

Evaluation of the UNDP
National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
Parliamentary Strengthening Project (PSP)
Phase III: 2012—2015



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The views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the UNDP or its affiliates.

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Glossary of Terms

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
MWYC	Ministry of Women, Youth, and Children’s Affairs
NPSI	National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
NPO	National Parliament Office
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PSP	Parliamentary Strengthening Project
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands
SIDS	Small Islands Developing States
TSI	Transparency International Solomon Islands
TSM	Temporary Special Measures
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
YWPG	Young Women’s Parliamentary Group

I. Executive Summary

The third phase of development assistance to the National Parliament of the Solomon Islands through the Parliamentary Strengthening Project (PSP) began in April 2012 and is scheduled to conclude in March 2015 with total project financial resources of **\$1,110,000 USD** of which \$294,415 (USD) is provided by UNDP TRAC funds and \$805,585 (USD) in Australian (AusAID) funds.¹

The third phase PSP has demonstrated a number of successful outcomes in accordance with the original project goals and objectives as outlined in the UNDP Project Document (2012)². These include:

- Successful strengthening of the operation, function and institutional capacity of the parliament secretariat and staff
- Enhanced capacity and operational sustainability of parliamentary committees, including public hearings, enhanced budgetary transparency, and public access to the legislative process.
- Introduction in Phase III of Parliament and Civil Society workshop to follow Phase II “Parliament Open Day and Parliament Open Week” providing citizen access to the building and their elected representatives.
- Youth engagement in the legislative process through the “Youth in Parliament” programme.³
- Increased access for young women to the parliamentary process through the Mock Parliament, and voice for a traditionally under-represented sector of Solomon Island citizenry through the “Young Women’s Parliamentary Group.”⁴
- Formation and implementation of Committees of Inquiry. In addition, parliamentary beneficiaries of UNDP development assistance acknowledge that UNDP intervention has resulted in capacity building and institutional strengthening of the parliamentary committee system overall in the National Parliament.

¹ Equivalent of 750,000 AUD calculated using UNORE for March 2012 (0.931)

² See UNDP Project Document: “Strengthening the National Parliament of the Solomon Islands (2012):

<http://pacificpolicy.org/blog/2011/02/07/solomon-islands/>. Accessed on August 28, 2014.

³ See Youth in Parliament (2013): <http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=node/743>. Accessed on August 28, 2014.

⁴ See UNDP Mock Women’s Parliament (2014): <http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=node/763> and Young Women’s Parliamentary Group (2011): <http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=node/613>. Accessed on August 28, 2014. See also: Solomon Islands National Council of Women at

http://www.commonwealthofnations.org/sectors-solomon_islands/civil_society/national_ngos_civil_society.

Accessed on September 8, 2014.

Looking forward toward potential interventions subsequent to the end of Phase III of the PSP (March 2015), a number of potential funding, capacity-building, and technical assistance options might be considered for combined UNDP seed fund support, Solomon Islands government support, and potential international donor funding.

Provided there is an eventual agreement between the Parliament and the Executive branch (Office of the Prime Minister) regarding parliamentary autonomy and to build on the successes of the programme to date, there are opportunities for UNDP and partner organizations to provide additional technical assistance and development support training in a number of areas, including:

- **MP orientation and induction training** focused on the practical aspects of parliamentary process, procedure, and the constitutionally-mandated role and responsibilities of a parliamentarian—including the importance of constituent outreach, effective representation in Parliament of the electorate, legislative drafting, rules of procedure, committee structure and function and other aspects to ensure MPs understand and fulfill the broader parliamentary mandate of **representation, legislation, and oversight**.
- Continued assistance to the **Procedures Department** regarding work plan outcomes assumed by UNDP in 2014: a study commissioned on autonomy for the parliament; a handbook on Legislative Process for MPs; input regarding legislative strategy, and; a timetable for the legislative process
- Planning and implementation strategies according to an established and publicly-available **legislative calendar**
- Effective legislative process strategies, including full implementation of committee and sub-committee **Rules of Procedure** (Standing Orders) with particular emphasis on sustainable staff capacity in assisting committees in this regard.
- Assistance helping NPSI to ensure regular participation in periodic plenary sessions (**quorum**).⁵
- In accordance with the pending revised **Federal Constitution**, guidance on municipal governance from the parliamentary perspective—including budgetary process, legislative process, and democratic representation as is possible and appropriate considering other UNDP-funded programmes in the Solomon Islands and the limitations of UNDP SI intervention capacity.
- Guidance and intervention on **transparency, public accountability**, and citizen (and civil society) participation in the legislative process.
- Continued support for an independent, professional, well-trained and **sustainable parliamentary staff** and civil service capacity.

⁵ See Transparency International report on attendance by MPs in the 9th Parliament published September 2014.

- Providing an opportunity for **direct interaction between international donors active in the region with MPs and government officials** as part of a proposed donors' conference sponsored by UNDP to encourage alternative and supplemental funding and technical assistance provision during the remaining months of Phase III of PSP. Given the considerable resources dedicated to the NPSI by the UNDP and in particular AusAID over the past 10 years during phases I, II and III of PSP, there may be an opportunity for UNDP to transition toward a more limited and targeted scope of development assistance from March 2015.⁶

A common theme raised by the majority of interlocutors during the Phase III PSP evaluation process is the concurrent desire for parliamentary autonomy from the executive while ensuring that the incremental progress made during the 10-year, 3-phase UNDP PSP implementation period be maintained from 2015. This commonly-held view suggests that the UNDP, as a multi-lateral and neutral international development organization, might facilitate both the process of parliamentary autonomy while continuing to provide technical assistance to the Solomon Islands parliament—albeit in modified form and with alternative funding in the interest of increased donor-NPSI autonomy. This autonomy is also fostered in such cases where the Solomon Islands government assumes at least part of the financial and project implementation responsibility for a given programme of technical and sustainable development assistance.

On this latter point, and as suggested by various parliamentary stakeholders interviewed as part of the PSP Phase III evaluation process, it may prove beneficial for the UNDP to stage a donors' conference during the remaining months of the PSP and in particular prior to (or in conjunction with) the formation of a new government, presumably by the end of calendar year 2014.

Thereafter, and as noted in the UNDP-sponsored *Baseline Report on Solomon Islands Parliamentary Autonomy* (2013):

“The wider task of the NPO on autonomy is set out in Parliament’s Strategic Plan 2012-2016, which identifies „parliamentary autonomy” as a key aspect of a long term aim to modernise Parliament as an institution. NPO has set out to complete this task with the assistance of the Parliamentary Strengthening Project (“PSP”) managed by the United Nations Development Programme (“UNDP”), Honiara Office, and based in Parliament.

⁶ For example, the current successful cooperation between UNDP and AusAid as part of PSP III might be modified or expanded to include direct programme support through SI government cost-sharing and/or such donors as DFID (UK), CIDA (Canada), SWEDA (Sweden), USAID (USA), Japan (JICA), and China [see: <http://www.lowyinstitute.org/issues/china-pacific>], among others. See also: “China announces more aid, and loans, to Pacific islands countries.” The Development Policy Centre: <http://devpolicy.org/china-announces-more-aid-and-loans-to-pacific-islands-countries-20131113-2>. Accessed on August 28, 2014.

The task is set out in the Results and Resources Framework of the PSP and its Annual Work Plan 2013 as a priority output to pursue [between 2013] and 2016.”⁷

⁷ Excerpted from the “Baseline Report on Solomon Islands Parliamentary Autonomy (2013).” See also: “Results and Resources Framework/PSP” and “PSP Annual Work Plans (2013 and 2014).”

II. Project Background

In response to a Terms of Reference and public solicitation for open-bid proposals issued by the UNDP Solomon Islands office, a detailed proposal with requisite implementation timeline and project budget was submitted in May 2014. The UNDP Solomon Islands office then determined that the proposal submitted by this independent international development consultant was most in keeping with the immediate evaluation needs of the UNDP PSP Phase III programme.

The overall UNDP programme of parliamentary strengthening assistance to the NPSI began in 2005 and was established within an initial limited-intervention development framework that expanded into a decade-long programme of capacity-building and institutional strengthening to the Parliament of the Solomon Islands. In brief, and as outlined in the parliamentary strategy for the period 2012—2016:⁸

Brief Project Description

This project aims to strengthen the National Parliament of Solomon Islands in carrying out its core functions, based upon the parliament’s first and comprehensive “5 Year Strategic Plan 2012-2016” and with quality support by the National Parliament Office (NPO) and its staff.

The Strategic Plan will modernize parliament by introducing a Parliamentary Calendar, reflecting a Legislative Agenda. Parliament’s core functions, to legislate and to oversee, will be strengthened through increased Committee support. Parliament’s outreach and parliamentarians’ representative role will be enhanced during the “Week of Parliament”. The project envisages parliament as the context for development of a gender policy.

This project document constitutes the third [and possibly final] phase of the UNDP’s “Parliamentary Strengthening Project” in Solomon Islands. Recognizing the significant achievements of the previous two phases of the project, sustainability and national ownership in parliamentary development were central considerations to the project design of this phase of the project. Therefore, the project broadens the cooperation with other partners, and consolidates the quality level of the work of the parliament’s staff services.

As of September 2014, the 10-year UNDP programme of parliamentary technical assistance and sustainable development support is completing its third and final phase. It is anticipated that with the accomplishment of nationwide parliamentary elections⁹ in late 2014 and the

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ As announced by the Prime Minister during Question Time in the House session of Wednesday, September 3, it is expected that approximately 8 political parties will be duly registered in accordance with the Political Parties Integrity Act (2014). Registration must be accomplished on or before the date when the Governor General announces Election Day. All duly registered parties must have a minimum of 250 signatures from party members/activists, pay a registration fee, and provide a detailed application (inclusive of party symbol, manifesto, among other requirements) in order to compete in the 2014 parliamentary elections.

Full requirements are available at:

<http://www.parliament.gov.sb/files/committees/bills&legislationcommittee/2014/Political%20Parties%20Integrity%20Bill%202014.pdf>. Accessed on September 5, 2014.

subsequent formation of a new government presumably by the end of the calendar year, UNDP will enter a period of modified assistance to the Solomon Islands parliament.

As such, the UNDP determined to conduct this third phase evaluation consultancy in 2014.

To that end, a UNDP-sponsored in-country independent evaluation was conducted from mid-August through mid-September 2014. This objective review and analysis of relevant project documentation, periodic programme analyses, and on-site interviews with relevant stakeholders and programme-related interlocutors resulted in this Evaluation Report which contains analysis of programme successes and challenges to date and includes recommendations for potential follow-on parliamentary development support and possible donor-sponsored intervention moving forward from March 2015. There is of course the cost-sharing option to consider in which the government of the Solomon Islands commits to a percentage of project funding to enhance both ownership and sustainability probability of parliamentary institutional development from 2015.

The changing nature of UNDP technical assistance to the Solomon Islands parliament is highlighted. Additionally, potential areas for continued support in modified form are included. The main text details a number of areas in which the UNDP Parliamentary Strengthening Project (PSP) has demonstrated particular success and those areas in which future technical assistance might be modified, strengthened, enhanced, or reduced in scope.

It is also important to consider Solomon Island government sponsorship, at least in part, of any potential future assistance to ensure local ownership and support for future parliamentary development projects or programmes.

III. Evaluation Methodology

The one-month consultancy began upon counter-signed contract submitted to the UNDP on August 12, 2014. Thereafter, the consultant began independent on-line research of the project to date with supporting desk review documentation provided by the PSP Programme Manager who is based in Honiara (SI). Documents and on-line resource desk review included:¹⁰

- UNDP PSP support strategy, 2005—2015
- UNDP NPSI Project Document (PSP Phase III), 2012—2015
- National Parliament of Solomon Islands (NPSI) Strategy Annual Report (SAR), vol. 2
- Solomon Islands National Development Strategy, 2011—2020
- UNDP Strategic Plan, 2014—2017
- Young Women’s Discussion forum (in collaboration with iKnowPolitics)
- Youth parliamentary leadership programme
- Engaging civil society and giving voice to civic groups in Parliament
- Composition and Hansard records of the 9th Parliament¹¹
- Political Parties Integrity Bill and subsequent Act (2014)

Thereafter, the consultant traveled to Honiara for three weeks of on-site discussions, interviews, continued document review, programme analysis, report drafting—including evaluation focus on UNDP, parliamentary staff, parliamentary leadership, and external stakeholders (e.g. civil society, media, et al). Preliminary findings were presented to the UNDP and parliamentary stakeholders during the final week in country. Comments submitted by participants during this session are incorporated into the final version of the evaluation report submitted to the UNDP Solomon Islands office at project completion (September 2014).¹²

¹⁰ A complete list of research and desk review references and bibliography is included as an Annex 2 to this report.

¹¹ The Hansard is the record of the proceedings of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands. All the debates, speeches and questions asked in Parliament are recorded and written down in the Hansard. Electronic copies of hansard are available from the sixth Parliament onwards. Earlier copies of Hansard are available from the National Parliament library. On-line access available at: <http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=node/288>. Accessed on August 27, 2014.

¹² See Annex 1 for a complete list of interviewees.

IV. Baseline Legislative Needs Assessment and Project Document Assessment¹³

It is clear from initial project documentation that the UNDP intended that Phase 3 (2012-2015) of the Parliamentary Strengthening Project (PSP) to the National Parliament would result in a consolidated and sustainable national representative body. While evident progress is noted elsewhere in this report, there is an opportunity for continued UNDP parliamentary development assistance in line with NPSI beneficiary-identified desire for continued assistance after March 2015—even if in somewhat modified form.

As noted in the series of interviews conducted on site in Honiara and in detail throughout the content of this report, incremental progress has been made in numerous areas of parliamentary process and institutional capacity building. However, the ability for individual MPs, existing parliamentary staff, and the legislative body as a whole to function efficiently, effectively and sustainably on an independent basis without a gradual phase-out of development assistance is in question.

There is an evident opportunity for UNDP to continue to fulfill its identified and recognized role as an impartial multi-lateral development organization. The support provided to Phase III PSP included a majority of funding from the Australian government with seed funding from UNDP TRAC funds. A continued transfer of programme design and implementation authority to the NPSI over time will likely result in continued forward momentum, institutional sustainability, and project ownership—provided the project phases out over time rather than abruptly concludes in March 2015. This is of particular import given the unknown composition and professional skills of MPs yet to be elected and parliamentary staff in transition as of September 2014.

¹³ See Baseline Report “Parliamentary Legislative Needs Assessment” (UNDP) and Project Document for the Parliamentary Strengthening Project/Phase III (UNDP, 2012-2015).

V. Project Document Indicators and Evaluation Assessment of PSP Outcomes to Date¹⁴

A comparison of those project progress indicators provided in the PSP Phase III Project Document (2012) follows with specific attention paid to the period of this evaluation from project inception in April 2012 through project implementation to date as of September 2014.
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2.1. Strategy Foundations

2.1.1. Strategic Plan of Parliament as project basis

“The National Parliament of Solomon Islands has initiated a process to draft and adopt its own five-year Strategic plan. This is an important step to maturity and institutionalization of democratic structures and culture. The Speaker of the National Parliament has called upon, amongst others, the development partners of the country to work in partnership with the National Parliament to achieve the vision, mission and objectives as outlined in the Strategic Plan. With this Project Document, UNDP responds to the call of the Speaker, and outlines in concrete terms the way in which UNDP wants to assist in the implementation of the Strategic Plan.”

Outcomes to date during PSP Phase III implementation: Strategic Plan drafted and accepted by Parliament and currently in implementation, inclusive of the implementation indicators note below and per the PSP Phase III Project Document (2012).

Current status: Strategic Plan document achieved. Implementation as of September 2014 in process. Important to consider three primary aspects of strategic planning: effective utilization of people (human resources), money (available financial resources), and time in this regard. As of September 2014, there are issues with human resource management in terms of the parliament-identified need to train and retain qualified staff over time, financial management in terms of parliament’s ability to manage and control financial expenditures independent of the executive (OPM), and time management in terms of parliament’s ability to devise and adhere to a fixed legislative calendar.

2.1.2 Focus on Committees of Parliament

¹⁴ As excerpted from the UNDP Project Document, PSP Phase III:

<http://www.parliament.gov.sb/files/project/phase3/2011-06-27%20Project%20Document%20SOLOMON%20ISLANDS.pdf>. Accessed on September 3, 2014.

¹⁵ See also Solomon Islands participation in the regional development goals and objectives as established during the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) conference, September 2014: <http://www.sids2014.org/>. Accessed on September 3, 2014.

“In the third phase of the project, UNDP will implement a specific approach towards Committee support. Firstly, in the first year of the project UNDP will provide staff support to the Committees Department in the NPO, via the Constitutional expert / senior legal officer and one legal advisor. Secondly, UNDP will offer technical advice and expertise on the issues under responsibility of the Committees, in terms of their legislative and oversight role. Thirdly, UNDP will support the Committee outreach initiatives. The technical advice and expertise to Committees will aim at the following outputs: improve the legislative process, support Committee public hearings and consultations, enhance MP oversight techniques, pilot review of implementation of legislation, and strengthen the research capacity of committees by incorporating best practices and by working more directly with the NPO research and library capacities. Project activities, next to vital daily support by the NPO staff, will be: legislative drafting training for Committee staff, development of Committee Annual Work Plans, creating database of external experts and CSOs per Committee, communication and presentation skills trainings for MPs, and opportunities for exchange of views, experiences and peer-support by other MPs visiting Honiara in the framework of a number of roundtables on technical topics / draft laws on the agenda of the Committee.”

Outcomes to date during Phase III PSP implementation: Committees have expanded in scope and specific competencies. This is noted in particular with regards to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and efforts toward public information, outreach, and public accessibility to the legislative process via public hearings. While there is progress noted in all areas as listed above (and in particular regarding committee outreach and public access to the legislative process), there remains a challenge in ensuring sustainability without ongoing technical support and attention to the day-to-day operational functioning and capacity of committees in Parliament. In addition, some parliamentary interlocutors asked that UNDP consider ongoing support for an independent and professional civil service which would encourage parliamentary staff to continue work with the NPSI given their developed professional capacity and competencies during the PSP programme implementation period.

Current status: Committees have demonstrated identifiable, meaningful and incremental progress during the Phase III implementation period to date. There is evident and parliament-identified need for measures to ensure independent and sustainable institutional development in this regard. Such measures might include specific and targeted funding to ensure that the lessons learned and operational capacity developed during Phase III is not lost when the 10th Parliament is convened.

2.1.3 Working cooperatively with other partners

“In addition to UNDP, the National Parliament of Solomon Islands can count on the support of the New South Wales (NSW) Parliament through the Twinning Project. As part of the Australian-Pacific Parliaments Twinning Programme (coordinated by the Australian Federal Parliament), the NSW Parliament is now officially paired with the Solomon Islands Parliament. In support of their twinning relationship, in 2009 the NSW Parliament applied for, and was

awarded, AusAID funding to work with the Parliaments of Solomon Islands and Bougainville. Planning and coordination between the NSW “Twinning Project and the UNDP Project has increased during 2011. The NSW Twinning Project is an important means by which key staff can obtain technical skills development, including through attachments to the NSW Parliament. The mid-term evaluation of the second phase of the UNDP project recommends that UNDP, the NSW Parliament and the Solomon Islands Parliament should endeavor to undertake joint annual planning, to ensure that all parties coordinate their activities and each support institution leverages their comparative advantage for the benefit of the Solomon Islands Parliament; and this is actually already under way.

“For the technical advice from fellow MPs from sister-Committees, UNDP will explore cooperation modalities with above partners as well as with the Parliament of New Zealand. These parliaments will certainly be one likely source for a Senior Parliamentary Advisor to the Parliament of Solomon Islands as of April 2013, when, as envisaged here, the mandate of the UNDP-recruited CTA (in this project) will expire. As the third phase of the project anticipates a larger number of parliament donor support programs as well as a diversification of the donor base for the UNDP project budget, UNDP project staff will assist the Speaker and Clerk in donor coordination initiatives. These initiatives will include Parliament’s briefings to donors and international representatives on the proceedings in parliament; Donor Coordination Forum on parliament’s capacity building; and the Project Board overseeing the implementation of the UNDP project.”

Outcomes to date during Phase III PSP implementation: This has been a particularly noteworthy success for the PSP and as evidenced by regional training, secondment (Committees of Inquiry), staff development, and MP interaction which has increased in frequency and with substantive impact on parliamentary capacity during PSP Phase III implementation. The training and consultation aspects as noted in 2.1.4 are also evidence of this.

Current status: identified and recognized success for PSP III. UNDP may want to consider ensuring that institutional memory is maintained so that the capacity developed is not lost to staff turnover and MP replacement as a result of the 2014 parliamentary elections.

2.1.4 Knowledge building and knowledge transfer

“In addition to national staff, Project Manager and the Senior Parliamentary Advisor (one year), a highly selective and targeted use will be made of consultants (some internationally sourced) to provide expertise in specific and technical areas and conduct comparative research. Highly prioritized capacity development through interactions between international consultants and Solomon Islands parliamentarians and senior staff should therefore be an additional tool to the operation of the project. The selection and the role of the consultants requires careful and precise preparation and follow-up to achieve value for money. However, international support is unlikely, by itself, to provide the range of interventions required to build the capacity required without a strong management which is constantly directing and monitoring capacity

transfer on a number of fronts. The Project Manager will need to be in constant contact with the experts and consultants, whether in-country or abroad, to be able to provide them with up-to-date assessments and requests in order to match the capacity gaps and the interventions as delivered by the project. The utilization of international and national democratic parliamentary or governance institutions can also substantially enhance the opportunities for knowledge building and knowledge transfer.”

Outcomes to date during PSP Phase III implementation: Three consultants were hired during the PSP III implementation period to date primarily through the New South Wales Parliament as part of the parliamentary Twinning Arrangement. The interaction of the consultants with parliamentarians and staff was in an approximate time ratio of 30% (MPs) and 70% (parliamentary staff). The primary areas of focus for the consultations were: amendments to the standing orders, committee inquiries, and committee stakeholder information workshops. An additional consultant was hired to conduct a Change Management Seminar for parliamentary staff, opposition members, and independents. In addition, the project also worked with a number of local and regional bodies to provide specific training to such groups as the National Council of Women, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Inter parliamentary Union (IPU)¹⁶ and International Centre for Parliamentary Studies ICPS.¹⁷

Current status: Consultant phase of PSP III completed.

2.1.5 Building on lessons learned in parliamentary development

“The proposed project phase intends making use of lessons learned in parliamentary development from across UNDP and other parliamentary development organizations. The issues on which the parliament of Solomon Islands seeks advice and expertise have been discussed and explored, too, in other parliaments as well. The project will bring on board a number of ‘lessons learned’, through the expertise of parliamentarians and consultants, knowledge materials, manuals and handbooks as well as the guidance of staff of the UNDP Democratic Governance Group. The project will seek to receive further best practices guidance through AGORA, the multilateral portal on parliamentary development.”

Outcomes to date during PSP Phase III implementation: No specific outcomes for this indicator reported as of September 2014. However, the regional cooperation and best practices sharing of the regional parliament twinning activities are noted in this context.

Current status: Pending.

2.2. Sustainability and project transition

¹⁶ See Parliament of Australia, Regional Parliamentary programmes: http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/International_Program/Parliamentary_Strengthening and IPU/Solomon Islands: http://www.ipu.org/parline/reports/2289_E.htm. Accessed on September 4, 2014.

¹⁷ See: International Centre for Parliamentary Studies (ICPS) website, international parliamentary development programmes: http://www.parlicentre.org/int_training.php. Accessed on September 4, 2014.

“During the second phase of the project, core staff positions needed for the functioning of a democratic parliament have been established with support of UNDP. These include 1 Human Resources and Strategy Support Manager, 1 constitutional expert / senior legal advisor, 1 Media officer, 1 Human Resources and Strategy Support officer, 2 Civic Education officers, 3 legal staff officers, 1 graduate accountant, 2 principal Hansard reporters, 1 Procedures officer, 1 ICT officer. The second phase of the project thus envisaged the financial support for the salary of a number of staff.

“Since several of the above mentioned UNDP-financed staff are fulfilling core-functions in parliament, without which a democratic parliament cannot function, the parliament of Solomon Islands should aspire that the state budget takes responsibility for covering the costs of salaries of these staff persons. This will ensure sustainability of the UNDP investments in the human resources of the parliament. While a discontinuation of all UNDP staff salary support by the end of the second phase of the project (March 2012) would seriously disrupt the functioning of parliament, it would not be prudent to wholly rely on external support for core-functions of parliament. The new and final project phase therefore envisaged a deliberate and progressive reduction of financial support to staff salaries.”

Outcomes to date during PSP Phase III implementation: As of September 2014, all NPSI staff compensation previously provided by UNDP under PSP has been fully transferred to the Solomon Islands government.

Current Status: completed.

2.4. Integration of cross-cutting themes

“Parliament plays a fundamental role in establishing the rule of law, protecting human rights, overseeing transparent governance processes, and ensuring national compliance with international obligations. As the supreme law making body in the Solomon Islands, the decisions of the National Parliament have a major impact on issues facing society, such as peace and stability, the Millennium Development Goals, human rights and gender equality.

“Pursuit of activities explicitly focused on cross-cutting themes will need to be integrated within the overall work program of the project and considered carefully, cognizant of the need to maintain support for the parliament in its key functional areas, of the level of support for such activities within the parliament, and of the legislative mandate within which the parliamentary administration and the Committees have to work. An indicative approach to integration of cross-cutting issues will be as follows:

2.4.1. Gender

“Due to the failed attempt in 2010 to introduce Temporary Special Measures (TSM) prior to the 2010 elections -- in concrete terms the proposal for 10 reserved seats for women in the

National Parliament -- cautious consideration needs to be given to the best possible way in which the Parliament can play a constructive role in advancing the cause for enhanced women representation in parliament. Specific activities may include: the creation of a “Speakers Reflection Group” on gender policy of parliament, Young Women’s Leadership Group in parliament, developing gender messages as a central component of parliamentary education initiatives; ensuring human resources management systems are gender sensitive; reviewing legislation on possible gender-discriminatory provisions and developing amendments to remedy it where appropriate; and liaison with the multilateral platform supporting women in politics.”

Outcomes to date during PSP Phase III implementation: The Young Women’s Parliamentary Group formed during Phase II PSP (2010) followed by the Mock Parliament conducted during Phase III PSP are the two identifiable outcomes for the PSP for Gender to date. Work with the Ministry of Women, Youth, and Children, as well as the civic outreach accomplished as part of the legislative process specific to the Family Protection Bill (2014) are additional highlights of programme success to date. The YWPG cooperation with UNIFEM and the MWYC also supports the “liaison with multilateral platforms supporting women in politics” aspect of this indicator.

2.4.2. Human Rights

“Specific activities focused on human rights may include facilitating involvement of external organizations such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Regional Rights and Resources Team to deliver training and support for the Bills and Legislation Committee and the new Justice Committee.”

Outcomes to date during PSP Phase III implementation: No specific Human Rights training or support identified under PSP III to date.

2.4.3. Millennium Development Goals and poverty reduction

“Specific activities focused on the Millennium Development Goals and poverty reduction may include: supporting the new Committees on Health, Education, and Justice to conduct investigations and discuss and review government initiatives in these matters. On these topics there is need for a strong and effective parliament which scrutinizes the government and government policies, in order to result in actions and policies that will assist meeting MDGs, improving protection of people’s human rights, amongst other things. The project envisages a number of thematic seminars and roundtable discussions on Draft Laws, including those covering MDG-topics. The project will produce three parliamentary handbooks on selected topics: 1. Climate change¹⁸, environment, energy; 2. MDGs; 3. Children’s Rights and Protection.”

¹⁸ Note the statements made on behalf of regional governments participating in the September 2014 Small Islands Developing States (SIDS), including reference to climate change and the negative impact of global warming and

Outcomes to date during PSP Phase III implementation: While no specific handbooks for MDGs were developed during PSP III implementation to date, the project has supported Children’s Rights and Protection via the Education Committee in its inquiry into the issue of teacher absenteeism in Solomon Islands schools. A special select committee also investigated the problem of children’s access to schools due to bus and transport challenges in Honiara. The Family Protection Act passed at the end of the 9th Parliament term also supports 2.4.3 (3) Children’s Rights and Protection as well as those Millennium Development Goals relevant to family and children’s rights.

Current Status:

Gender: in process with opportunity for continued UNDP support given success to date of this aspect of UNDP development assistance and evaluation participant identified need for increased gender equality in the NPSI and Solomon Island society in general.

Human Rights: pending.

MDGs: pending with some initial programme support success.

rising sea levels on the fragile ecosystem, fisheries, tourism and habitable land of the small islands in the Pacific region—including the Solomon Islands.

See: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=960&menu=35>. Accessed on September 6, 2014.

VI. Phase III Parliamentary Strengthening Project: Results and Resources Framework: Analysis and Recommendations

The third phase PSP has demonstrated a number of successful outcomes in accordance with the original project goals and objectives as outlined in the UNDP Project Document (2012) and annual work plans from PSP Phase III inception in April 2013 through the evaluation period in September 2014, with specific reference to the Results and Resources Framework as follows:¹⁹

Output 1: MODERNIZING PARLIAMENT AND EMPOWERING STAFF

Output 1.2. Parliamentary staff services strengthened

1.2.1 Human Resources Strategy and Plan for parliamentary staff

As of September 2014, all positions paid for by the UNDP have been turned over to the NPSI.

HR policies, including job descriptions, are in place. The issue of institutional memory given the relatively high staff turnover remains and will need to be resolved the NPSI's various departments in line with the NPSI strategic plan.

1.2.2. Professional skills training for Parliamentary staff

Staff training has taken place during the PSP III implementation period to date. Consideration should be given to the question of NPSI responsibility for ensuring that new staff are adequately trained independent of direct UNDP intervention. This includes NPO taking responsibility for ensuring overlap between outgoing staff and incoming staff to allow adequate training and skills transfer. This is particularly important during the transition between the 9th and 10th parliaments given the expected staff turnover as MPs are either re-elected or not with concurrent changes to their portfolio from 2015.

1.2.3. Effective Reporting of Parliamentary Proceedings

The Hansard Department is reported to currently have 9 staff members, inclusive of 2 editors and 7 proceedings transcribers. There is an identified need to assist this department in managing both the file load and the department's ability to post parliamentary documents on the Parliament's web page. There is also an identified delay in the department's ability to ensure transcription and posting of proceedings in a timely manner. This is a time management, staff resource and financial issue, with the latter reflecting the need for consideration of additional funding for adequate ICT resources to allow more rapid transcription and uploading of parliamentary proceedings.

¹⁹ See UNDP Project Document: "Strengthening the National Parliament of the Solomon Islands (2012): <http://pacificpolicy.org/blog/2011/02/07/solomon-islands/>. Accessed on August 28, 2014.

1.2.4. Creating an e-Parliament

The ICT department is housed in the Parliament Library and maintains the parliament web page as well as other aspects of the NPSI electronic information management system. One external obstacle is the limitations imposed by available internet accessibility Guadalcanal and in particular on the islands removed both geographically and technologically from Honiara. When both the general population and the government are beneficiaries of improved Interweb access, the ability for citizens to access their government and for the Parliament to utilize existing web-based technologies is likely to improve.²⁰

The NPSI currently has an operational and periodically updated website:

<http://www.parliament.gov.sb/>

Output 2: SUPPORT TO PARLIAMENT’S CORE BUSINESS: LEGISLATION AND OVERSIGHT

Strengthening of the operation, function and institutional capacity of the parliament secretariat

This is evidenced through the acknowledgement of direct beneficiaries of the project who described the gradual and sustainable evolution of staff and institutional capacity from essentially a minimally functional secretariat at the outset of the first phase of the PSP (2001) which has steadily increased in operational capacity and staff skills—and in particular since 2011 with the introduction of various tools for maintaining institutional memory despite staff turnover. This includes detailed job descriptions, electronic record keeping, and the preservation of relevant documentation to ensure that the parliament functions well on a day to day basis and in particular during periods of post-electoral government transition.

Output 2.1: Legislative functioning of parliament strengthened

Enhanced capacity and operational sustainability of parliamentary committees, including public hearings, enhanced budgetary transparency, and public access to the legislative process

Progress is noted in these areas by reporting on committee structure from the UNDP and through the increase in the number of public hearings during PSP Phase III and as recorded in the Hansard during the past two years of the project. Public access and enhanced parliamentary oversight through the committee mechanism is evidenced through the activity of

²⁰ As of September 2014, there is an effort led by Australia to examine the feasibility of installing sub-surface fiber optic cable connecting many of the Pacific SIDS to the Australian mainland for high-speed internet access. See: <http://broadbandtoolkit.org/7.5>. Accessed on September 20, 2014.

the **Public Accounts Committee** (PAC) during Phase III. Both PAC and the **Bills & Legislative Committee** have demonstrated an openness to public access to the legislative process during the PSP III implementation period.

Formation and implementation of Committees of Inquiry

In August 2012 following the annual Effective Parliamentary Committee Inquiry Course conducted at the Centre for Democratic Institutions with funding and support from the New South Wales (NSW) Parliament, four NPSI staff were seconded to Committee offices and to Hansard. The week-long secondment involved close collaboration with staff from the NSW Parliament and Bougainville House of Representatives, putting into practice the lessons of the Effective Parliamentary Committee Inquiry Course (EPCIC) and developing projects from home parliaments.²¹

Thereafter in May 2013 and following the annual EPCIC at the Centre for Democratic Institutions funded and hosted by NSW Parliament, four NPSI staff were seconded to various NSW Parliament sections. The week-long secondment involved close collaboration with staff from the NSW Parliament and Bougainville House of Representatives, putting into practice the lessons of the EPCIC and developing projects from home parliaments.²²

In addition, parliamentary beneficiaries of UNDP development assistance acknowledge that UNDP intervention has resulted in capacity building and institutional strengthening of the parliamentary committee system in the National Parliament. This includes Committees of Inquiry and the more general institutional and capacity-building for committee staff and MPs serving on respective committees.

2.1.1. Foundations for improved legislative review and drafting

As noted elsewhere in this report, a Legislative Needs Assessment was conducted. An annual timetable for the legislative process was drafted and its importance recognized in the Parliament's strategic plan. However, there is an issue regarding the Parliament's ability to regularly maintain, update and adhere to this timetable. The UNDP has conducted seminars and workshops as part of the process towards improving the legislative process.

2.1.2 Technical expertise and thematic policy advice for Committees

A constitutional expert was recruited during the initial PSP III implementation phase. Through the twinning mechanism, additional advice and relevant expertise sharing took place during the PSP III. Workshops to build upon MPs' existing professional expertise while introducing new

²¹ <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/web/common.nsf/key/Twinning?OpenDocument&ExpandSection=2>. Accessed on August 28, 2014.

²² Ibid.

concepts and best practices were held. The issue of attendance and active engagement remains. Handbooks have been considered and discussed, but not yet finalized or published.

2.1.3. Strengthening Committee public hearings

Public hearings have taken place and have been well-attended by the media and some representatives of civil society. As with the Parliament in sessions of the full house, there is an issue with quorum and regular attendance by some MPs in committee sessions. The Public Accounts Committee and the Legislative Bills & Review Committee have demonstrated a consistent and open policy regarding public hearings and public access to the legislative process.

Output 2.2. Oversight role of parliament strengthened

2.2.1. Enhance parliamentarians' oversight capacity

Consultations, training, workshops and informal advice through meetings with the UNDP project staff have been put in place during the PSP III implementation period. The production and distribution of handbook(s) is pending.

2.2.2. Implementation of legislation review

Legislative drafting and review training and consultations took place during the implementation period. Longer-term sustainability given the likely change in composition of the 10th Parliament in comparison to those MPs and staff who participated during PSP III during the tenure of the 9th Parliament is an outstanding question which will need to be considered early in 2015.

2.2.3. Enhance MP financial oversight capacity

The PAC has worked closely with the Auditor General's office on this primary responsibility of any parliamentary body. While progress has been made during PSP III, there remains the outstanding issues of long-term staff (and MP) capability regarding financial management and budgetary oversight—particularly given the pending question of autonomy

2.2.4. Oversight by independent institutions

No outcome to report during PSP III implementation to date.

2.2.5. Improved library and research services

A UN Volunteer worked with existing parliamentary library staff to provide legislative and relevant institutional research capacity. Skills transfer and research skills were provided. At issue is the independent sustainability and academic research capacity of existing library staff

with the need for an improved recruiting and vetting process for those assigned to the unique and specialized area of research for a parliamentary body. While AGORA and other on-line resources are widely available, there is a continued need to ensure that research conducted is in line with internationally accepted norms and to ensure that research provided to MPs is factually valid.²³

Output 3: PRESENTING PARLIAMENT TO THE NATION AND TO THE WORLD

Output 3.1: Education & outreach work of Parliament developed, MPs representative role enhanced

3.1.1. Outreach activities

The Civic Unit in the NPSI has conducted outreach to constituencies during the project implementation period to date. Staff are currently at two, with a request for additional staff member(s) presumably paid for by the NPSI. MPs have not participated in the Unit’s civic outreach and engagement activities to date. A handbook for school children on civic education has been produced but not yet sent to press or distributed.

Parliamentary Civic Education Unit

The Civic Education Unit is an important aspect of parliamentary outreach and engagement with citizen groups, constituents, and the Solomon Islands public at large—particularly in instances where civic participation can be very localized due to traditional and geographic constraints. The effort to engage citizen groups through proactive parliamentary effort helps to support cooperation while enhancing the positive transition from conflict to cooperation. Through regional interaction and best practices sharing as well as sponsored engagement under the auspices of PSP, the Civic Education Unit has provided a valuable opportunity for citizen groups to engage elected representatives of the people.²⁴

One example of this unit’s success is the introduction of committee and civil society workshop to follow phase II “Parliament Open Day and Parliament Open Week” providing citizen access to the parliamentary process.²⁵ In November 2013 during Phase III of PSP, the Parliament Committee Secretariat in cooperation with UNDP introduced a parliamentary committee information workshop to directly engage public officials and civil society representatives. This outreach by public officials to civic activists is an important first step in bridging the gap in

²³ For example, avoid utilizing Wikipedia as a source for research and subsequent policy formulation.

²⁴ See for example <http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=node/606> and <http://www.fj.undp.org/content/fiji/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2010/07/02/seminar-to-boost-knowledge-about-the-parliamentary-system> (2010). Accessed on August 29, 2014.

²⁵ <http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=node/398>. Accessed August 28, 2014.

understanding and appreciation by citizens groups regarding the daily work of Parliamentary committees.²⁶ The workshop also engaged public servants, State Owned Enterprises (SOEs), Statutory Authorities in 2014 to promote public awareness on various responsibilities that these stakeholders play in providing oversight and also for being accountable to Parliament. This could assist PAC in its future plans to conduct inquiries on Audit Reports, Annual reports and financial statements.

As the 2014 parliamentary elections approach, there is an opportunity for MPs to publicly come out in support of electoral and parliamentary transparency and accountability. The local affiliate of Transparency International is providing the opportunity for interested candidates to sign an Election Integrity Pledge. The Political Parties Integrity Act (2014)²⁷ is an important benchmark in the evolution of the NPSI and of the Solomon Islands' political process. Monitoring and reporting of adherence to the precepts of both the Election Integrity Pledge²⁸ and the legal mandate of the Act are important components of ensuring public access, electoral integrity, and public faith in the outcome of the 2014 parliamentary elections. Adherence to the transparency and accountability demands of these documents is also a reflection of public trust in the 10th Parliament from convocation in 2015. While not a direct programmatic link to PSP III, this is an opportunity for UNDP to show support for the integrity and accountability the electoral process during the transition from the 9th to 10th parliaments.

Convocation of Parliament is also an opportunity for UNDP to highlight work accomplished to date through the PSP programme with an eye toward potential parliamentary assistance from March 2015. One ongoing challenge faced by the Civic Department is the (mis)perception among many MPs that the role and responsibilities which this department promotes to the public in accordance with the Constitution is contrary to the role MPs see for themselves vis-à-vis their constituents. Specifically, it is important for UNDP to continue to support and promote adherence to MPs' constitutional mandate while better informing both the representatives and the represented of how Members can better fulfill the NPSI's core functions of **representation, legislation, and oversight**.

3.1. 2. Media

The parliamentary Media Unit is operational and until early in calendar year 2014, provided telecasts of parliamentary proceedings. A discrepancy between the parliament's in-house

²⁶ <http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=node/756>. Accessed on August 28, 2014.

²⁷ Political Parties Integrity Act (2014): <http://www.parliament.gov.sb/files/legislation/9th%20Parliament/Acts/2014/Political%20Parties%20Integrity%20Act%202014.pdf>. Accessed on September 4, 2014.

²⁸ See Transparency Solomon Islands: http://archive.transparency.org/regional_pages/asia_pacific/about/pacific/solomon_islands and Solomon Star newspaper: <http://www.solomonstarnews.com/news/national/3645-ngos-unite-in-clean-election-campaign>. Accessed on September 1, 2014.

equipment capability and the television broadcaster's bandwidth requirements is unresolved. New television equipment is believed to be needed to ensure compatibility. Existing staff are investigating radio broadcasts as well as electronic (e.g. DVD) distribution of materials to promote the NPSI to citizens, civic groups and a broader regional and/or international audience.

Parliamentary Media Unit

While the media unit was established during the end of PSP Phase II, it continued to engage and proactively promote the important role media plays in informing individual citizens and the public at large of the activities and representative functions of parliament on a regular basis. Particularly in the geographically dispersed and diverse constituencies of this island nation, the ability to reach out via the airwaves to citizens who might not otherwise have any direct access to their parliament or elected representatives is particularly important.

The UNDP PSP-sponsored media unit is another example of incremental success for the PSP overall and an important aspect of public outreach, citizen engagement, and government transparency overall. It is important for this aspect of PSP to be considered for ongoing support in some capacity to ensure the unit's long-term sustainability.²⁹ There is an opportunity for continued public outreach in 2015 as part of the Media Unit's public information portfolio regarding government policies and recently passed legislation or regulations affecting the citizens of the Solomon Islands.³⁰

In addition, the Department is currently seeking funds or donations in kind to replace television cameras currently in use for closed circuit broadcast. Public broadcasts of parliamentary proceedings ceased in 2014 due to incompatibility between current equipment and the broadcasting data requirements of the local television provider. Radio broadcasts to the provinces are currently in negotiation as they are more expensive than television at this point. Finally, the Department would like to provide soft copy public information videos as part of the 2015 work plan and to replace the less portable paper copies of these materials.

3.1.3. Technical Advice on Schools and NGOs outreach

Youth engagement in the legislative process through the "Youth in Parliament" programme

²⁹ See "Parliament Recognizes the Role of Media" through Media Unit public outreach:

<http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=node/708> and

³⁰ See for example, "Ha'amori: Limited Awareness Leads to Extra Charges" in reference to parents paying illegal supplemental fees to schools when the 9th Parliament through the Ministry of Education is already providing an annual budget for these expenses. Excerpt from the Solomon Star newspaper (print edition), Saturday 06 September 2014, p. 5. See also: <http://www.solomonstarnews.com/news/national/3939-extra-fees-illegal-says-ha-amori>. Accessed on September 8, 2014.

The Youth in Parliament programme provided an additional positive and proactive opportunity for future parliamentarians and civil servants to become more familiar with their government and parliamentary governance.³¹

In August 2013, 50 young people participated in a parliamentary event and debate which brought a group representing numerous schools from throughout the Solomon Islands to Honiara.³² Thereafter, in September 2013, UNDP PSP sponsored a four-day programme of on-site experience for young people, including discussion in a parliamentary setting of climate change and its impact on island communities. Participants addressed issues of concern to regional youth in the Solomon Islands, Bougainville and New South Wales(NSW) Australia; conducted mock committee hearings on the issue of climate change and mitigation followed by a simulated debate on the Climate Change (Mitigation) Bill 2013. The bill was intentionally developed for the event. The aim of the program was to nurture the leadership qualities of the participating youths by engaging them in debating issues of national, regional and international significance in a parliamentary setting.³³

The Youth Market and work accomplished under PSP III in cooperation with the Ministry of Women, Youth, and Children's Affairs (MWYC) is another important aspect of UNDP-facilitated assistance to the NPSI in support of traditionally under-represented population sectors and in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals.³⁴ The UNDP PSP programme might also consider greater inclusion of the MWYC in planning and implementation of future sessions of the successful PSP-sponsored "Mock Parliament" given that the Ministry is well-versed in the key proponents and advocates of women's issues in the Solomon Islands.

As of September 2014, one component of UNDP assistance to increased and enhanced civic education remains in process since 2013. A handbook on civic education and parliament is to be published by UNDP but has to date been delayed within the NPSI due to procedural and personnel delays.

The UNDP PSP III implemented a Youth In Parliament programme to involve and engage young people in the parliament. In addition, the Youth Market³⁵ encourages young people to exercise

³¹ See Youth in Parliament (2013): <http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=node/743>. Accessed on August 28, 2014.

³² <http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=node/743>. Accessed on August 28, 2014.

³³ <http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=node/753>. Accessed on August 28, 2014.

³⁴ See for example MDGs and the Solomon Islands (2010):

http://www.undp.org/content/dam/fiji/docs/Final_SI_MDG.pdf and Honiara Youth Market (2013):

<http://www.plp.org.fj/media/news/bustling-crowds-at-youth-markets-first-day/>.

³⁵ The Youth Market is part of the Youth @ Work programme sponsored by AusAID, a primary donor to the UNDP PSP. See:

https://mbasic.facebook.com/profile.php?v=timeline&timecutoff=1400220935&page=6§ionLoadingID=m_t

both civic and economic rights. There are periodic visits by young people to tour parliament and the Open Parliament Day is an additional opportunity for civic education and outreach to youth.

The **Education and Human Resources Training Committee** have made a nationwide inquiry into the issue of Teacher Absenteeism, in which the committee visited all the provinces. This is the only committee to undertake a nationwide inquiry after the Foreign Relations Committee inquiry into RAMS in 2008/2009. This I suppose is an example of how parliament through the committees are able to reach out to the people in the rural provincial areas.

Output 3.2: Gender policy of parliament initiated

Increased access to parliament for young women and voice for a traditionally under-represented sector of Solomon Island citizenry through the “Young Women’s Parliamentary Group”

Begun during phase II of PSP, the Young Women’s Parliamentary Group continued activity during phase III and provided an important forum for women to become more active not only in a traditionally male-dominated society but also through having a voice in their representative institutions. This project component included two mock parliaments for young women during Phase III of PSP.³⁶

In September 2012, the Young Women’s Parliamentary Group addressed gender issues affecting women seeking leadership roles in society and government as part of the Bridge Gender and Elections Training provided by UN Women Gender Equality and Political Governance program. The training focused on gender and elections looked at how electoral issues affect women’s representation not only in Parliament but also in other sectors. Participants identified the barriers and biases with regard to gender and elections. This may prove to have a particular impact during the forthcoming parliamentary election cycle at the end of the 2014 calendar year and be a positive opportunity to give voice to women as elections approach.³⁷ Here again, enhanced outreach to the Ministry of Women, Youth, and Children’s Affairs may prove of added benefit to this component of the PSP programme.

3.2.1. Awareness raising

PSP III has provided support to the Young Women’s Parliamentary Group. It has also supported training in conjunction with UNW. The Mock Parliament involved numerous representatives

[imeline_loading_div_1420099199_1388563200_8_6&timeend=1420099199×tart=1388563200&tm=AQCO5HQ-TISy1Ct2&id=151279301694070](http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=node/763). Accessed On September 20, 2014.

³⁶ See UNDP Mock Women’s Parliament (2014): <http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=node/763> and Young Women’s Parliamentary Group (2011): <http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=node/613>. Accessed on August 28, 2014.

³⁷ <http://www.pacwip.org/resources/news/2012/bridge-gender-elections-training-impacts-solomon-islands-young-womens-parliamentary-group.html>. Accessed on August 28, 2014.

engaged in gender equality and fair representation for women in Parliament. Outreach to such women's NGOs as 'Voice Blo Mer' took place. Outreach was also conducted with the Ministry of Women, Youth, and Children's Affairs.

3.2.2 Policy development

A bill on protection for women and children against domestic violence was tabled during the end of the 9th Parliament's tenure ("Family Protection Bill"). As of September, there is a public awareness and information campaign underway targeting cervical cancer in SI.³⁸

³⁸ See "The Fight Against Cervical Cancer Begins With You": <http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=node/825>. Accessed on September 20, 2014.

VII. PSP Phase III and OECD DAC Criteria³⁹

Relevance

Based upon interviews, comparative analysis, and on-site programme review while resident in the PSP office within Parliament, the UNDP Parliamentary Strengthening Project (PSP) during Phase III of project implementation has met four of the five OECD DAC criteria for development projects. The project was described by interlocutors as being **relevant** to the needs and priorities of parliamentarians and parliamentary staff. This assessment is based upon the interviews conducted on site during the three-week period between August 25 and September 12. A complete list of these interlocutors is located in the Appendix section of this Evaluation Report.

Efficiency

UNDP PSP planned, executed and implemented the components of the PSP in an **efficient** manner given the budget allocation and the staffing available to work on the project over the ten-year period of project implementation and in particular during the third and presumably final phase from 2012—2015 (to date).

Effectiveness

UNDP's efforts to identify and implement a comprehensive programme of development assistance in line with the baseline assessment, project document and other relevant measurement criteria is deemed mostly **effective**, given the comparison conducted between baseline indicators and direct beneficiary response gathered during the period of the evaluation consultancy.

Impact

There are clear indications that the work of the UNDP PSP programme staff has resulted in positive growth and development of parliamentary capacity and MP and staff ability to better perform their representative, oversight, and legislative core functions as elected representatives and support personnel, respectively. This incremental professional development has therefore had an efficacious **impact** on the National Parliament of the Solomon Islands as a representative government institution for the people of the Solomon Islands.

³⁹ See OECD/DAC: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

Sustainability

The outstanding question to be addressed by the UNDP during the period between dissolution of the current 9th Parliament on September 8, 2014 and the formal induction of the 10th Parliament by year-end 2014 is how the existing PSP programme components can be made **sustainable** beyond the scheduled cessation of formal project activity on March 31, 2015.

This question is addressed in detail within the broader context of this report's findings and recommendations. The evaluation findings include explicit reference to PSP parliamentary programme beneficiaries who would wish to see a gradual process of UNDP development assistance reduction concurrent with increasing parliamentary autonomy from the executive.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ See in particular Section VIII: "Areas for Potential Follow-on Activity post-PSP Phase III" and Section IX: "Consolidated List of Evaluation Recommendations" of this report.

VIII. Areas for Potential Follow-on Activity Post-PSP Phase III

With the dissolution of the 9th Parliament on September 8, 2014 and the subsequent focus on the electoral campaign leading up to the formation of the 10th Parliament presumably by the end of calendar year 2014, there is an opportunity for the UNDP PSP to continue to engage both permanent and transitional parliamentary institutional structures and staff toward the goal of codifying progress made during the 10-year PSP implementation period. Such activity would then support the gradual reduction in direct UNDP support to parliament while concurrently assisting in the transition to parliamentary autonomy and longer-term institutional sustainability. Core competencies introduced during PSP I, II, and III need to be supported and reinforced during this transitional period for both the parliament and UNDP-funded development assistance.

For example, newly-elected and re-elected MPs to parliamentary governance in 2015 would benefit from available UNDP induction materials and a parliamentary orientation seminar focused on practical skills such as parliamentary process, procedure, and the constitutionally-mandated role and responsibilities of a parliamentarian—including the importance of constituent outreach, effective representation in Parliament of the electorate, legislative drafting, rules of procedure, committee structure and function, among other responsibilities to ensure MPs understand and fulfill the broader parliamentary mandate of representation, legislation, and oversight. This seminar could be conducted in conjunction with another donor or possibly INGO staff or independent consultant(s) expert in such training.⁴¹

Similarly, there is an opportunity for UNDP in coordination and through co-sponsorship with the Solomon Island government and willing international donor partner(s) to engage the 10th Parliament in the process of Federal Constitutional drafting and review. While this process is well underway as of this writing, this document and the process leading up to its ratification may well be a welcome entry point for UNDP-facilitated development assistance early on in 2015.⁴² This may be an area in which the UNDP may choose to monitor rather than directly engage in or provide direct programmatic support.

Likewise, the parliamentary autonomy process is predicated on ensuring that from the 10th Parliament moving forward there is the sustainable capacity to design, implement, orchestrate, monitor, and plan the proceedings of parliament independent of executive resource and financial management. This process requires that the Public Accounts Committee continues to fulfill its mandated role as fiscal “watchdog” and monitor of the public purse. Parliamentary

⁴¹ See, for example, “First Weeks at Westminster. Induction Arrangements for New MPs”: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmadmin/193/193.pdf>. See also NDI/Bangladesh MP orientation training: <https://www.ndi.org/bangladesh>. Accessed on August 29, 2014.

⁴² See: Reforming the Constitution of the Solomon Islands, <http://www.sicr.gov.sb/>. Accessed on August 29, 2014.

autonomy in this regard will be a process agreed to between the NPSI and the Executive (Office of the Prime Minister), presumably in initial form during the tenure of the 10th Parliament and in accordance with the process begun by the 9th Parliament's Speaker's Office in 2014.⁴³

In reference to the 2013 *Baseline Report on Parliamentary Autonomy*, that report notes the constitutional and traditional challenges inherent in the forthcoming transition toward greater parliamentary independence from the executive branch:

“Unlike the British context, Solomon Islands is governed under a written constitution. This has certain implications as far as parliamentary autonomy is concerned. Firstly, constitutional supremacy replaced parliamentary supremacy. Secondly, having a written constitution raises questions as to how much of Westminster parliamentary conventions and practices apply in Solomon Islands. Thirdly, the written constitution made British statutes of general application (as at 1961) and principles of common law and equity (as at 1978) part of the laws of Solomon Islands to assist in the transition post independence; however, the nation never quite came out of transition. As a result, many archaic British laws that even England has moved away from continue to apply. Many of these could affect parliamentary autonomy in ways that can only be guessed at until ruled on conclusively by the courts. Lastly, though the written constitution sets out the framework for the administration and finances of the nation, the supporting series of legislation that were to give flesh to the framework have not been as well developed as these could be. In turn, this led to the creation of systems of administration and finances which are riddled with worrying issues: gaps in legislation, contradictory rules, problems with organisational structure and many undesirable long standing local practices.”⁴⁴

Recognizing that the formation of a Parliamentary Research Service during PSP Phase III is a positive step forward, it is important that the hiring and promotion of staff in this department reflects a demonstrated background in law, parliamentary governance, and academic research. This aspect of follow-on activity is particularly important when considering that legislative background papers produced in response to parliamentary inquiry have a direct impact on eventual legislation tabled and that oftentimes such background analysis may be a primary source for MPs or committees unfamiliar with certain aspects of pending legislation.

Another point of consideration moving forward (and as mentioned elsewhere in this report) is the element of strategic planning. While it is acknowledged that a strategic plan was

⁴³ See: *Rebuilding Parliamentary Rule Post-Conflict*. UNDP Legislative Needs Assessment for the Solomon Islands. <http://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/pacific/SB/solomon-islands-legislative-needs-assessment>

⁴⁴ UNDP Baseline Report on Autonomy of Solomon Islands Parliament (2013).

formulated and is in effect for 2012—2016,⁴⁵ it is equally important for an increasingly autonomous National Parliament to ensure that its strategic development goals and objectives are not only adopted but also followed through in the best interests of the sustainable and equitable development of parliament as a truly representative and democratic institute over time.

Additionally, financial management, transparency and accountability in expenditures, and a consistent and enforceable set of codified anti-corruption rules which are identified and proposed by the NPSI. This is an issue raised by a number of interlocutors and something which is of obvious importance to a transparent and accountable parliament. While this may not be a direct UNDP intervention, it is an issue with which UNDP could lend support moving forward through provision of background materials and advice to the 10th Parliament.⁴⁶

Specifically, topical areas of development assistance and donor-sponsored intervention may include:

- Planning and implementation strategies according to an established and publicly-available legislative calendar with continued public, civil society, and media access to the legislative process
- Effective legislative process strategies, including committee and sub-committee Rules of Procedure, Standing Orders and ensuring that attendance in committee and during sessions of the full house are in accordance with quorum and mandatory attendance requirements to reach quorum—while promoting the consistent and active participation of MPs in full house and committee orders of business.
- In accordance with the pending revised Federal Constitution, guidance on municipal governance—including budgetary process, legislative process, and democratic representation.
- Guidance and intervention on transparency, public accountability, and enhanced citizen (and civic group) participation in the legislative process.
- Enhanced inclusion of women and youth in the legislative process and as part of the institutions of government.

Finally, continued regional cooperation among Pacific Islands parliaments combined with access to UNDP regional training and technical assistance resources after PSP is an important ‘next

⁴⁵ See Strategic Plan for the National Parliament of the Solomon Islands (2012-2016): <http://www.parliament.gov.sb/files/Parliament%20Strategy/National%20Parliament%20Strategic%20Plan%202012-2016.pdf>. Accessed on August 29, 2014.

⁴⁶ See for example Transparency International corruption index/Solomon Islands: <http://www.transparency.org/country#SLB>. Accessed on September 20, 2014.

step' in ensuring that the institutional momentum and capacity-development successes of the UNDP parliamentary support programme continue in the years ahead.

Utilizing existing UNDP PSP staff and in particular the current PSP Programme Manager during project conclusion and thereafter as is determined by the UNDP would benefit in the transition toward eventual donor-parliament autonomy while providing the opportunity for a more gradual disengagement of UNDP human and financial resources.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ In this regard, UNDP might consider retaining the PSP Programme Manager on a consulting basis from March 2015.

IX. Consolidated List of Evaluation Recommendations

Legislation and Committee Capacity Development

- Continue support for the **Public Accounts Committee** toward the goal of enhanced independent competencies beyond the direct review of the Auditor General's office—particularly regarding review of Appropriations Bills. Also focus some remaining human and financial resources on ensuring the accuracy and timely transcription of Hansard records, necessary financial reports, and the parliamentary website regarding such records and proceedings for on-line notification and forward planning for PAC oversight and financial accounting and reporting purposes. Continue the established and demonstrated success of public outreach, public awareness, and public input into the legislative process through PAC activity from formation of the 10th Parliament.⁴⁸

Oversight

- Provide incentive for sustainable and independent parliamentary capacity and Solomon Island stakeholder oversight of parliamentary process, procedure, training, capacity and operational management through limited training (with some sort of 'training of trainers' component)
- Pending independent agreement between the NPSI and the OPM, UNDP could provide best practice examples and/or case studies to demonstrate how incremental parliamentary autonomy can be effectively and equitably accomplished. This might include examples of how to modify the budgetary allocation mechanism between the Office of the Prime Minister and the Parliament to ensure fiscal autonomy in the expenditure of public funds while minimizing the opportunity for political patronage and potential corruption of a transparent and accountable political process.

Representation

- Consider a new member orientation session early in 2015 as an introduction to the fundamental precepts and successful (and sustainable) aspects of the 3-phase UNDP PSP.
- Once the 10th Parliament has been formed (or as is feasible during the forthcoming parliamentary election cycle in 2014), continue to encourage enhanced participation by women in the electoral process and thereafter in governance and civic engagement. As of September, 2014, there is only 1 woman MP among a total of 50 MPs in the National Parliament. As was noted as early as 2008, there has been discussion of the

⁴⁸ See PAC in Parliament: <http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=node/670>. Accessed on September 4, 2014. See also: <http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=node/486>.

introduction of set aside seats for women in the parliamentary election process—to date without success.⁴⁹

- Specific assistance to the **Young Women’s Parliamentary Group** (YWPG) formed during PSP Phase II (2010) might include: UNDP support for a proposed series of straw polls conducted by the YWPG to gauge women’s attitudes and perceptions regarding elections in September (pre-election), October (E-day), and November (post-election); Support in conjunction with UN Women for continued training on the evolving role of women in Solomon Islands’ society as leaders, community activists, and potential MPs; Support for the implementation and public information outreach related to the Family Protection Act that was passed at the conclusion of the 9th Parliament; Support for dissemination of information and public outreach through the parliamentary media unit to include public information on health, family issues, domestic violence awareness, and the potential role for women in forthcoming elections and in the 10th Parliament, and/or; Support for enhanced inclusion of women in governance through outreach and possible programme coordination with the Ministry of Women, Youth, and Children’s Affairs. This is also an opportunity in 2015 during the implementation of the Family Protection Act passed at the end of the 9th Parliament in 2014.

Outreach

- Deepen the relationship with existing regional parliaments, including New South Wales and Bougainville House of Representatives, through the Twinning Arrangement already in place.
- Encourage enhanced direct MP outreach to constituents, civic groups, and the public at large beyond the immediate parameters of the election cycle through public information sessions, on-line (website) access to the daily proceedings of parliament, social media, and radio or other traditional media outreach.⁵⁰ This might also include the opportunity for cell phone users to follow their elected representative on Twitter or to pose questions via FaceBook, the SI Parliament website, or email.
- Formulate and implement a municipal government outreach and institutional governance strategy at the local, regional and/or village level. This is particularly important given the traditionally weak central government presence in geographically dispersed, remote and traditionally governed island communities with little if any contact to date with MPs representing constituencies and the limited constituent

⁴⁹ Pacific Women in Politics/Solomon Islands (2014): <http://www.pacwip.org/future-elections/solomon-is/>. Accessed on September 1, 2014. See also iKnow Politics (UNDP)/Solomon Islands: <http://iknowpolitics.org/en/2014/01/solomon-islands-women-parliament>.

⁵⁰ See for example: <http://www.parliament.gov.sb/index.php?q=feedback/contactus>, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/National-Parliament-of-Solomon-Islands/119199508153445> (FaceBook), <http://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/outreach-and-training/> (Parliament UK).

outreach identified by interlocutors in the nation to date.⁵¹ There is an existing UNDP-sponsored programme of municipal development assistance which may provide complementary support or assistance should UNDP determine that municipal government assistance would be advantageous from 2015.⁵²

Institutional Strengthening

- As requested by the 9th Parliament leadership, consider hiring at least one Solomon Islander as a project consultant with experience working in the SI Parliament who does not have a direct stake in periodic evaluation outcome(s) and is well familiar with the overall programme of development assistance provided under the PSP. S/he would be well-suited to assume responsibility for potential interventions moving forward from 2015 Phase III conclusion. This option allows for continuity during the interregnum between the end of PSP and an as yet to be determined follow on programme of assistance.
- Utilize existing UNDP regional resources, including Suva-based regional parliamentary support technical assistance consultant(s).⁵³
- Encourage the development of institutional memory given the relatively high staff turnover through the enhanced storage, dissemination and availability of relevant staff procedures in the parliamentary library or other in-house information repository.
- Introduce a specific and defined programme of limited training with key parliamentary staff and perhaps willing MPs on **strategic planning** to include time management, human resource management, and financial management and accountability. ⁵⁴
- Provide opportunities for best practices sharing between and among successful individuals who have been promoted through the civil service ranks in the Parliament. This may include consideration of a “parliamentary internship programme” which could encourage young people to become more directly involved in their government. This would be a natural progression from the existing “youth in parliament” programme and act as a productive pipeline for encouraging the involvement of potential new staff once

⁵¹ See for example, Pacific Institute of Public Policy paper on Solomon Islands sub-section III “Traditional Government”: <http://pacificpolicy.org/blog/2011/02/07/solomon-islands/>. Accessed on August 28, 2014.

⁵² See UNDP Provincial Governance Strengthening Programme (PGSP): <http://uncdf.org/en/Solomon-Islands#topP>. Accessed on September 20, 2014.

⁵³ These first two options are particularly cost-effective and of immediate impact as a locally-based Solomon Islander or regionally based consultant is provided travel and per diem by UNDP and the daily rate is proposed for host parliament sponsorship.

⁵⁴ See for example the Strategic Plan for the Parliament of Australia (2013-2018): http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Department_of_Parliamentary_Services/Publications/ICT_Strategic_Plan_2013_-_2018. Accessed on August 28, 2014.

the existing cadre of parliamentary staff has moved on to other professional opportunities outside parliament.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ See for example the Canadian Parliamentary Internship Programme: <https://pip-psp.org/home> and the Australian Parliamentary Internship Programme: <http://studyabroad.arcadia.edu/find-a-program/programs-by-country/australia/australian-parliamentary-internship/>. Accessed on August 27, 2014.

X. Summary and Conclusion

Overall, the UNDP Parliamentary Strengthening Project (PSP) is perceived to be a successful programme of development assistance to a relatively new parliament which has experienced numerous tests of its long-term sustainability and ability to fulfill the core functions of legislation, representation, and oversight. As a consequence not only of cultural tradition and less than a generation of autonomy from status as a British protectorate, but also as a consequence of the divisive violence of the early 2000s, the National Parliament is still very much an evolutionary representative democratic body.

The third phase of the UNDP Parliamentary Strengthening Project has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to the autonomy and sustainability of the National Parliament of the Solomon Islands. This commitment, however, would benefit from an internal analysis and resource evaluation during the intra-parliamentary period from the dissolution of the 9th Parliament in September and the induction of the 10th Parliament at the end of calendar year 2014. This is intended as a UNDP supplemental analysis based upon the findings and conclusions of this evaluation

Looking toward the future, there are numerous areas for potential intervention outlined in this report which could be supported by the UNDP from March 2015—particularly in conjunction with other donors sharing common interest and development goals with the Solomon Islands and of the Pacific Islands region as a whole. The regional component of such development assistance is of evident import and could readily tap into the best practices framework of SIDS, twinning parliaments and others. For example, this might include the UNDP Suva (Fiji) office technical assistance capacity, and the existing regional cooperation established during PSP with the parliaments of New South Wales and Bougainville House of Representatives. The staff and programme manager currently working on the PSP in parliament are another valuable resource to consider and maintain moving forward.

In all cases, it is perceived by the majority of interlocutors to be important for potential follow-on programme activity to take into consideration the willingness, commitment, funding, resources, and capacity of the Solomon Islands National Parliament at this point in its development—particularly given the unknown aspects of parliamentary composition and representative capacity post-election from 2015 and subsequent to the 10-year UNDP programme of direct intervention in parliamentary development and capacity-building.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ See, for example, See: *Rebuilding Parliamentary Rule Post-Conflict*. United Nations Development Programme, Legislative Needs Assessment (Solomon Islands). February-March 2001 Mission Report by Quinton Clements. See also the Project Document for the 3rd phase of the UNDP PSP.

Annex 1: List of interviewees interviewed in Honiara from 25 August—12 September 2014

Celsus Talifilu
National Project Manager, UNDP Parliamentary Strengthening Project
National Parliament of the Solomon Islands

Gloria Suluia
UNDP Parliamentary Strengthening Project
UNDP Honiara Office

Akiko Suzuki
Joint Presence Manager & UNDP Deputy Resident Representative
UNDP Honiara Office

Taeasi Sanga
Clerk
National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
Honiara

Florence Naesol
Deputy Clerk
National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
Honiara

Sir Allan Kemakeza
Speaker of Parliament
National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
Honiara

Boniface Supa
Senior Librarian
National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
Honiara

Sunjay Dharija
ICT Department
National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
Honiara

Jayne MacPherson
Australian Volunteer
Research Co-ordinator and Project Officer
Honiara

Lloyd Bera
Financial Controller
National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
Honiara

Manasseh Sogavare
Chairman, Bills & Legislative Committee
National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
Honiara

Hon Peter Shanel Agovaka
Chairman, Education and Human Resources Training Committee
National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
Honiara

Josephine Teakeni
Voice Blo Mere Solomons
Women's NGO/Solomon Islands
Honiara

Robert Cohen
Deputy Auditor General Solomon Islands
Honiara

Hon Milner Tozaka
Chairman, Foreign Relations Committee
National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
Honiara

Calvin Ziru
Political Parties Commission
Honiara

Albert Kabui
Political Parties Commission
Honiara

Joy Rikimae
Media Unit of Parliament
National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
Honiara

Liam Sau
Hansard Records of Parliament
National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
Honiara

Marisa Pepa
Civic Unit of Parliament
National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
Honiara

Jean Resana
Procedures Department
National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
Honiara

Ethel Sigimanu
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Women, Youth and Children's Affairs
National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
Honiara

Barnabas Anga
Secretary to the Prime Minister (former)
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Forestry (current)
National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
Honiara

Daniel Fenua
Executive Officer
Transparency Solomon Islands
Honiara

John Taupongi
Parliamentary Law Chamber, NPSI (2007—2011)
Transparency Solomon Islands, Board Member (current)
Honiara

Marson Lilopeza
Committee Secretariat Department
National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
Honiara

Jefferson Hallu
Committee Secretariat Department
National Parliament of the Solomon Islands
Honiara

Annex 2: References & Bibliography

Desk review and in-country Evaluation Report for the UNDP SI PSP consultancy (August 12—September 25, 2014)



“To Lead Is To Serve” - seal of NPSI

Desk Review documents (provided by UNDP SI PSP office emailed soft copy and accessed on-line pre-deployment/August 12-August 22) and on-site interviews in Honiara (August 25-September 12)

- UNDP PSP support strategy, 2005—2015
- National Parliament of Solomon Islands (NPSI) Strategy Annual Report (SAR), vol. 2
- Solomon Islands National Development Strategy, 2011—2020
- UNDP Strategic Plan, 2014—2017
- Young Women’s Discussion forum (in collaboration with iKnowPolitics)
- Youth parliamentary leadership programme
- Engaging civil society and giving voice to civic groups in Parliament
- Composition and Hansard records of the 9th Parliament
- Project Document for the 3rd Phase of the PSP
- Political Parties Integrity Act (2014)
- On-line review of relevant articles from *The Island Sun* and *Solomon Star* (newspapers)
- Interviews with key interlocutors on-site in Honiara (August 25—September 12)

The Parliamentary Strengthening Project has duration of 10 years from 2005 till 2015. It aims at providing assistance in strengthening the National Parliament of Solomon Islands capacity to effectively deliver on its constitutional mandate, and is designed to support achievement of the goals and targets set out in the Solomon Islands National Development Strategy 2011 - 2020, particularly its outcomes in Governance. The programme is fully aligned with the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017 in the following areas, Managing Citizen expectations accommodating their voice, developing and strengthening the rule of law, strengthening accountability in the whole of government, building stronger systems of democratic governance in the different sector of Solomon Islands, working towards addressing issues of gender inequality and to reduce the likelihood of conflict occurring again. The third phase of the project constitutes the final phase of the UNDP's Parliamentary Strengthening Project in Solomon Islands. Recognising the achievements of the two previous phases this final phase is designed to accommodate sustainability and national ownership. To achieve this project is designed to broaden cooperation with other partners on specific issues that needs closer attention.

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