hub and spoke as well as an earlier CFTC projects to assist Pacific countries develop market access and EPAs are now being used in PACER Plus negotiations. These have also contributed to capacity building of national officials who now have a better understanding of complex trade issues and the dynamics of trade negotiations; are now able to speak confidently or make logical interventions at meetings; and are able to clearly articulate their countries' positions. The Solomon Islands is one of those countries that have shown great improvements in capacity development resulting in the promotion of a number of trade staff either within the Department or to other parts of the government.

It was mentioned that the policy advice provided on request to MSG members individually or to the MSG Trade Officials, Ministers and leaders collectively at meetings has enabled them to

make informed decisions. This is reflected in the outcomes of meetings in recent years as the MSG renews their commitments to the MSG Trade agreement and embarks on a new vision to deepen and broaden its trade and economic integration beyond trade in goods to include services, labour mobility and investment.

It was indicated that MSG is positive that the arrival of the expert would certainly boost the MSG Secretariat's ability to provide policy and technical advice to MSG members including the Solomon Islands. It was highlighted that the Secretariat should consider providing CFTC experts for a 3-year terms as 2 years is too short to make significant impacts, particularly if experts are from a different region.

#### 4.12 Technical Assistance to Build Capacity and Respond to Climate Change in the Pacific

The CFTC is supporting the Secretariat of the Pacific Environmental Programme (SPREP) through the provision of an Environmental Resource Economist to build strategic and technical capacity of the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) to develop and implement evidence based climate change policies with emphasis on environmental resource economics. The objective is to provide PICs with sustainable technical and coordination capacity to develop and implement evidence-based climate change policy and project responses. One of the major problems is that rigorous and evidence-based planning and prioritisation of climate change adaptation investment (and other development investments) is poorly done in many countries and this impacts the climate change investment decisions. There is an ongoing and increasing need for assistance in this area. It was acknowledged that the support from the Secretariat has made an effective and valuable input in this area and is highly relevant to the region.

The evaluation noted that the Commonwealth Secretariat is one of the few agencies providing economic capacity support through Pacific Regional Government Agencies (CROP agencies).

Others include ODI, GTZ, ADB, World Bank and UNDP. Support provided through CROP agencies provides for efficient delivery of technical assistance to small PIC Governments which don't have the economies of scale to justify full-time and dedicated expertise in environmental economics. It was mentioned that the challenge is to link this support in as part of a programmatic approach to allow SPREP to respond to country requests for assistance. Currently, SPREP relies on project funding (e.g. PACC project) which limits SPREP officials ability to respond to/work on requests which are outside these projects - and sometimes of greater need. It was noted that while there are close and effective working relationships between other donor agencies and SPREP in the area of resource economics and evidence based climate change policy, the support from the Secretariat has added significant value to ongoing efforts in the region regarding climate change.

At SPREP, the ERE has trained three officials in cost-benefit analysis (CBA) and co-ordination/overseeing of technical backstopping support to conduct a CBA of the Solomon Islands PACC food security project on Ontong Java. Officials trained in CBA did not have a background in economics and were not actively involved in the conduct of the SI PACC CBA. The training helped the officials to improve their understanding of the CBA process, key concepts, and how it can be used to help inform project selection and design. The SI PACC co-ordinator reported that the CBA conducted for their food security project helped the PACC team to select/focus on measures to improve the soil and growing environment on Ontong Java. It also helped them to better understand the costs of their project and make budgets. It is hoped that if adopted the advice would lead to improved food security outcomes on the ground.

While the long-term ERE resigned eighteen months prior to the planned completion of the project, SPREP is confident that this has strengthened its capacity to deliver climate change adaptation and mitigation projects at the national levels. It has not only improved the capacity to design, develop monitor and evaluate

robust evidence based climate change policies and projects but also increases funding for such policies and projects. It is felt that this will help reduce climate related vulnerabilities in the Pacific Island Country communities.

#### 4.14 Enhancing Professional Development in Multi-grade Education and Development of Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders

Solomon Islands has occasionally benefitted through participation in workshops organized by the Education Section of the Social Transformation Division of the Secretariat. One of these has been the joint Commonwealth Secretariat-Commonwealth of Learning Project on 'Development of Professional Course on Multi-grade Teaching'. The aim of the project was to adapt the Multi-grade Teaching Commonwealth Secretariat Modules for delivery using open and distance learning platforms. In 2012 a team from the five pilot countries including a representative from Solomon Islands met in London to undertake the Instructional Design and Material Adaptation.

The other such project has been the pan-Commonwealth project on the 'Development of Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders' which aims to deliver a global Commonwealth Framework on Professional Standards. Solomon Islands attended the Pacific Regional Workshop held in Apia, Samoa in June 2012.

In addition, Solomon Islands was also part of research study on education for sustainable development. The study focused on climate change education, and provided practical recommendations on how education for sustainable development can be integrated in education policy and strategy and delivered more comprehensively. The research resulted in a publication 'Education for Sustainable Development in Small Island Developing States'.

Discussions at the Office of the Under Secretary (Professional) at the Ministry of Education and

Human Resources Development and the Director of the Teachers Training Division emphasized the fact that provision of and access to quality education is and will remain a priority area of development in the country over the coming years. The Government has an ambitious plan to address the nearly all sub-sectors from early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary, technical, vocational, community and adult education which is highlighted in its Education Strategic Framework (ESF) 2007-2015. Together the ESF charts out a course by identifying key education policy and implementation issues and that can be used in developing a Performance Assessment Framework against which performance of the education sector can be assessed.

While the discussion mostly centered around the ESF and future government priorities, it was very difficult to ascertain if participation in the Secretariat organized workshops/ events had any way contributed to the development of the strategic or performance framework or otherwise. Although mention was made that while multi-grade teaching remains an important delivery mechanism, especially for Solomon Islands where islands are isolated, villages are scattered, teaching resources are limited and many teachers are still untrained, multi-grade teaching provides a good mechanism for optimizing resources and providing primary education. However, how the participation in Secretariat workshops has benefitted or will benefit Solomon Islands is yet to be seen.

One of the reasons that can be attributed to this can be the transfer of Government officials across Ministries/ Departments. The evaluation noted that one senior Government official who in the past attended most of the workshops has now moved to the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs. The evaluation made efforts and succeeded in meeting the Official in the new capacity. Discussions that followed, however, did not lead to any conclusive evidence of any action that resulted from the attendance at these workshops. What emerged from the discussions was the feel good factor on how good the workshop, its organisation and venue was. It was evident that participation in these workshops

was just seen as an incentive to travel and get some time away in a foreign country. This is not surprising, as the evaluation findings very much resonate with the findings and recommendations of the Secretariat's Training Evaluation which highlighted several of these shortcomings attached with the Secretariat's use of training and workshops as a means of capacity building. It is time Secretariat stops organizing these stand-alone/ one off workshops unless they are part of a wider and sustained capacity building effort.

Discussions at the Teachers Training Directorate were however more progressive. It was noted that the participation at the Apia regional workshop in 2012 provided a clearer picture on the professional standards and reinforced the fact that other countries are also using them to improve the quality of education. It was mentioned that the Government in 2011 approved the 'National Professional Standards for Teachers' which are now included in the Chapter 10 of the Teaching Service Handbook. These were further approved by the cabinet in 2012 and factor in the National Education Action Plan for 2013-15. This is also supported by a nationwide media campaign on professional standards for teachers and leaders. It was noted that New Zealand government is helping the government of Solomon Islands with the training of teachers and leadership development is an integral part of this training. A course on professional leadership is also being designed for teachers and it was indicated that support and guidance in mainstreaming the professional standards within the education system could have far reaching effects.

#### 4.15 Promoting Human Rights Standards and Capacity Building in the Commonwealth

In order to respect, protection and promotion of human rights in the Commonwealth, the Secretariat assists member countries to: improve the ratification and implementation of international human rights instruments;

strengthen the capacity of key institutions to monitor and protect human rights; adopt and apply best practices, specifically on the development of integrated and comprehensive approaches to human rights; promote awareness of human rights and human rights dimensions of current issues; participate effectively in the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review; and participate in and strengthen the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions and regional networks of human rights institutions

Solomon Islands has been an active participant in several of these workshops and training programmes since 2007. In January 2009, a high level visit was organised by the Secretariat and meetings were held with the Prime Minister, the Attorney General, Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs, the Police Commissioner and the Ministry for National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace. Among other issues concerning human rights situation in the island state, discussions explored the possibility of establishing a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) in Solomon Islands as well providing human rights training to police officials in the country. In September 2009, a human rights awareness workshop was organised for youth workers to educate the youth workers on international human rights philosophy, mechanisms and treaties primarily to build their capacities in human rights work.

In January 2010, the Secretariat organised a workshop on National Action Plan on Human Rights (NHRAP) to disseminate knowledge and share best practices on NHRAPs with a view of developing one for Solomon Islands. Since then, Solomon Islands has participated in a Regional Consultation on Advancing Pacific Human Rights Mechanisms in Suva (2011); Regional Training on Human Rights in Prison Management in Honiara (2012); and Commonwealth Regional Seminar on UPR follow-up and implementation for Asia-Pacific member states that reported under UPR in 2010 and 2012 in Sydney (2013).

The evaluation, however, could not find evidence of any demonstrable impact that can be attributed to Solomon Islands participation

in these national and regional workshops. Discussions at the Ministry of External Affairs and Trade and the Prime Minister's Office did acknowledge the work of the Secretariat in this area and mentioned that while these could have contributed to raising the awareness of the young people and participating government officials on human rights and international instruments on HR, they could not comment if this can be attributed to the work of the Secretariat or many other development partners who are also working in this area in the country and the region. It was mentioned that despite the recommendations of the UPR process in 2011, the National Action Plan on Human Rights still remains a challenge.

Discussions once again confirmed that while the one-off workshops and trainings can at best raise awareness around certain targeted issues, they certainly cannot be used to make a meaningful difference. To make a lasting impact and build sustained individual and institutional capacity, these trainings and workshops should be part of a wider institutional capacity building strategy that is supported with a robust monitoring plan and follow-up support. Unless these considerations are taken into account in designing interventions, the result of Secretariat's work will not be visible and just remain as 'High level Goal/ Purpose' statements.

As the Secretariat embarks on the implementation of its new Strategic Plan, it needs to immediately develop an organization wide capacity building strategy and seriously consider the implementation of the Training Evaluation Recommendations. This will bring value for money and increase the effectiveness and impact of its work.

#### 4.16 Commonwealth Youth Programme

Solomon Island is host to the Pacific Regional Office of the Commonwealth Youth Programme. CYP which was established by Commonwealth Heads of Government in 1973, advocates for the effective participation of young people in the development process and their full engagement

at all levels of decision-making. The programme is financed by a special fund consisting of voluntary contributions from member governments to the tune of £3M per annum (total pan-Commonwealth) and is further topped up through projects and partnerships developed by the CYP with other organisations and networks. CYP works to engage and empower young people, aged 15-29, to enhance their contribution to development. The programme is implemented in partnership with young people, governments and other key stakeholders.

In addition to hosting the CYP Pacific Centre, Solomon Islands has been an active participant in a number of regional and pan-Commonwealth activities of the Youth Affairs Programme within the framework of its Youth Enterprise and Sustainable Livelihoods (YESL), Governance, Development and Youth Networks (GYDN) and Youth Work Education and Training (YWET) programmes. The youth programme in the region is implemented by a small team of one Regional Director and two Programme Managers, with an average budget of about £300K per year, which includes programme staff salaries, administration and travel. The evaluation noted that while the youth programme has implemented a range of activities to engage, empower and mainstream young people within the social, political and economic sphere, its broad focus of work in the region and countries has been around four key strategic areas. These include- providing technical assistance to the national governments; promoting regional cooperation; promoting and enabling youth participation and empowerment; and professionalization of youth development work.

Over the five year period, one of CYPs key focus area in the region has been on providing **assistance to the National Governments** particularly in addressing the technical and capacity needs of youth departments and ministries, formulation and implementation of National Youth Policies and support to the National Youth Councils. Solomon Islands, for example, was supported by the CYP to draft its National Youth Policy (SINYP) before it was

presented to the Cabinet for endorsement. The government has widely endorsed CYP's support in this area and this has subsequently led to the Solomon Islands National Youth Summit on mainstreaming and implementing the National Youth Policy. This was followed up by ten Provincial Youth Summits all aimed at building a sound understanding of the policy, its approach and outcomes and monitoring framework for its implementation. All the summits produced detailed work-plans and follow up activities with timeframes to implement the recommendations from the summits. In addition the summits resulted in a coordination and monitoring framework for the SINYP and committees have been identified and agreed on and work is continuing to ensure all stakeholders are involved. The evaluation noted the immediate impact of this work as nine Provincial Governments (out of ten) have now increased their youth development budget and three Provinces have even established a Youth Development Officer position to implement the SINYP.

The second area in which the programme has extensively focussed is in **promoting regional cooperation** between governments, regional and national agencies focussed on youth development and strengthening youth networks. An example of this has been the efforts to bring together young people, senior government youth officials and regional stakeholders in the region to attend the Commonwealth Pacific Young Leaders Conference in Brisbane in October 2011. In addition to addressing youth development priorities and working relationships between the young people and the governments, the conference endorsed the creation of a Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF). This was seen as a landmark achievement as in the past the Pacific Youth Strategy had never worked and had no buy-in from different agencies and governments. It has been through this conference and later through the CYP Pacific's collaborative endeavours to promote PYDF, collaborations have strengthened among agencies working within the youth space like UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA, ILO, UN Working Group on Youth (UWGY), UNAIDS, UNESCAP,

UNICEF, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Oceania Football Confederation (OFC), Pacific Youth Council (PYC), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the Pacific Leadership Programme (AusAid funded). This has positively raised the visibility and profile of the CYP Pacific Centre across the Pacific region. A clear evidence of this was the overwhelming participation of key Pacific Youth Stakeholder agencies representatives at the Commonwealth Youth Stakeholders Forum, which was held alongside the Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (CYMM) in Papua New Guinea in 2013, the endorsement of the PYDF by Pacific countries during regional meeting of delegations at CYMM and endorsement of PYDF in the CYMM Communiqué. Further communications and documents highlighted that partners are positive about this increased collaboration, especially as the UN agencies are now mandated to work in youth development and are keen to access and build on CYP's networks and expertise.

Another example is the Commonwealth Pacific Youth Employment Conference in Vanuatu in March 2011, which resulted in the launch of a collaborative Youth Employment and Advocacy Initiative (YEA) led by the Pacific Youth Council (PYC). The initiative succeeded in having youth employment placed on the agenda and included in the communique of the Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meeting in September 2011, where Pacific Leaders recognised youth unemployment as a critical issue and made commitments to invest resources to address this issue. The political commitment resulted in CYP together with ILO developing the Pacific Youth Employment Strategy (PacificYES), which is being used by the member governments to develop their own specific youth development policies and programmes. Governments of Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Kiribati have already started developing and implementing youth employment policies and programmes in their countries. Further, as a result of the advocacy on Youth Financial Inclusion, the Pacific Islands Working Group on Financial Inclusion which is made up of the Central Bank Governors, has recognised the need for a



greater focus on youth in their national financial inclusion strategies.

A third area of CYPs focus has been in **promoting and enabling youth participation and empowerment**. This is in line with CYPs asset-based approach and the global shift to youth-led activities with the focus on capacity building of youth leaders and networks. To this end, the programme convened the first 'Commonwealth Youth Leadership and Integrity Conference' in Solomon Islands in 2012- opened by HRH Prince William- for 40 young leaders from 13 Pacific countries to discuss key issues of leadership, good governance, communication and conflict resolution. The conference, while producing a training manual, equipped the youth leaders to undertake similar trainings upon their return to their countries, which is now being widely replicated.

Further efforts in this area included supporting two regional members from the Pan Commonwealth Youth Caucus to undertake a six month internship focused on establishment of the Commonwealth Youth Council; and the launch of Commonwealth Pacific Students Association (CPSA) in 2012 to give students a voice in education policy and programming. Representatives from CPSA now sit on the steering committee for the development of the new Commonwealth Students Association (CSA) which was endorsed by the Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers at their August 2012 meeting.

In 2009, the CYP Pacific Centre took the lead in approaching the Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE) Asia and Pacific Office in Sydney to revive the programme in Solomon Islands after nearly 20 years. The CYP worked closely with the Solomon Islands representative on the CYP Pacific Regional Youth Caucus (RYC), the Solomon Islands National Youth Council and staff of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs. As of 2012 there were more than 60 young people have been the proud achievers of Duke of Edinburgh Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards.

In addition to the normal DofE Awards programme which involves young people engaging and completing four specific areas of work, the DofE also introduced the 'Y-Fin' or the Youth Finance Scheme whereby groups of young people begin a small business by contributing \$20 and the total money collected is then used to start a business. One such group was from Lau Valley, a squatter settlement at the outskirts of Honiara, Solomon Islands. Comprised of 30 young people, the Lau Valley Group, through savings raised \$600 and started their own little business. As their small business grew, the young people became less involved in anti-social behaviour and criminal activities in the area declined noticeably. The group negotiated with their village elders and chiefs for a piece of land to build their own little meeting house and started learning new livelihood skills. They joined forces with the elders in their community to negotiate with their Member of Parliament to get piped water down into their community, as a result of which Lau Valley community today has piped water supply. Their leader was elected President of the Honiara Youth Council and together with another of his members received the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award from Prince William, during the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's visit to the Solomon Islands in 2012. He was also recently elected by his peers to be the Pacific Regional Representative of the new Commonwealth Youth Council. At the time of the evaluation, the group was considering expanding their business ideas.

In another example of promoting youth peace building network, support was provided to five Pacific Islanders (including one from Solomon Islands) to attend the *Nkabom* Peace Building Training in Rwanda in 2010. Upon return from training this led to a regional youth led *Wansolwara* Youth Peace Building Conference in New Zealand guided by the CYP in collaboration with UNDP and UNESCO. This Youth peace building work was widely commended at the Pacific Forum Regional Security Council (FRSC, 2011) meeting and further endorsed at the Pacific Island Forum Leaders (PIFL) meeting in Auckland in 2011. PIFS

has since taken forward the youth peace building training in two more Pacific countries.

In addition, to further the youth participation and empowerment agenda, young Pacific Islanders have been regularly supported to attend the Biennial Commonwealth Youth Forums alongside CHOGM's in Uganda (2007), Trinidad and Tobago (2009), Australia (2011) and Sri Lanka (2013).

The fourth key area of focus of CYP work has been on **professionalization of youth development work** in the Pacific countries. To this end, the Commonwealth Diploma in Youth Development Work was established and is delivered in partnership with the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), Papua New Guinea Institute of Public Administration (PNGIPA), Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE) and the University of South Pacific (USP). More than 200 Youth Workers have graduated from these courses so far and are contributing to the youth development work in the region. In addition, the technical assistance and negotiations between 2007-11 with the Government of Samoa, Tonga and Papua New Guinea and their national institutions have resulted in the establishment of the Diploma in Youth Development Work by National University of Samoa (NUS), Tonga National Centre for Vocational Studies (TNCVS) and the Divine World University (DWU) of Papua New Guinea. These efforts are now enhancing the opportunities for Pacific Islanders to access the course and will increase the qualified Youth Development Workers in the region. On an average 30 youth workers graduate with the Diploma every year with the requisite skills and expertise to work effectively as youth development workers in the government and civil society.

The evaluation noted that the Governments and National Institutions are now giving greater

recognition to the profession of youth work and qualified youth workers. For example, Solomon Islands Ministry of Youth now requires all their youth officers to have the Diploma in Youth Development. Stakeholders at the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade highly commended the work of the Commonwealth Youth Programme in the region and Solomon Islands in terms of its relevance and impact; and innovative programming approaches that build on networks and collaborations, despite operating with very limited resources.



## 5. Conclusion and recommendations

This section analyses the findings of the evaluation from the systematic literature review, response to electronic survey, interviews with the Secretariat staff and the in-country stakeholders during the evaluation. It summarises the discussion against key evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability and makes recommendations for the future work of the Secretariat.

### 5.1 Relevance

Relevance, with respect to this evaluation, is the extent to which the assistance provided by the Secretariat suits the needs, priorities and policies of Solomon Islands to address its national issues.

At the a Pan Commonwealth level, the 2008 Evaluation of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) confirmed that the CFTC has made a positive contribution to members' development, noting that it *"continues to have a substantive role to play, occupying a unique niche, both in terms of its size and philosophy."*

At the country level the evaluation found that overall the assistance provided by the Secretariat within the framework of its Strategic Plan (2008-12) programme areas and results was highly relevant (and continues to do so) and in line with the country's development plans and priorities taking into consideration Secretariat's comparative strengths as well as the work of other development partners.

Majority of the assistance to Solomon Islands during the evaluation period focussed under Secretariat's Development Goal *"to support pro-poor policies for economic growth and sustainable development in member countries"*, especially under the programmes on Public Sector Development and Economic Development. It,

however, also received assistance in the areas of promoting Democracy, Rule of Law, Human Rights and Human Development thereby contributing to the Secretariat's Goal *"to support member countries to prevent or resolve conflicts, strengthen democratic practices and the rule of law, and enhance the protection of human rights"*.

While the assistance in the area of democracy focussed on supporting democratic processes and institutions across the commonwealth, the assistance under the rule of law focussed on supporting member countries in promoting and strengthening the rule of law that underpins strong democratic and accountable governance. This was very much in line with the Solomon Islands country development objective to *"build the capacity of the judiciary to promote sustainable law and order"*. Assistance through election observations, building the legal policy capacity of the Attorney General's office, placement of the Puisne judge and technical assistance to train and improve the skills of key legal actors, building and strengthening of networks of prosecutors contributed to the Secretariat's strategic plan results *'Elections are conducted more credibly and enjoy public confidence'* and *'Judicial systems and processes are more effective at delivering justice'*.

Assistance in the area of Public sector Development to advance good governance focussed in assisting governments build its public service capacity, strengthen public institutions and improve service delivery through the Commonwealth Pacific Governance Facility and institutional strengthening of the internal audit bureau of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury. While contributing to the strategic plan results on *'delivery of more effective citizen-centred public services'* and *'increased accountability, integrity, transparency, predictability and participation in public sector decision making and implementation'*,

the assistance resonated very well with the Solomon Island Governments development objective of *'strengthening public sector performance and encouraging more effective public service mechanisms so that leadership at all levels of government reflects the highest standards of conduct and supports quality decision making'*.

Assistance in the area of economic development to support inclusive and sustainable growth focussed on strengthening policies, systems and institutions through support in development of debt and cash management policies and strategies, development and regulation of the gold mining sector, submission of claims to the UN to delimit maritime boundaries and promoting trade policies and agreements was found to be very timely and highly relevant to the country and the region and contributed to the country's development goal *'to encourage the private sector as an engine of growth and to redress key factors inhibiting growth in Solomon Islands, such as macroeconomic policy, inconsistency pervasive rent-seeking and public sector dominance in production and consumption'*. The assistance fell within the Secretariat's focus areas and contributed to the strategic plan results on *'maximising financial return on natural resources'*, *'making successful claims for maritime boundaries'* and *'strengthened Institutional capacity to manage debt effectively'*.

The regional projects in the region, particularly through the placement of long-term experts in SPREP, MSG and OCTA in the areas of regional economics of climate change, technical support for meteorological services and environmentally sustainable trade fall very much in line with the environmentally sustainable development programme contributing *'to assisting members, especially small and least developed countries, to manage risk and identify opportunities for environmentally sustainable economic development and pro-poor growth'* which align themselves very well with country's developmental objective *'to ensure the sustainable utilisation and conservation of natural resources, protection of the environment and to pursue successful adaptation to climate change'*.

The assistance to the country and the region under the auspices of Commonwealth Youth Programme within the framework of its Youth Enterprise and Sustainable Livelihoods, Governance, Development and Youth Networks and Youth Work Education and Training programmes was found to be highly valued and extremely relevant in supporting the government's development goal to mainstream young people in every sphere of growth and development.

Overall, the evaluation found that most of the projects that have been implemented in Solomon Islands were highly relevant to the country's development needs and priorities and conformed very well to the Commonwealth Secretariat's strategic plan priorities and results. The evaluation, however noted that while highly relevant, there is a limited understanding of what the Commonwealth is and does in the country and the region. This was clear from the meetings with the different ministries and stakeholders. Not many people, apart from those directly involved, including the PCP in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade or the Office of the Prime Minister and other line ministries were aware of the diverse portfolio of work that the Secretariat has implemented in the country and how this work contributes to the Government's developmental goal in building the capacity and strengthening institutions in Solomon Islands. This conclusion was further reinforced at the high level meetings with the political missions and international organisations present in the Country, where stress was laid upon the need for the Secretariat to address the visibility issue by probably "re-introducing" the Commonwealth in the Country and the Region.

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**Recommendation:** The Secretariat should identify opportunities and invest in raising the visibility and awareness of the Commonwealth, its comparative advantages and work so that it is relevant to a wider group of stakeholders and seen as a strong international player in supporting the country development goals and objectives.

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## 5.2 Effectiveness

Effectiveness is the extent to which the projects achieve their stated outputs and outcomes. Most of the projects, barring a few, reviewed under this evaluation did meet their output objectives and to some extent the outcome objectives, and were found to be effective.

This was widely recognised and acknowledged by the partners and stakeholders, who appreciated the support from the Secretariat and the outputs that resulted from them. Examples include the recommendations for electoral reforms from the Commonwealth Observer Groups, the reduction in backlog of civil cases, the establishment of internal audit framework for the country, consolidation of the country's debt portfolio and increased staff capacity, submission of the extended continental shelf claim to the UN convention on the Law of the Seas and reopening of the gold ridge mine, to name a few.

There were however, many other projects, for which it was difficult to show a direct correlation between the outputs and the project purpose (outcomes) as described in the project documentation (logical frameworks). Beyond the outputs, the logical link to establish its contribution to outcome seemed either too ambitious or unrealistic. It was noted that in some cases not only the outcomes, but even the project outputs were pitched too high making them unrealistic, immeasurable and unattainable within the duration of the project.

While a lot of this can be attributed to the smaller size and short term nature of Secretariat's intervention, which results in a lot more emphasis on project activities and outputs rather than short and longer term outcomes, this does not undermine the importance of having a realistic and logical chain of results that can be achieved over the life of the project. This was clearly identified as a project design issue that the Secretariat must address through more rigorous training for staff on good project design and management in line with results based management philosophy and principles. Particular emphasis needs to be

given to the logical hierarchy of results in the results chain so that the project log-frames have clear, measurable, realistic and time bound outcomes and indicators. This will considerably improve the delivery and effectiveness of Secretariat's projects.

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**Recommendation:** The Secretariat should invest more time and resources in building staff capacity on good project design and management in line with results based management philosophy and principles so that projects have clear, realistic, measurable and time bound outcomes and indicators supported by an integral project monitoring and evaluation Plan.

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In addition the project design, the mode of delivery of the assistance, especially where training or networking events alone were used without adequate monitoring and follow-up support, it had a compromising effect on the effectiveness of the projects.

Examples of these include, among others, the regional programme to build the capacity and networks of prosecutors in the Pacific region to strengthen the rule of law; Solomon Islands participation in workshops organized by the Secretariat to enhance professional standards in multi-grade education and development of professional standards for teachers and school leaders; and Secretariat organized training and workshops to promote human rights standards and capacity building in the Commonwealth countries.

As discussed under the evaluation findings, Solomon Islands has been an active participant in all these trainings, workshops and networking events. The evaluation also noted that while the conception of some of these trainings and events was innovative and had the necessary ingredients for sustained capacity building, for example the Pacific Prosecutors Programme, their effectiveness was limited because of the non-existent or poorly conceived monitoring and follow-up mechanisms.

On the positive side it was evident that participation in these trainings and networking

events did lead to sharing of experiences and raising awareness around new and emerging trends and issues in their respective areas. The evaluation, however, found no evidence to substantiate how these training programmes and workshops have been effective and contributed to, for example, in improving or changing the way criminal prosecutions are conducted OR influenced the development of strategic or performance framework for the education sector OR advanced the establishment of National Human Rights Institution or implementation of the National Action Plan on Human Rights despite the recommendations of the UPR process in 2011.

Many of the officials attending the meetings rather than giving evidence of the actions resulting from these trainings and workshops spoke about how good the organization was, how well the logistics were coordinated including travel, meals and DSAs, how exciting the venue was, how interesting some of the people they met were, etc. It was evident that unless the higher level objective is kept in mind at the conceptualization stage and followed upon, participation in these trainings and workshops will be just seen as an incentive to travel and get some time away in a different country.

This is not surprising, as the findings very much resonate with the findings and recommendations of the Secretariat's Training Evaluation which highlighted several of these shortcomings attached with the Secretariat's use of training and workshops as a means of capacity building. It is time Secretariat stops organizing these stand-alone/ one off workshops and training events unless they are part of a wider and sustained capacity building effort and supported by a robust monitoring plan and follow-up support. Unless these considerations are taken into account in designing interventions, the result of Secretariat's work will not be visible and just remain as far-fetched 'High level Goal/ Purpose' statements.

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**Recommendation:** The Secretariat should undertake a critical review of its innovative Pacific Prosecutors Training Programme,

especially the voluntary e-mentoring component so that it delivers the desired results. It should include structured monitoring and follow-up mechanisms in the programme design and budget with flexibility for additional capacity building and institutional support, if needed, so that the impact can be sustained.

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**Recommendation:** As the Secretariat embarks on the implementation of its new Strategic Plan, it needs to immediately develop an organization wide capacity building strategy and seriously consider the implementation of the Training Evaluation Recommendations. This will bring value for money and increase the effectiveness and impact of its work.

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Another critical element that was found to have a bearing on the effectiveness of Secretariat projects is the coordination of Secretariat's assistance in the country through the Primary Contact Point (PCP) and the network of Point of Contacts (POC). While some of the assistance to the country is routed through the office of the designated PCP, in majority cases, the Secretariat still approaches the line ministries directly without any information to the PCP. This is in contrast to the preferred option that was agreed by the PCPs at their meeting in London in 2009 and subsequently endorsed at the 2011 meeting. This results in lost opportunities and has a direct impact on the effectiveness of the project. From project design point of view, the Secretariat should take cognisance of the fact that all the external assistance to the country is, in majority of cases, routed through the Office of the PCP and it is the PCP's office that can play a critical role in aligning the assistance with the national development priorities and identifying niche areas where Secretariat's assistance can play the value added role. This will help avoid any duplication of efforts and increases the effectiveness of the assistance.

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**Recommendation:** It is recommended that all future Secretariat's assistance to the country is directed through the office of the Primary Contact Point (PCP). This will prevent any lost opportunities for collaboration and cost sharing

**as well as duplication of activities and promote a more coordinated approach to country assistance that demonstrates impact.**

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### 5.3 Efficiency

Efficiency is the measure of outputs in relation to the inputs. Given the small size of projects implemented in Solomon Islands and the absence of integral project monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, it was very difficult to assess the quality and quantity of inputs and outcomes required to assess the actual efficiency of projects.

However, based on the analysis of Secretariat's business model that involves providing expert advice to member countries on specific thematic areas, it would appear to be more cost efficient than hiring external experts in the same fields. Such areas included in-house technical and legal advice on mine restoration, maritime boundaries delimitation, debt management good governance for effective public services delivery and engagement and empowerment of young people in mainstream development. In addition, it should be noted that the Secretariat appointed short term consultants operate at fees that is often below the comparable market rates. In addition, the placement of long-term in-country experts was found to be more cost-effective than if these experts were hired on daily rates.

The regional presence of the Secretariat in the Pacific, on the other hand through its two flagship programmes- the Commonwealth Pacific Governance Facility (CPGF) and the Commonwealth Youth Centre for South Pacific (CYP-SP) can be argued both in favour and against the effectiveness and efficiency of Secretariat's interventions. While CYP-SP Centre has been in the region since 1995 and has contributed significantly to the advancement of youth agenda in Pacific with a very modest budget of £310K per annum, the progress of CPGF, on the other hand, which was launched in 2009 after eight years of deliberation, has been extremely slow with results that can be best described as limited despite an annual budget of around £500K.

One of the very strong focus of CYPs strategy has been in building collaborations and strategic partnerships with national, regional and international agencies operating in the region including bi-lateral donors and this has yielded the desired results, outreach and visibility to the youth programme making its operations highly cost-effective. CPGF on the other had used a two pronged approach, implementing short term as well as long term sustainable long term projects, however has in its first three years grappled with finding its focus and niche area based on Commonwealth comparative advantage. It now focuses mainly on a couple of activities against its original stated objectives. One of the reasons for this is the presence of several regional and international organisations in the region who are in a much stronger position to advance the governance agenda.

With regards to the operational efficiency, CPGF is implemented with an established office in Honiara consisting of a Director, Programme Coordinator, Office/Finance Manager and an Administrative Assistant. It further receives regular on-going support from the Secretariat in London from the Governance Adviser (Pacific) and a Programme Officer under the overall guidance of the director of GIDD. Further, it has its own financial and administration set-up, which the evaluation found could have been strengthened and shared with the CYP-SP Centre.

Given the current focus of the programme, its limited interventions based on its comparative advantage, the Secretariat should seriously think about the future of CPGF and its value for money and reconsider the viability of CPGF in its current form.

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**Recommendation: Commonwealth Secretariat should reconsider the value for money and viability of CPGF in its current form. Consideration should be given to the placement of a Regional Adviser with the Governance Division of PIFS to support the Commonwealth governance agenda.**

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The evaluation noted that, apart to CYP-SP and a couple of other projects, the Secretariat has done very little to explore and develop strategic partnerships with a large number of other regional and international development actors and bi-lateral donors present in the country and the region all of which are working towards similar goals of advancing economic growth and good governance in the Solomon's and the region. These include, among others, AUSAID, NZAID, ADB, BHC/ DFID and UNDP. While the Secretariat works with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, however this collaboration has the potential to be further developed.

Through its long term expert's programme, the Secretariat has some advisers based in Office of the Chief Trade Adviser (OCTA), the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Pacific Environment Programme supporting countries in the Pacific on issues related to trade policy, trade agreements, regional trade, meteorology and climate change economics. While the work done by the Secretariat in these areas is extremely important and has also been widely recognised and acknowledged by the regional institutions, the Secretariat should take cognisance of the fact that these agendas are also high on the list of many of the active and larger development players who probably are better placed and resourced to make a lasting impact. For example- European Union, AusAid, NZAid and the World Bank have been active in the area of strengthening institutional capacities of the Pacific Island Countries on different components of trade and trade negotiations; WTO, UNCTAD, ITC, Australia, New Zealand and the ACP Secretariat provide support in the area of trade policy, promotion and negotiations; and ODI, ADB, World Bank, UNDP provide support in building capacity on environmental economics through the Pacific Regional Government Agencies (CROP Agencies). The Secretariat needs to reflect on this programme and identify its niche area and comparative advantage and where needed optimise its resources for maximum impact.

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**Recommendation:** The Secretariat should explore strategic partnerships with other international development partners active in Solomon Islands to harmonise resources, build on each other's comparative advantages to get the maximum value for money. Possible partners include- AUSAID, NZAID, RAMSI, the European Commission, ADB, UNDP and the World Bank Group.

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Linked to the Secretariat's long term experts placement programme is their Terms and Conditions of Service (TACOS). The evaluation noted that while the assistance provided by some of the long term experts has been highly effective and appreciated by the country, many of them leave their assignments mid-way. Recent examples include two Puisne Judges and the Internal Audit expert all based in Solomon Islands. This disrupts the flow and effectiveness of the ongoing work, system and processes, not to mention the wastage of investment that is made in terms of recruitment, relocation and establishment of experts in the member countries. On exploration, Secretariat's Terms and Conditions of Services for CFTC Experts, were cited as the reasons, as they are considered far below from those of other comparable international and regional level organisations. This raises a question on recruitment and retention of qualified international experts by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

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**Recommendation:** In order to be competitive and be able to retain high calibre international experts, the Commonwealth Secretariat should review the Terms and Conditions of Services (TACOS) for its CFTC Experts to align them with other similar Regional and International Organisations.

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## 5.4 Impact and Sustainability

Impact is the extent to which the Secretariat's work has affected change- positive or negative- directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. While determining the impact of projects (with

clear attribution) can be a challenging owing to the complex political, social and economic nature of the development, it is further exacerbated by the size of short term small projects implemented by the Secretariat, which usually tend to limit their scope to the activities and outputs, rarely extending to outcomes. Having said that, the evaluation did find that some of the Secretariat's work has been highly effective and has indeed made some difference, especially in the area of electoral reforms, strengthening administration of justice, institutional strengthening of the internal audit bureau, strengthening debt and cash management, maritime boundary delimitation, re-opening of the gold ridge mine, professionalization of youth work, maritime boundary delimitation, PACER+ negotiations, trade negotiations and building capacity of national governments in development and implementation of youth policies, promoting regional cooperation on youth issues, promoting and enabling youth participation and empowerment and professionalization of youth work.

Several of the recommendations from the Commonwealth Election Observation Group, which was constituted by the Commonwealth Secretary General to observe the Solomon Islands National Parliamentary Elections in 2010 have now been implemented. The National Parliament Electoral Provisions (Amendment) Act 2013 (NPEP) was passed by the Parliament in March 2013 to strengthen the voter registration process. The use of biometric technology in voter registration process has been agreed and office of the Solomon Islands Election Commission has been mandated to undertake its next voter registration exercise using biometric technology by the end of 2013. The Voter Registration Centres (VRCs) used in 2010 are being reviewed for their suitability and where needed alternate VRCs are being identified. A budget of SBD 4.9 Million has been assigned to streamline the voter registration in the Islands and it is anticipated that with the new approach to register voters, a significant change will be felt within the Solomon Islands electoral environment.

The placement of Puisne Judge in Solomon Islands has contributed to strengthening the capacity of judiciary and has been highly effective in administering justice in the country. The backlog of civil cases has reduced by about 25%. Particular reduction has been observed in the number of cases that have been ongoing for several years and there are now very few cases that are over 3-4 years old. A side-effect of the Puisne Judge placement has been the availability of extra judge hours for other judges, who have been able to concentrate on the criminal cases. Proactive case management and updating of the court records has contributed to improving court efficiency and more cases being properly prepared and heard. Lawyers are now required to pursue cases beyond the interim order stage so that all issues are finally disposed. Accountability has increased as lawyers are now better prepared for hearings. This has improved the image of judiciary as more and more people are now showing confidence in the judiciary due to its ability to deal with cases in a timely manner.

The placement of long term CFTC Internal Audit Technical Advisor has successfully built the required auditing capabilities within the Internal Audit Division of Ministry of Finance and Treasury as well as laid good foundation for future sustainability of this capacity development initiative. The Ministry now has a useable Public Sector Internal Audit framework in compliance with international standards for auditing. This is supported by a Strategic Internal Audit Development Plan 2011-2014. The training and mentoring has led to the establishment of a cadre of nearly 30 professional internal auditors, many of whom have gained membership to the Institute of Internal Auditors and are seeking to achieve their professional certifications. The Institute of Internal Auditors has now transitioned to the Association of Internal Auditors, Solomon Islands, which comprises of members from both Government and state owned enterprises. There is now a community and public sector recognition of the profession and its role in public financial accountability and anti-corruption.

Another outcome of this work has been a greater public confidence that action will be taken against corrupt public officials. This was evidenced in 2011 when several corrupt public servants were investigated and removed from duty as a direct result of internal auditing. During the same year, the misuse of thousands of dollars of public funds was prevented due to intervention and investigation by internal auditors of corrupt procurement practices. All this is inspiring other ministries and state-owned enterprises to consider and establish Internal Audit Offices and positions. Overall result has been a stronger, more accountable public sector which is under scrutiny by trained internal and external auditors.

Solomon Islands uses the Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management Software (CS-DRMS) since 1989 and it is used by the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MOFT) and the Central Bank of Solomon Islands (CBSI) for recording and managing debt data. While the country has a basic debt portfolio, the assistance has helped the country in effectively managing, recording, forecasting, monitoring and reporting country's debt. It now produces a regular Debt bulletin. Besides the Central Bank of Samoa, the Central Bank of Solomon Islands is the only other site in the Pacific that currently uses the Commonwealth Secretariat Securities Auction System (CS-SAS) to conduct Treasury bills auctions.

The evaluation noted that the Regional Debt Adviser Programme, which was a huge success in the Pacific also raised the profile of the Secretariat in the region. While more frequent support was available through this programme, it also helped consolidate the debt portfolio in the region, raised awareness among decision makers and had a positive impact among decision makers.

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**Recommendation:** Given the huge demand and past success, the Secretariat should reconsider its Regional Debt Adviser Programme. The Regional Adviser/ Long term expert could be placed in one of the Regional Institutions. While addressing the immediate needs, this would

**contribute to building sustained institutional capacity and also contribute to raising the profile of the Commonwealth in the Region.**

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Under the Secretariat's Maritime Boundary Delimitation programme, the Secretariat's legal and technical assistance on the extended continental shelf (ECS) submission to the United Nations enabled Solomon Islands together with Papua New Guinea and Federated States of Micronesia to prepare and lodge a claim for over 602,000 square km of additional seabed area in the Ontong Java Plateau. The ECS submission is in a queue awaiting formal examination, which is likely to commence in 2014. This also represented the only submission to have been made by three small island states anywhere in the world and the first joint submission that has come from the Pacific region.

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**Recommendation:** Given the significant long term potential for enhancing the economic prospects of Solomon Islands through delimitation of its maritime boundaries and exploitation of the natural resources from the extended continental shelf, the Secretariat should continue the legal and technical advice to the Government of Solomon Islands on maritime boundary and ocean governance.

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Secretariat's advice on legal, economic, environmental and social issues associated with the launch and re-opening of the Gold Ridge Mine in Guadalcanal is yielding quiet fruitful dividends following the commencement of production. While sporadic tensions between the mining company and the local communities have been reported from time to time, the re-opening of the mine has been a significant step in the economic recovery of Solomon Islands. Gold Ridge mine is the only operating mine in the Solomon Islands and currently contributes approximately 20% of the Gross Domestic Product of the Solomon Islands economy. It was mentioned that Government is at the moment considering a revision of its mining legislation.

As the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are engaging in trade negotiations with the EU for an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and



with Australia and New Zealand for a PACER Plus agreement, Secretariat's support to the Office of the Chief Trade Adviser (OCTA) and the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat to strengthen their negotiating and analytical capacity is proving extremely valuable. This has resulted in increased staff capacity on trade negotiations and produced evidence based analytical studies on the likely fiscal impact of trade liberalisation on the PICs. Further the support on trade policy and negotiations through the Hub and Spoke project has been very relevant as it not only brings expertise and strong analytical skills to the Pacific collectively through the Hub and individually through the spokes but more importantly a perspective that is independent of the parties sitting on the negotiating table. The outcomes of these initiatives have furnished a sound basis upon which to underpin the inputs that are being channelled into the negotiations.

In the area of Youth empowerment and engagement, CYP's work has led to mainstreaming and implementation of National Youth Policy and nine Provincial Governments have increased their youth development budget. Efforts in promoting regional cooperation between governments, regional and national agencies has resulted in bring together several agencies working within the youth space, which has positively raised the visibility and profile of the CYP Pacific Centre across the region.

Work and advocacy on Youth Employment has led to the recognition of youth unemployment as a critical issue and Governments are making commitments to invest resources to address this issue. Young people now feature in the national financial inclusion strategies of the Pacific Islands Working Group on Financial Inclusion which is made up of the Central Bank Governors. The professionalization of youth development work has resulted Governments and National Institutions giving greater recognition to the profession of youth work and qualified youth workers.

To conclude, the work of the Secretariat has been highly relevant to Solomon Islands and has

led to some significant outcomes in a number of areas. However, the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of its work can be significantly improved if it was to harmonise its efforts in the country and the region with other development partners who are active and working towards similar goals. This may mean, in some cases, either expanding the work programme or working differently based on its comparative advantage. In some instances this would mean identifying strategic partners and working in collaboration or withdrawing completely from areas where others are well resourced and have an advantage over the Secretariat.







# Annex 1: Key Development Partners in Solomon Islands

A number of international development partners are active in Sri Lanka and these include:

## Australian Agency for International Development (AUSAID)

Australia's aid agency provides substantial bilateral and regional aid to the Pacific and is one of the most significant donors to Solomon Islands, with a country program estimated at AUS\$50.9 million for 2010–11. Solomon Islands–Australia Partnership for Development signed in 2009 sets out four areas:

- Health
- Economic livelihoods
- Economic infrastructure
- Economic Management.

## European Commission (EC)

The Country Strategy Paper for Solomon Islands (2008–2013) presents the strategic framework for the EC's co-operation with Solomon Islands.

Priority areas include:

- Sustainable rural development: emphasis on strengthening local and national institutions. Support will supplement ongoing interventions in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and transport.
- Mainstreaming cross-cutting issues; in particular good governance, gender equality, environmental sustainability, as well as the fight against HIV/AIDS.

## New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID)

NZAID has developed a Solomon Islands Programme, guided by a strategy with two programmatic focus areas:

- Education and skills development.
- Supporting broad based economic growth.
- NZAID also contributes to funding a number of regional agencies and organisations, such as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and UNICEF Pacific.

## Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI)

RAMSI, a partnership between the people and Solomon Islands Government and fifteen contributing countries of the Pacific region, continues to provide a broad programme of support, in the following areas, aimed at achieving long-term stability, security and prosperity for Solomon Islands: Police, Law and Justice, Economic Governance, Machinery of Government, Military, Media Strengthening, Anti-Corruption and Community and Sport.

## Asian Development Bank (ADB)

ADB's strategy for Solomon Islands seeks to reduce poverty by promoting equitable private-sector-led economic growth and is guided by the Interim Country Partnership Strategy (ICPS), 2009–2011. Priority areas:

- Transport Infrastructure and Services
- Private Sector Development
- Mainstreaming Climate Change
- Economic Crisis Response Support

## United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDP has an extensive Country Programme for Solomon Islands. Its priority areas are:

- Poverty Reduction and Supporting Attainment of Millennium Development Goals
- Good Governance and Human Rights
- Crisis Prevention and Recovery
- Environment & Sustainable Management

## World Bank Group

Focal areas of the World Bank's assistance to Solomon Islands are:

- Education
- Rural development
- Health
- Sustainable Energy

In November 2008, the World Bank Group established a permanent office in Honiara together with the ADB.



## Annex 2: List of people interviewed

### Stakeholders interviewed during the country visit

1. Mr Cornelius Walegere, PCP, Assistant Secretary, Europe and International Cooperation Branch, Ministry Of Foreign Affairs and External Trade
2. Mr Bernard Bata'anisia, Deputy Secretary, Ministry Of Foreign Affairs and External Trade
3. Mr Banabas Anga, Secretary to Prime Minister, Office of the Prime Minister
4. HE Dominic Meiklejohn, High Commissioner, British High Commission, Solomon Islands
5. Hon. Chief Justice Sir Albert R. Palmer, High Court of the Solomon Islands
6. Mr Edward Ronia, Auditor General, Solomon Islands
7. Ms Akiko Suzuki, Joint Presence Manager and UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, Solomon Islands
8. Mr Gavin J Withers, Registrar, High Court & Court Of Appeal, Solomon Islands
9. Mr Allan Daonga, Under Secretary, Ministry of Development Planning And Aid Coordination
10. Mr Eliam Tangirongo, Chairperson to Public Service Commission, Ministry of Public Service
11. Mr John Tealikava, Secretary to Public Service Commission, Ministry of Public Service
12. Mr Timothy Ngele, Under Secretary (Professional), Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development
13. Mr James Bosamata, Director, Teacher Training Division, Ministry of Education
14. Mr Aseri Yalangono, Under Secretary, Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs
15. Affairs
16. Mr David Natoga, Director for Petroleum, Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification
17. Ms Emily Teaitala, Commissioner, Office of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission, Department Of Home Affairs
18. Mr Josaia Naigulevu, Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions, Office of Director of Public Prosecutions
19. Mr Walter Diamana, Chief Desk Officer, UN, Americas and Treaties, Ministry Of Foreign Affairs and External Trade
20. Mr Daniel Haridi, Chief Manager, Currency and Banking Operations, Central Bank of the Solomon Islands
21. Mr Joe Vasuni, Manager, Currency and Banking Operations, Central Bank of the Solomon Islands
22. Mr Bradley Lenga, Acting Director, Internal Audit, Ministry of Finance
23. Mr Tobais Bule, In-Charge Debt Management Unit, Ministry of Finance
24. Ms Doreen Monogari, Supervisor, External and Internal Debt, Central Bank of Solomon Islands
25. Mr Mose Saitala, Chief Technical Advisor, Political Integrity and Stability Project, Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Honiara
26. Mr Edard Anisitoto, Director Youth, Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs

27. Mr Timothy Waegao, Youth Development Officer, Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs
28. Mr Denton Enriko, Youth Development Officer, Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs
29. Ms Methodius Iapara, Youth Development Officer, Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs

#### Regional Organisations and CFTC Experts contacted through survey questionnaires

30. Mr David Sheppard, Director General, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Apia, Samoa
31. Ms Merewalesi Falemaka, Director Trade and Investment Division, Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat, Port Vila, Vanuatu
32. Mr Adeshola Odusanya, Legal Adviser (Trade), OCTA, Port Vila, Vanuatu (CFTC Expert)
33. Dr Carmen Voigt-Graf, Economic Adviser (Trade), OCTA, Port Vila, Vanuatu (CFTC Expert)
34. Mr Aaron Buncle, Environmental Resource Economist, SPREP, Apia, Samoa (CFTC Expert)

#### Commonwealth Secretariat staff interviewed in Honiara, Solomon Islands

35. Ms Afu Billy, Regional Director, Commonwealth Youth Programme, Honiara
36. Mr Sushil Ram, Programme Manager, Commonwealth Youth Programme Honiara
37. Mr Paul Pateru, Programme Manager, Commonwealth Youth Programme, Honiara
38. Ms Janice Spalding, Acting Director, Commonwealth Pacific Governance Facility

#### Commonwealth Secretariat staff interviewed in London

39. Taiamoni Pifeleti, Adviser- South Pacific, Governance and Institutional Development Division
40. Laura Southerland, Programme Manager, Governance and Institutional Development Division
41. Tim Newman, Acting Director, Governance and Institutional Development Division
42. Elroy Turner, Assistant Project Manager Hub & Spokes Project, Secretary-General's Office
43. Jarvis Matiya, Head of Justice Section, Legal & Constitutional Affairs Division
44. Mark Guthrie, Legal Adviser, Legal & Constitutional Affairs Division
45. Mark Stevens, Head of Democracy Section, Political Affairs Division
46. Karen McKenzie, Acting Head, Human Rights Unit
47. Meena Shivdas, Adviser-Gender, Social Transformations Programme Division
48. Joshua Brien, Adviser and Head, Economic and Legal Section, Special Advisory Services Division
49. Jose Maurel, Director, Special Advisory Services Division
50. Walton Gilpin, Adviser- Debt Management, Special Advisory Services Division
51. Carilus Odumbe, Adviser- Debt Management, Special Advisory Services Division



## Annex 3: Evaluation Framework

Evaluation Criteria/ Issues	Questions	Information Sources & Methods/Tools
<p>Relevance</p> <p>(The extent to which the assistance was suited to the priorities and policies of the target group).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the objectives of the programmes/ projects being implemented by Divisions and are they relevant to the needs and priorities of member countries? What is the relevance of the assistance against the Secretariat's Strategic Plan, as well as the development policy of the member country? Did the Secretariat 'do the right things?' To what extent have member countries/partners been involved in shaping project activities to meet their needs?</li> <li>Are other agencies providing similar services adequate enough to cover member countries? In which areas does/might the Secretariat have a comparative advantage?</li> </ul>	<p>Project documents</p> <p>Secretariat staff</p> <p>Secretariat Strategic Plan</p> <p>Country Plans of selected countries</p> <p>Country visits</p> <p>Stakeholder interviews.</p>
<p>Effectiveness</p> <p>(A measure of the extent to which an activity attains its objectives).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent have Secretariat projects achieved their objectives?</li> <li>What were the factors that hindered or facilitated realisation and achievement of these objectives?</li> <li>What could have been done differently to improve implementation?</li> <li>How effective has the relationship between Secretariat divisions in delivery of programme results?</li> </ul>	<p>Analysis of project documents</p> <p>Country visits</p> <p>Stakeholder interviews</p> <p>Interviews within ComSec</p>
<p>Efficiency</p> <p>(Efficiency measures the outputs - qualitative and quantitative - in relation to the inputs).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Were objectives achieved on time?</li> <li>Were actual expenditure levels in line with planned expenditure? Were there any significant changes or delays?</li> <li>Has the assistance been delivered in ways that avoided and minimized duplication, bureaucracy and complexity?</li> <li>How well has the Secretariat collaborated with partner agencies? Are there other possible collaborations which it should have considered?</li> </ul>	<p>Project documents</p> <p>Country visits</p> <p>Stakeholder interviews</p> <p>Interviews within ComSec</p>

Evaluation Criteria/ Issues	Questions	Information Sources & Methods/Tools
<p>Outcomes/Impact</p> <p>(The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has Secretariat assistance made a difference and has there been any identifiable change? What has happened as a result of the programme or project and what is the evidence of this change?</li> <li>• What would have happened without the Secretariat's involvement?</li> <li>• To what extent has Secretariat assistance contributed towards capacity development, strengthening of institutions and poverty reduction?</li> <li>• What positive and negative effects are resulting from Secretariat assistance? Is it demonstrable that the positive effects will outweigh the negative ones?</li> </ul>	<p>Project documents</p> <p>Country visits</p> <p>Stakeholder interviews</p> <p>Interviews within ComSec</p>
<p>Approach to cross-cutting themes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were issues relating to gender, human rights and youth integrated in the design and delivery of Secretariat's efforts? What difference has this made?</li> </ul>	<p>Project documents</p> <p>Secretariat staff and other stakeholder interviews</p> <p>Country visits</p>
<p>Sustainability</p> <p>(Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after funding has ceased).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent did the benefits accruing from Secretariat interventions continued after the funding ceased?</li> <li>• What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the programme or project?</li> </ul>	<p>Project documents</p> <p>Country visits</p> <p>Stakeholder interviews</p>
<p>Forward looking analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In future, what should be the focus of the programme of assistance?</li> <li>• How can the Secretariat ensure that its assistance will yield demonstrable results?</li> <li>• What lessons are to be learnt in the design and delivery of future assistance?</li> <li>• Should the Secretariat do things differently to order to be more effective?</li> </ul>	<p>Recommendations based on analysis of "relevance" issues.</p> <p>Country visits and documents</p> <p>Stakeholder interviews.</p>

## Annex 4: References

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