# POLITICAL STABILITY AND GOVERNANCE IN SOLOMON ISLANDS
## POTENTIAL FOR REFORM
### CONFERENCE
**Wednesday 24 and Thursday 25 September 2008**
King Solomon Hotel, Hibiscus Avenue, Honiara

### Wednesday 24 September

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session/Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>0830-0900</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>0900-0930</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Hon Fred Fono, Deputy Prime Minister</td>
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<td>Martine Letts, Deputy Director, Lowy Institute for International Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>0930-0940</td>
<td>Overview of conference</td>
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<td>Jenny Hayward-Jones, Program Director, Myer Foundation Melanesia Program at the Lowy Institute</td>
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<td>John Keniapisia, Special Secretary to Prime Minister Sikua</td>
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<td>0940-1115</td>
<td>Session 1: causes of instability and desired outcomes of reform</td>
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<tr>
<td>0940-1030</td>
<td>Speakers: Working Committee presents findings from 26-27 August workshop on political stability</td>
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<td>1030-1115</td>
<td>Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka, Research Fellow, Pacific Islands Development Program, East-West Center, Hawaii – Parties, Constitutional Engineering and Governance</td>
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<tr>
<td>1115-1145</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
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<td>1145-1230</td>
<td>Session 2: alternative political models</td>
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<td>1230-1400</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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1400-1445  **Session 2: alternative political models (continued)**

*Speakers:* Mr Ieremia Tabai, former President of the Republic of Kiribati – A presidential alternative: the experience of Kiribati

1445-1530  **Session 3: lessons from other external models for Solomon islands**

This session will consider rest of world models that have most relevance for addressing the problems of Solomon Islands and discuss how they could be applied in Solomon Islands.

*Speakers:* Professor Benjamin Reilly, Director, Centre for Democratic Institutions, Australian National University – Comparative experience in party strengthening

1530-1600  Coffee break

1600-1700  **Session 4: stakeholders and external solutions**

This session will examine four stakeholders that stand to benefit from lessons learnt from other models to improve political stability / good governance. It will assess how they have been addressed in these countries, with a view to extracting lessons for Solomon Islands stakeholders; as well as considering the relevant responsibilities of effecting similar changes vis-à-vis the respective stakeholders.

(a) Government
   - Removing executive instability / hamstrung assemblies
   - Reducing tendency of votes of ‘no confidence’ challenges
   - Restricting the practice of post-election ‘horse-trading’
   - Instituting restrictions on party-hopping

(b) Parties
   - Implementing controls over funding
   - Strengthening parties / Encouraging consistency in party stances on policies (increasing predictability)

*Speakers:* Dr Jon Fraenkel, Fellow, State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Program, Australian National University

1900-2030  cocktails

**Thursday 25 September**

0830-0845  **Introduction and overview for day 2**

0845-1030  **Session 4: stakeholders and rest of world solutions (continued)**

(c) Society
   - Utilising local pressures / constituency involvement
   - Increasing connections to strong bases in society

(d) Personal / Individual
   - Creating better governance through better policymaking and implementation / decreased corruption in politics
   - Personal Responsibility

1030-1100  Coffee Break
Session 5: implementation of reform

Responsibilities for reform: Government, parties, candidates, civil society

This session will examine the responsibilities incumbent on the parliament, government, individual candidates and civil society in the successful implementation of reform measures. The responsibility of MPs will be examined with particular reference to guiding reform and the consequent impact on governance and society.

Session 5: implementation of reform (continued)

Reform measures

This session will seek to determine what practical measures would be required to implement reform of the political environment in Solomon Islands. Discussion will focus on whether new legislation and amendments to the constitution, other legislation and parliamentary standing orders are required to give effect to desired reform. The session will also consider non-legislative reform measures that could be undertaken to achieve greater stability, including party strengthening activities.

The broader implications of reform as well as any obstacles to reform will also be discussed.

Session 6: recommendations for reform

This session will seek participants' views on what can be done and what should be ruled out, recommendations for legislative and non-legislative reform, enforcement mechanisms and measures to enhance transparency and accountability, and methods of integrating reform in Solomon Islands society.

Conclusion

This session will discuss the findings of the conference and develop a statement of prioritised practical recommendations that could be used by the Solomon Islands Government Working Committee to advance reform.