

***WEATHERCOAST (TASI MAURI) TOK STORI
STATEMENT***

**KUMA
Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands
September 19-21, 2005**

Organised, Coordinated, and Facilitated
By
NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL

In partnership with
Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP)
East-West Center

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I. Rebuilding, Reconnecting and Restoring Our Relationships

We, the following participants in the Weathercoast (Tasi Mauri) *Tok Stori*, as Chiefs, women leaders and representatives, church leaders, youth leaders and individuals from our respective communities, have begun to share our own personal stories about the tension that affected and continues to affect the relationships within and between our communities and the institutions of government in the Solomon Islands.

<u>Names</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Ward</u>
John Tova	Chief	Vunusa	Duidui
Alfred Ringolo	Church Leader	Urahai	Duidui
Norman	Chief	Vatungola	Duidui
Jemuel Vota	Chief	Vatungola	Duidui
Hon. Chonny	Provincial		
Sigege	Member	Viso	Duidui
Mahlon Leni	Church Leader	Peochakuri	Duidui
Bartholomew			
Belei	Chief	Wanderer's Bay	Wanderer's Bay
John Temple	Youth Leader	Veuru	Wanderer's

			Bay
Nicodimus Valena	Chief	Marasa	Wanderer's Bay
Warren	Church Leader	Iru-Iru	Wanderer's Bay
Donation			Bay
Howald Basi	Chief	Sukiki	Moli
Leone Malai	Chief	Bokasughu	Moli
Redley Roka	Chief	Nagho	Moli
Raymond Lee	Church Leader	Komuvaolu	Moli
Daniel Vitale	Chief	Bokasughu	Moli
Reynald			
Karivaka	Church Leader	Noto	Moli
Porotas Dede	Youth Leader	Noto	Moli
Gabriel Mane	Youth Leader	Tetekanji	Vatualae
Peter Balo	Chief	Tetekanji	Vatualae
Patrick Volana	Chief	Tetekanji	Pichahila
Kasiano Oli	Chief	AvuAvu	Lualua
Fred Laku	Youth Leader	AvuAvu	Bubuvua
Joseph Bubuatu	Chief	AvuAvu	PurePure
Gorrety Lino	Women Leader	AvuAvu	PurePure
Pius Samani	Chief	Kolokiki	Vatukulau
Benjamin	Chief &		
Ngaovaka	Spokesperson	Haliatu	Vatukulau
Dudley Seth	Youth Leader	Haliatu	Vatukulau
Franas Laisa	Chief	Raeavu	Vatukulau
Gibson Pungua	Chief	Kuma	Vatukulau
Simon Low	Chief	Kuma	Vatukulau

Nancy Ale	Women Youth Leader	Raeavu	Vatukulau
Anastasia Kurino	Women Leader	Raeavu	Vatukulau
Gibson Voa	Chief	Sughu	Talise
Spriano Tai	Chief	Madakacho	Talise
Bala Tasare	Chief	Bagerau	Talise
Sare Lego	Chief	Chohiri	Talise
Henry Eric	Chief	Navutu	Talise
Dickson Sangu	Spokesperson	Sughu	Talise
Paul Mamara'ai	Chief	Simeiruka	Birao
		Island, Marau Sound	
		E/Guadalcanal	
Obed Hairiu	Chief	Mavaniapa	Birao
		Marau Sound	
		E/Guadalcanal	
Allen	Youth Leader	Wahere	Birao
		Marau Sound	
		E/Guadalcanal	
Julian Kulusuia	Women Leader	Piapia	Birao
		Makina C.M.	
		Marau Sound	
Elia Leso	Chief	Piapia	Birao
Georgina Kopuria	Women Leader	Oa	Moli
		Marau P/Agency	Moli
Robert Arthur	Chief	Vatulava	Moli
		Marau P/Agency	Moli
Magarate Seti	Women Leader	Omeome	Tetekanji

		Marau Sound	
Cassian Lovoli	Chief	Komunisabaha	Tetekanji
		St. Aloysions Church	
		Sangasere, Marau Sound	
Savino Kokopu	Chief	Tiaro	Tangarare
John Kuvini	Chief	Veragavai	Tangarare
Anthony Cheka	Youth Leader	Konabo	Tangarare
Agustina Kei	Women Leader	Fox Bay	Tangarare
Bartholmew Uro	Church Leader	Tangarare	Tangarare
Vincent Wueni	Chief	Tita	Malango

We acknowledge RAMSI's important work in re-building law and order and security in the Solomon Islands; we appreciate the welcoming story of encouragement and support made by RAMSI Special Coordinator James Batley and the presence of his assistant Masi Lomaloma at the official opening of our *Tok Stori*. In addition we extend our thanks to Royal Solomon Islands Police Commissioner Shane Castles for his story about the new vision, structure, and image for the RSIP; as well as to Mr. Joseph Hasiau from the Guadalcanal Peace Coordinating Office for his attendance and contribution to our *Tok Stori*.

We express our thanks to the Director of the East-West Center's Pacific Islands Development Program Dr. Sitiveni Halapua, Chairman of the National Peace Council Paul Tovua, Councillor Victor Ngele, and the NPC Trainers and Peace Monitors for the efficient and effective organization,

coordination, and facilitation of our first historic *Tok Stori*, from 19th to 21st of September 2005.

Our *Tok Stori* focuses on the critical issues affecting us during and after the crisis; critical issues that underpin the re-building and restoring of broken relationships between persons, families, villages, communities and between us and government.

We believe that telling, listening to, and sharing our stories about these issues are critical for peace-building, reconciliation, and the reconstruction of long-term stability and security in our communities and hence in the Solomon Islands as a whole.

We acknowledge the significant role and contribution of women in peace-building in our communities and we listen to their stories about their suffering, and their extra burden of trauma they have to bear with regard to the loss of lives, the fear of armed men and patrol boats, death threats, the lack of food and health services, their gathering for children and families in the villages and surviving in the jungle and hills during the tension; and we listen to their present concerns regarding the special need to rebuild and restore the relationships between persons and families in the post-conflict situation in our communities.

We recognize the important role that children, education and schools play in the processes of peace, confidence-building and the future development of our communities and welcomed the participation, on Wednesday September

20, 2005, of Laloato Community High School's Principal and Form Two students in our *Tok Stori*.

Our *Tok Stori* is guided by our traditional principles of respect for, and confidence in, telling, listening to, and evaluating the stories that we share with one another. We value *tok stori* as an important part of our culture and as our traditional means for reducing conflict and building peace and unity in our various communities.

II. Root Causes of Our Broken Relationships

We believe that the primary causes of our broken relationships include:

- Failure of former government to address the land question in Guadalcanal and failure to address bona fide demands;
- Taking over of the state armoury by a certain group;
- Rushing into the negotiation and signing of the Townsville Peace Agreement without proper consultation with traditional leaders and relevant individuals;
- Aggressive and violent intervention by former government between 2000 and 2003;
- Negative social interaction between youths and communities;
- Desire for social status that resulted in the excessive and corruptive use of power and authority;
- Greed for money and power that lead to corruption; and
- Lack of trust and lack of confidence in our governmental system, constitution and leadership.

III. Processes for Rebuilding and Restoring Our Relationships

We believe that our traditional ways, including our Christian values, constitute the principal key to re-building the broken relationships between persons, families, villages, communities and government.

Therefore we call on the government to recognize our traditional ways; and recognize their responsibility to provide compensation, rehabilitation and reconciliation.

We reaffirm the continuation of our commitment to facilitating our own traditional ways of compensation and reconciliation, and to making the necessary traditional arrangements to rebuild and restore our own broken relationships with each another. We reaffirm that Marau is an integral part of Guadalcanal.

IV. Development Issues:

We recognize that the disparity in the distribution of development between the people of the Weathercoast (Tasi Mauri) communities and Honiara is an important part of the root causes of the tension in the Weathercoast and the Solomon Islands.

Therefore we recognize that addressing this disparity is crucial for peace-building and for maintaining and enhancing stability and security in the long-run.

We call on the government to address the disparity in human resource development by:

- Building a hospital;
- Expanding educational opportunities;
- Providing reliable shipping services and re-opening airports; and
- Establishing rehabilitation services for our communities including ex-combatants in the Weathercoast.

V. Central Coordination Role of NPC

We acknowledge and give our full support to, and express our full confidence in the important role that the National Peace Council (NPC) plays with regard to mediation, reconciliation, and peace-building in our respective communities and in the whole of the Solomon Islands. Therefore we agree that the NPC becomes the Central Coordinator of our *Tok Stori* Statement.

We believe that the central coordinating role of the NPC as a neutral organization will help improve the flow of relevant information, communication, common understanding, and cooperation between our respective community leaders and Government, including the Guadalcanal Peace Coordinating Office.

Therefore we recommend to the Government that the mandate of the NPC should be extended.

END OF STATEMENT