



## East Rennell World Heritage Site Solomon Islands Identification number:



### 1. Executive Summary of the Report.

Although the East Rennell World Heritage site (ERWHS) is inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, its forests seem to be in good condition. The technical workshop organised by HIST in February 2016 concluded that unspoiled forest cover remains at 95% of land area within the ERWHS and at 90% in other parts of Rennell Island and that no logging has occurred within the property.

It remains a big challenge to register the ERWHS under the 2010 National Protected Areas Act, legally banning all logging and mining in the property. This registration requires approval of the about 80 landowner groups, since the ERWHS is under customary ownership (ERWHS was the first natural property inscribed on the World Heritage

List with customary ownership and management). In recent years there have been different views among the various landowning groups with regard to;

- 1) Recognition of the involvement of the Government; 2) business interests of logging and mining; and 3) the Lake Tenganon World Heritage Site Association and its members (LTWHSA).

General observation made about the situation in ERWHS is that while there was high expectation from landowner groups from government and other parties (including UNESCO and IUCN), when nothing is forthcoming the frustration builds among people and still remains an issue.

Furthermore, landowner groups with different opinions are dealing directly with international organizations, speaking on behalf of the World Heritage site, causing confusion and “freezing” of heavily needed programs that focus on sustainable socio-economic development for the local communities.

Following a constructive discussions during the ERWHS Meeting of SIG Core Team for WHS/ Lake Tenganon Tribes and Representatives in December 2019, the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) reiterated and reviewed the Cabinet Paper in September 2016 is a reference point for SIG to mandate key ministries to prioritize the ERWHS. Also the meeting aims to update SIG core team of the paper directives and the 15 recommendations from the Reactive Monitoring Mission (RMM) 2019.

The SIG Dialogue on East Rennell World Heritage Site meeting for Heritage has convened to update SIG and stake holders of the role each organisation played towards the World Heritage Site program. Also the dialogue aims to renew commitments of each SIG ministries and organisations towards the program and to find out the government’s and stakeholder’s contribution to the Management of the Site.

## **2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee**

The World Heritage Committee,

- a. Having examined Document WHC/19/43.COM/7A.Add,

- b. Recalling Decision **42 COM 7A.41**, adopted at its 42nd session (Manama, 2018),
- c. Commends the efforts made by customary landowners, local communities and the State Party to protect the property, in particular by not allowing commercial logging and mining within the property;
- d. Regrets however that a logging concession has been granted up to 200 meters from the boundary of the property without assessing the impacts on its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and before an understanding of the ecological connectivity between East and West Rennell is available, requests the State Party to submit an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for this project, and urges the State Party to closely monitor the situation, ensure that the boundary of the World Heritage property is clearly demarcated on the ground, and extend the buffer zone as new scientific information becomes available;

The people of both the East Rennell and the West Rennell are fully aware of negative impacts and effects of logging and mining on their environment. This has emanates positive discussions between tribes and literate individuals on how they can continue educate the communities and ensure they support the protection of land, forest of west Rennell and East Rennell WHS boundary.

The logging operation by OTC Company in the West Rennell has ceased its operation in December 2019. According to a report from Mr George Tauika, Chair of ERWHS Association in February 2020, he confirmed that the company has already left the logging operation site. A logging company can only operation within the respective concession areas as per their contract and their license.

A final monitoring / assessment by Environment and Conservation Division (ECD) is yet to be done. This was planned for implementation in the first quarter of 2020. Purpose of the monitoring and assessment is to identify any potential residue impact to the surrounding environment. The unforeseen situation of the Covid-19 pandemic has made it impossible for work to progress as expected. It is anticipated that once the current State of Emergency status of the country is lifted and financial allocation for the work is released, then, the final monitoring will be done this year, 2020.

- e. Notes that the letter submitted to the World Heritage Centre on behalf of the Tuhunui Tribe of East Rennell in May 2018, indicating their wish to withdraw its customary land from the World Heritage property, has been revoked, and also notes the competing claims of customary rights among tribes and individual households;

This is no longer an issue.

- f. Welcomes the State Party's effort to initiate dialogue with customary landowners and local communities concerning the 2010 Protected Areas Act, but also regrets that little progress has been made with the implementation of the commitments made by the State Party at the 2017 Round Table, including the finalization of a Management Plan, which was recommended by the Committee at the time of inscription in 1998, and also urges the State Party to include those commitments in the work plan and budget of relevant ministries;

SIG Dialogue 2020 recommendation – Use of cabinet conclusion paper to support budget bids for line Ministries.

- g. Adopts the following corrective measures and also requests the State Party to implement them, as a matter of urgency, to strengthen the protection of the OUV and integrity of the property while enhancing livelihoods of local communities:

a) Adopt a new Cabinet Paper, prepared by the three Chairs of the 2017 Round Table, reconfirming the 2016 Cabinet Paper, reaffirming all Round Table Ministerial commitments for East Rennell and directing all ministries to provide a concrete timeline and budget for their implementation,

The Solomon Islands Government and relevant Stakeholders/ Partners during its dialogue in March 2020, further recommend that the Cabinet Conclusion Paper 2016 must be used as a document to justify efforts for budget bids for respective line Ministries who have responsibilities to support the work at ERWHS. The dialogue session also recommended that the SIG Core Team for World Heritage Site must revise the 2016 cabinet paper. Revised version must outline explicit Government's commitments with estimated costing. The joint cabinet paper is to be submitted by Minister of Environment, Minister of Culture and Tourism and Minister of Education in 2020.

b) Ensure that the Lake Tengano World Heritage Site Association (LTWHSA) can officially and immediately apply for National Protected Areas status for the World Heritage property in order to initiate the official consultation process by the Director of the Environment and Conservation Division, and to finalize the Management Plan (including zoning)

The process to apply for legal protected area under Protected Areas Act 2010 is yet to start. However, the awareness of the Protected Areas Act 2010 and the review of the management plan is ongoing and currently led by the Environment Conservation Division (ECD) within the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Meteorology.

The commitment of ECD is to ensure that East Rennell Lake Tegano World Heritage Site – Association and its Management Committee continue to pursue and discuss the importance of PA with their tribal leaders and community members.

Strategically, the way forward to draw attention of individuals and community members towards the agreement of declaring Lake Tengano as a Protected Area are;

- World Heritage Site Management Plan must be finalised first and socialisation of the document to be done simultaneously with the Protected Areas Act key messages. Once this is well understood, it will pave the way for agreement of having Protected Area status at the designated WHS.

- The Management Committee with the Guidance from Environment Conservation Division must socialise the rules in the Protected Areas Act 2012
- There needs to be clarification on PAA Regulations and its implications.
- c) Ensure that the World Heritage property is actively promoted, including on the website of the Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau and on all relevant maps and promotional leaflets, and immediately begin actively promoting appropriate tourism using existing accommodations and facilities;

During the Land Owners Consultation in 2019 the discussions as per Reactive Monitoring Mission (RMM) recommendation number 7, highlighted that Promotion of Lake Tengano is lacking in relevant forms of media advertisements. The promotions and access of world Heritage Site in East Rennell remains a problem for tourists and visitors in terms of access and promotion. Also there is not enough support from the tourism sector and the government.

The National Commission for UNESCO supports this recommendation and in SI NATCOM considered this activity in its annual work plan for 2020/2021. Work on the promotion of Lake Tengano in media platforms that is accessible and affordable is paramount.

- h. Further requests the State Party to implement all other recommendations of the 2019 Reactive Monitoring mission, including:
  - a) Clarify the consent provision of the 2010 Protected Areas Act, particularly what concerns the ‘interested parties’ who would need to be involved in the process,

In the process of applying for the Protected Area status, “**interested parties**” are inclusive of; the resource owners, management Committee, resource users and any individual that have interest on the said property

or proposed protected area. On top of that, the Provincial Government and the National Government. National Government includes Government line Ministries such as; Ministry of Lands and Housing, Ministry of Forestry and Research, Ministry of Mines and Energy and Ministry of Environment & Conservation. In accordance to the Protected Areas Act Regulations 2010, the Ministry of Environment and Conservation is the lead Government Ministry that facilitates the **Protected Area Status** process.

Apart from the above agencies, there are also other key stakeholders that involve in the process especially taking into account the “type of Protected Area - Refers Categories”. For instance, the process can also involve Ministry of Tourism if the PA is a Nature Park as some of the activities might relate to tourism activities and this should adhere to some of the tourism standards and probably requirements. Apart from Government agencies, local and International NGO’s are also important partners in the process in terms of providing technical advice and advocacy.

b) Provide the LTWHSA with the support needed to manage the World Heritage property to international standards,

Capacity building /Training for association members and consistent communication /advice and support to the Chair and Association. A work plan of Association must be aligned to that of SI NATCOM, Environment and Conservation Division and Ministry of Culture and Tourism. This is the way forward to ensure support is provided for the LTWHSA.

c) Improve access to the property for tourists and local communities and improve access to basic services and facilities,

- SIG Dialogue 2020 asserted that one of the priority for the Ministry of Infrastructure Development (MID) Team is to do a scoping work on East Rennell on the road access. This has been already underway and the site report is yet to be submitted to SIG Core Team for WHS.

- There is also an Assessment of Tingoa airport with consultation of RENBEL Provincial Government for upgrading of Tingoa airstrip and for the new airstrip in East Rennell.
- There is also one telecommunication tower in East Rennell currently underway, however, the challenge faced is limited funds availability, thus, the Ministry of Communication and Aviation has worked closely with Renbel Provincial Government to ensure completion of the desired project.

During the SIG Dialogue meeting 2020, the action is to:

- Follow up on financial assistance for ground work
- Submit site report to National Transport Fund Board for approval (SIG Dialogue 2019)

d) Prioritize the development of sustainable livelihoods for the local communities, recognizing the important role played by women in East Rennell, including through a development plan, and seek technical and financial support from the international community for this effort,

The Government through the Ministry of Environment has identified and endorsed East Rennell for implementation of Livelihood and Conservation projects managed by UNDP. East Rennell is one of the recipients of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding Under Small Grants Program, UNDP.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) as established in 1992, the year of the Rio Earth Summit, the GEF Small Grants Programme embodies the very essence of sustainable development by "thinking globally acting locally". By providing financial and technical support to projects that conserve and restore the environment while enhancing people's well-being and livelihoods.

This program is specifically designed to mobilize bottom-up actions by empowering local civil society organizations, and poor and vulnerable communities, including women and Indigenous Peoples. The Programme **funds grants** up to a maximum of \$50,000 USD..

The first batch to East Rennell has already been disbursed.

e) Ensure the Rennell-Bellona Constituency Development Fund reserves an allocation for East Rennell and its local communities,

There is no allocation under the Rural Constituency Development Fund (RCDF) for WHS program for East Rennell. This issue was discussed at the SIG & Partners dialogue meeting. It was recommended that Solomon Islands Government (SIG) Core team for World Heritage Site to ensure this is discussed by relevant Ministries during the SIG budgetary period in 2020.

f) Develop a scientific research programme at Lake Tegano, seeking support from the international research community and also incorporating traditional ecological knowledge,

At the moment, there is no major developments within the property apart from a tower which was built by Our Telekom. ECD is aware on the importance of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as this is a legal requirement as per the Environment Act 1998.

There is an intent for an Infrastructure development for research /laboratory for East Rennell. ECD is ready to support this initiative by providing guidance and advise when and where necessary to ensure this is done.

Research Program for LTWHS needs support from Solomon Islands Government (SIG) and International community. New perspectives on research areas/ ideas must be made recognized and considered by Stakeholders to ensure collective support.

g) Continue and expand the recently started bird monitoring program, and seek international support to mitigate the effects of invasive species,

- Survey of the terrestrial Vertebrates on Rennell Island (Lake Tengano) was done by Kansas University in collaboration with other international institutions and a local Environment NGO on the island of Rennell.
- Survey highlighted that this is the first time the organization documented five species i.e. one bird (Stephen's Emerald Dove, *chlalcophaps staphani*), two reptiles (littoral skink, *Emioa atrocostata*; flowerpot blindsnake *indotyphlops braminus*) and two mammals, both being bats (large –footed Myotis, *Myotis moluccarum* and a *Pteropus* sp. Flying fox).
- Such finding however indicates the ecology of the forest system of eastern part of Rennell Island is still intact in a way that it provides the breeding opportunity for the existence of those species.
- It is recommended that such effort in conducting biological surveys should continue to provide more information on the conservation effort in protecting the world heritage site despite the fact that there is mining and logging in the western part of the island which undermines or disturbs the connectivity of the whole ecology of the island.

h) Ensure that EIAs are carried out for all proposed developments within the property and its vicinity to guarantee that these do not have a negative impact on the OUV of the property,

- Environmental Impact Assessment is one of the core function of ECD in the Ministry of Environment and Conservation. Strategic plan for this work is to be executed by the department when resources are available and provided by SIG.

i) Consider registering and surveying all lands under the Registration of Customary Lands Act, prioritizing the

western shore of the lake, where most people live and where initial tourism lodges should be clustered,

- SI NATCOM held a meeting in 2019 and had discussion with tribal chief and customary landowner's representatives regarding the importance of Registration of Customary Land. A presentation of the process and procedures of land registration will be done by the Ministry of Lands and Housing in the next SIG dialogue with customary landowners and LTWHS-Association which is schedule to take place in October 2020.

j) Record and map local culture, traditional and living knowledge, customary governance, genealogies and language of the East Rennell communities,

There has been already discussions on Safeguarding ICH of East Rennell by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism during the SIG Dialogue 2020. It is paramount that the ministry's role in East Rennell is to safe guard the Intangible Cultural Heritage of East Rennell and to increase the economic benefit of culture in East Rennell.

It has also been identified that there is a need for a Cultural Mapping exercise in East Rennell. The ministry's priority recommendations to this challenges are:

- Need for a tangible change
- Need to promoting practical aspect of culture in East Rennell

k) Consider assessing, in the 2020 state of conservation report, whether the current timeframe for implementing the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) is realistic;

Now that Solomon Islands Government is reconsidering its approach to mobilise its support to East Rennell World Heritage Site, it is important that the current time frame for implementation of the Desired State of Conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage Site in Danger (DSOCR) be extended to 2025. This

is to allow proper planning and in country and international mobilisation of resources to support the work. Also, considering the effects of COVID-19 pandemic, for instance economical, re-prioritisation of SIG plans and so forth, it is worth considering the risks that might be encountered to ensure proactive implementation of the key programs, projects, activities planned for ERWHS.

- i. Notes with great satisfaction the substantial support that the States Parties of Australia and New Zealand provided to the Solomon Islands in an effort to prevent the Kangava Bay oil spill from reaching the property, and calls upon the ship owner and insurer of the MV Solomon Trader to cover all expenses of the ecological and socio-economical impacts;
- j. Requests furthermore the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2020**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 44th session in 2020;
- k. **Decides to retain East Rennell (Solomon Islands) on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

#### 1. Public Access to the state of conservation report

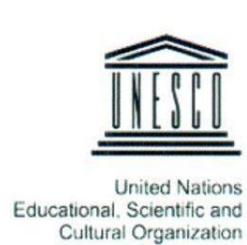
*[Note: this report will be uploaded for public access on the World Heritage Centre's State of conservation Information System (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc>). Should your State Party request that the full report should not be uploaded, only the 1-page executive summary provided in point (1.) above will be uploaded for public access].*

6. Signature of the Authority



**Annex:**

1. **East Rennell World Heritage Site Meeting of the SIG Core Team for WHS/ Lake Tribes and Representatives**



Solomon Islands  
Government

**SOLOMON ISLANDS NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO**

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**EAST RENNELL WORLD HERITAGE SITE MEETING OF THE SIG CORE TEAM FOR WHS / LAKE TEGANO  
TRIBES REPRESENTATIVES**

**MINUTES OF MEETING at  
SIBC Conference room 13<sup>th</sup> December 2019.**

**Objectives:**

- Update SIG core team of the Cabinet paper Directives
- Review the WHC 15 recommendations achieved from RMM to East Rennell.

**Solomon Islands National Commission for UNESCO 2019**

**Members Present**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Status</b>
1	Everlyn Fikumani		MID	Representative
2	Paul Jack Tainapu		ERWHS Committee	Committee Member
3	Randy H Kaipua			Member present
4	Dr Ian Puia			Member present
5	Seth Gukuna			Members present
6	Fred Mamata		ERWHS Committee	Committee member
7	Newman Tegheta			Paramount Chief
8	Danny P			Member present

9	Patrick Moana		ERWHS Committee	Committee Member
10	Justin Bauake			Member present
11	George Tauika	Chair, LTWWSA	ERWHS Committee	Chairman ERWHS
12	Jethro Tagosia			Member present
13	Dixon Soaika			Member present
14	Davis Puia			Member present
15	Dr. Franco Rodie	PS – Secretary General	MEHRD	MEHRD
16	Christina Bakolo	Coordinator IEC	MEHRD	SINCU
17	Sophie Liligeto	Assistant IEC	MEHRD	SINCU

## 1.0 PRE- MEETING FORMALITIES

Formal proceedings commenced after thirty (30) minutes into meeting time. Quorum was confirmed by Permanent Secretary at 10:15 am.

## 1.1 MEETING OPENING

### Preliminary Welcome

Deputy Secretary General of UNESCO, Christina Bakolo, warmly welcomes all participants to the meeting. A special welcome mentioned to paramount chief Newman Tegheta and MID rep for their availability.

She further briefly outline the agenda and highlighted key areas of change in the program.

## 1.2 MEETING PROCEEDINGS

George Tauika, chairman of LTWWS Association opened the meeting with a prayer.

Permanent Secretary of MEHRD, Dr Franco Rodie, specifically highlighted the important objectives of the meeting as stated in the program and confirmed the first two objectives necessary.

### 1.3 Remarks by the Chairperson

Apologise for the absence of Co- Chair Permanent Secretary Nihopara Ministry of Culture and Tourism and key Line Ministries especially Min. Environment Conservation and Climate Disaster Risk Management as WHS program focal point.

Objectives no. 3 cannot be discussed and achieved as responsible line ministries are not available to respond and answer relevant questions.

### 1.4. Agenda

1. Reactive Monitoring Mission- 15 Recommendations

#### 1.4.1 AGENDA ITEM FOR DISCUSSION AND DECISION

- Update Solomon Island Government (SIG) core team of the Cabinet paper Directives
- Reactive Monitoring Mission- 15 Recommendations

### DISCUSSION

#### Session 1- Updating SIG core team of the Cabinet paper Directives

Christina Bakolo presented the Cabinet paper/ directives (2016)

Franco Rodie assured and remind that the Cabinet paper is a reference point for SIG to mandate key ministries for the tasks and commitments

Reviewing the cabinet paper poses the question “how far SIG implemented these activities and to what extent?”

#### MEHRD activities

1. Schools -Translated into Curriculum

- Educating children of the environment, conservation, protection concepts
  - Issues and challenges are featured in the new curriculum
2. Students
    - Solomon Islands Secondary School Entrance (SISE) Phase out
    - Compulsory Education- raising education standard of rural populace
  3. Infrastructure - Improving school buildings, education office etc.

### **MID activities**

Activities featured in Annual Work Plan (AWP) in 2019 but re-scheduled for 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr. 2020

- Road maintenance of existing road/ trimming of vegetation
- Widening of road to at least 6 meters
- Upgrade drainage sections
- Need feasibility studies
- Need proper consultations for road scoping (Min. Infrastructure and Development and East Rennell Community)

### **Questions/ Comments**

- It is suggested for another meeting/ consultation early in 2020
- Participants expressed their disappointment of key line ministries unavailability at the meeting
- Participants reiterated the people's disappointment of SIG failed assistance and support causing frustrations
- The Paramount Chief Newman Tegheta gave a brief background of East Rennell World Heritage Site membership
- Participants question Recommendations from 2017 round table.
- SIG admitting failing East Rennell program
- Call to SIG and NATCOM to developed East Rennell
- Addressing livelihood of people is paramount

## Session 2 – Understanding 15 Recommendations

### Reviewing 15 recommendations

Recommendations No.	Comment
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MECCDM to clarify Protected Areas Act.</li> <li>• Increase consultations / awareness for Provincial Government, community, council of chief.</li> <li>• Management Plan still in draft- community suggest a simple plan, with more activities/ timeframe (currently working with LALSU)</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need consultation with proposers</li> <li>• Upgrade 2017 round table minute</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Min. Culture and Tourism to improve amenities (access)</li> <li>• Empower WHS Committee and council of chiefs to drive this</li> <li>• Revive the cultural aspects in management plan</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land owners and community , individual and family must be the benefit of the projects</li> <li>• SIG must be committed to funding livelihood projects</li> <li>• Problem- Promotion and access- not enough support from Tourism</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of Rural Constituency Development Fund (RCDF) control</li> </ul>
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map culture for Tourism</li> <li>• Promotion of Lake Tegano</li> <li>• Cultural land scape- Identified threat- lack of income generating capacity</li> </ul>
12	Improve Livelihood for East Rennell

## **ACTION/WAY FORWARD**

- Put aside challenges
- Find ways to influence the SIG Government for Infrastructure projects eg. Tourism industry
- To connect with SIG Government – Secretary to the Prime Minister to attend 2020 proposed meeting
- Propose an Act of parliament for World Heritage Site needed to be passed
- Suggestion for another meeting/ consultation early in 2020
- Provide Aviation services directly to East Rennell
- Call to amendment to cabinet paper – UNESCO to support airfield and road.
- Recommend that an officer is to account for WHS in head division to attract budget support in ministries.
- Recommend to create accounting code in respective ministries budgets

### **Major Recommendations:**

- Infrastructure Development –road and airstrip
- To include budget line for line ministries
- Supplementary budgets for 2020

**Meeting Closed at 4 pm**

## **2: SIG PARTNERS DIALOGUE ON EAST RENNELL WORLD HERITAGE SITE**



Solomon Islands  
Government

## SOLOMON ISLANDS NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

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### SIG AND PARTNERS DIALOGUE ON EAST RENNELL WORLD HERITAGE SITE

MINUTES OF MEETING at

MENDANA Hotel 12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

#### Objectives:

- Update Solomon Islands Government and stakeholders of the role each organisation played towards the World Heritage Site program
- Renewed commitments of each SIG ministries and organisations towards the program
- To find out what the government and stake holders can contribute to this national asset.

#### Members Present

	Name	Designation	Organisation
1	Andrew Nihopara	PS	MCT
2	Michael Maehaka	Deputy director - Hydrology	Hydrology- MMERE
3	Josef Hurutarau	Deputy Director	MECCDM
4	Dennis Marita	Director -Culture	MCT

5	Bunyan Sivoro	Director -Tourism	MCT
6	Steven Paukari	Principal - Culture officer	MCT
7	John Maefasimaoma		Min. Fisheries & Marine Res
8	Job Hukamoana	Principal- fisheries officer	Min. fisheries & Marine Res
9	Sylvester Dialke	Chief Aquaculture	Min. Fisheries & Marine Res
10	Robert Dolasi Kaua	US	MPGIS
11	Dr Samson Viulu	Resource Sector	PMC
12	Jimson Tanagada	Policy Secretary	PMC
13	Loraine Bambu		UNDP
14	Teiba Mamu	National Coordinator – Small Grant	UNDP
15	Elmah Panisi	Country Manager	Live and Learn
16	Mike Qaqara	Director	MID
17	William Kadi	LALSU	Public Solicitors Office
18	Trevor Veo	Undersecretary - Aviation	MCA
19	Bill Apusae		Live and Learn
20	Brian Wate	National Consultant	PMC
21	Veira Pukera	ECD	MECCDM
22	Kedson Angu	PIMEU	PMC
23	Alfred Maaramo		MOFR
24	David Sanga	Rep	Honiara
25	Dixon Soaika	LTWHS- Secretary	Lake Tegano
26	Liam Sau	Social Sector - PS	PMC
27	Walter Hubert Reign	Social sector- NC	PMC
28	Christina Bakolo	Coordinator IEC	NATCOM
29	Sophie Liligeto	Assistant IEC	NATCOM
30	Newman Tegheta	Paramount Chief	East Rennell
31	Dr Ian Puia	Advisor	East Rennell
32	Rex Pugeika Tahua	ERWHS	East Rennell
33	Fred mamata Saopogo	ERWHS	East Rennell

34	Garry Sibolo	ERWHS	East Rennell
35	Kelly Moa Livae	ERWHS	East Rennell
36	Maxie Tauika Saoba	ERWHS	East Rennell
37	Alfred Taukiniu	ERWHS	East Rennell
38	Seth Tinopau	ERWHS	East Rennell
39	Francis Temagibu	ERWHS	East Rennell
40	Sibolo kaihuei	ERWHS	East Rennell
41	Daniel Kaituu	ERWHS	East Rennell
42	Oswald Sauika	ERWHS	East Rennell
43	George Tauika	ERWHS	East Rennell
44	Dickson Soaika	ERWHS	East Rennell
45	Gabriel kiupua	ERWHS	East Rennell
46	Loretta Tepuka	ERWHS	East Rennell
47	Tusiata	ERWHS	East Rennell
48	Warren Teseu	ERWHS	East Rennell
49	Jack Tainapu	ERWHS	East Rennell

## 1.155 MEETING OPENING

### Preli56minary Welcome

Senior officer, Trevor Maeda from MECCDM warmly welcomes all participants to the two days dialogue. A special welcome and acknowledgement mentioned to PMC consultants for their availability and participation.

Trevor further highlighted the importance of the dialogue with stakeholders and SIG

Add on to convey apologies from PS MEHRD/ PS MECCDM for their unavailability due to other commitments.

There was a quick Introduction of participants and a brief glance at the two days program.

## 1.2 MEETING PROCEEDINGS

Director Civil Engineering- MID, Mr Mike Qaqara opened the dialogue with a word of prayer.

MC, Trevor Maeda welcomes Permanent Secretary Min. Culture and Tourism as chair of SIG and Partner Dialogue on East Rennell World Heritage Site

MC Conveying apologies from Permanent Secretary MECCDM and Permanent Secretary MEHRD as Co – Chairs of Solomon Islands Government Core Team for East Rennell World Heritage Site.

He further acknowledged the presence of the Development Partners and Non –Government Organization and their participation to the meeting.

Acknowledging the presence and participation of the Office of the Prime Ministers Cabinet officer's.

## 1.3 Agenda

Update Solomon Islands Government of the different roles each organisation/ Development partners and SIG line ministries play towards World Heritage Site Program regarding the Reactive Monitoring Mission (RMM) 15 recommendations 2019.

### Introductory

#### **Setting the context – National commission for UNESCO**

Ms Christina Bakolo, Deputy Secretary General for Solomon Islands National Commission for UNESCO, presented the need for the SIG and Partners Dialogue on East Rennell World Heritage Site.

Presenting the purpose and the objectives of the dialogue.

#### **Comments**

- Angles of challenges are eminent in such cases in terms of development in any community.
- It is evident that issues do exist in Local Communities.

The Chair Person for the Meeting, Mr Andrew Nihopara, Permanent Secretary for Min. Culture and Tourism introduced the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) CORE TEAM for East Rennell World Heritage Site which consisted of the government ministries of Min. Education and HRD, Min. Environment Climate Change Conservation Disaster & Meteorology and Min. Culture and Tourism which formed after cabinet paper was signed in 2016.

### **Permanent Secretary- MCT**

- Highlighted the background of work progress done in East Rennell World Heritage Site.
- The Lack of commitments and recognition from Solomon Islands Government towards this program.
- 2013 is listed in Danger – reflects the lack of coordination and commitment as a government towards WHS.
- Highlighted the Cabinet Conclusion paper submitted in 2016
- Clarify that **Conclusion G** in the cabinet paper was not originally in the cabinet conclusion submission.
- Outstanding issue - actual demarcation of the boundary between East and West Rennell.
- Highlighted the 15 recommendation from RMM 2019- based on assessing issues on the ground and the Government's commitment of addressing issue of removal Lake Tegano from the danger list.
- Highlighted the 2017 Round Table meeting- expanding the commitments the government made through the Cabinet Paper Conclusion.

### **Expected Outcome:**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be signed between Provincial Government, East Rennell World Heritage Site Association Committee, Land owners, Solomon Islands Government.

### **Key Question Areas:**

- Roles each line ministries and stakeholders played
- Renewed Commitments of each SIG ministries and organizations
- Addressing some issues on the 15 recommendations made in 2019.
- What Government and stake holders can contribute to this national asset

## Comments

### PMC- Mr Jimson Tanagada

- Challenges are eminent in any community where development is taking place
- Reassuring SIG support continues towards this current Govt towards this program

#### Recommendation:

- To work with current political Govt as Sub- Cabinet committee secretariat working with the SIG Core Team as an opportunity to remind Current Government of the commitment.

## Session 1 – Day 1, Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March

### PRESENTATION - MECCDM activities – Mr Josef Hurutarau

#### Responding to Activities on given Recommendations

*Recommendation 1-* Provision of Consent given to relevant parties for site conservation

*Recommendation 2-* Technical Assistance

- Currently working on the Protected Areas Act
- Currently working on how Trust Fund will be established and managed
- Office establishment- Do not have the resources for office establishment.

*Recommendation 5 – Sustainable Livelihood Development*

- Maybe develop research priorities based on threats on ground
- Recommend support from Gov't line ministries for technical support

*Recommendation 7-* Research priorities based on observation on site

- Currently working on research priorities on site

- Invasive species with technical assistance from Birdlife International

*Recommendation 8 – Bird monitoring program*

- Seek support from partner ministries for technical support

*Recommendation 10 – Land Survey*

- Activity to be communicated to Min of Lands for technical support

*Recommendation 12 –State of Conservation Report / DSOCR*

- SIG core team to discuss and recommend and report on DSOCR on site and how it is being managed.

*Issues/ Concerns- Conservation practices*

- Funding
- Unrealistic expectations of property and local politics
- Limited understanding and awareness of World Heritage Site property

**PA ACT Process**

- Process for PA Act
- LO to take issue on serious note

Situation change from initially time of inscription to now- to consider new ways of approaching and dealing with World Heritage Site program.

**Comments**

**PMC- Dr. Viulu**

- Lack of Government enforcement activities

**Recommendations:**

1. Support the call for the establishment of Cabinet Subcommittee which deals specifically with Lake Tegano
2. 12 recommendations (RMM 2019 Report) can be good TOR for cabinet sub committee
3. Revisit 2017 Round table Meeting
4. MECCDM to consider making process for Bio Prospective easy
5. Proper identification of risk factors and resolutions – logging/ mining

**PRESENTATION – MID Activities – Mr Mike Qagara****MID Director – Mr Mike Qagara-  
Cabinet Paper Conclusion - Access**

## Recommendation 3- Access

- Priority for MID Team to do scoping work- report to be submitted by March
- Assessment of Tigoa airport with consultation of RENBEL Provincial Govt

**Action:**

- Follow up on financial assistance (travel request fund) for ground work
- Submit site report to National Transport Fund Board for approval

**Session 2****PRESENTATION – MCA Activities – Mr Trevor Veo**

## **MCA- Director Aviation- Mr Trevor VEO**

- MCA team for Scoping Work on Tigoa, West Rennell
- Upgrade existing runway

### **Challenge:**

- Limited Budget

### **Recommendation 3-**

- Telecommunication – currently 2 towers, 1 in East Rennell, work is underway
- Postal Agency- Solomon Island Postal Cooperation in planning stage for a postal Agency in Tigoa.

#### **Way Forward:**

- MCA Team to Tigoa for Scoping mission
- Limited budget –Approach taken – partnership approach with Renbel Provincial Govt

## **Comments**

### **PMC- Liam Sau**

- Medical center in Tigoa is part of Min. Health Medical Services plan
- Assured his Ministry's support to this World Heritage Site program
- Land Owners must take ownership of the program, through management plan.

#### **Recommendation:**

- Use of Cabinet Conclusion Paper to support budget bids
- Call for update on the cabinet progress done so far since 2016.

### **PMC – Walter Hubert Reign**

- Call for collaboration in all line ministries.
- A National Heritage Site Bill underway

### **PMC - Jimson Tana**

- Reiterated the call to set up subcommittee secretariat working group
- Landowners to clarify economic activities that can be available working with SIG
- Suggest for another airstrip closer to Tegano  
(Consultation with land owners already underway)

### **PMC- Liam Sau**

- Provincial Govt to give development plan of Province

#### **Recommendation:**

- SIG Core Team for East Rennell World Heritage Site to communicate with Permanent Secretary MEHRD to prioritize school infrastructure in East Rennell
- SIG Core Team for East Rennell World Heritage Site, to seek update from MAL / MPGIS/ MRD- since they are not available in the dialogue meeting.
- Accommodating scoping of infrastructure development in East Rennell (MID/ MCA)

## **PRESENTATION – MMERE Activities – Mr Nicholas Biliki**

### **MMERE- Mr Nicholas Biliki**

- Mining Act Currently in review
- There are no direct impact on WHS regarding mining
- Community infrastructure – West Rennell provisions for development facilities / infrastructure
- The possibility of assisting community projects in East Rennell

**Recommendation:**

- Provincial Govt to spread development assistance to East Rennell in safeguarding East Rennell WHS.
- Current mining bill to consider affected communities in Rennell as benefit

**Action:**

- Impacts on what's happening on affected communities in west Rennell
- More involvement in scientific study – on water quality, water content

**Mr Michael Maehaka - Director (Hydrology)**

- No activity done on Lake Tegano
- Signs of level water increases
- Needs assessment on causes
- Research needed on water (Lake)
- High Salinity/ Temperature increase need baseline study
- Need water resources assessment
- Water / Sanitation policy
- Need for a proper water and sanitation system (Which is best?)

**Recommendation:** MCT- PS

- Need to dialogue with R- WASH to extend project from West Rennell to communities in East Rennell



### **Director Hydrologist**

- Extend request to UNDP for funding for other communities
- Need an engagement study on water resource

## **PRESENTATION – MCT Activities – Mr Steven Paukari / Mr Dennis Marita/ Mr Bunyan Sivoro**

### **DIR Tourism- Mr Bunyan Sivoro**

#### Challenges in Rennell

- Challenges on infrastructure Development
- Challenges on tourism operators in Rennell- is very expensive
- Road (distance) cause destination to be very expensive
- Telecommunication tower establishment in East Rennell

#### Recommendation 4

### **Dir Culture- Mr Dennis Marita**

#### Highlighted MCT ministry's role in East Rennell

1. Safe guarding culture of East Rennell- Intangible Cultural Heritage
2. The economic benefit of culture in East Rennell

#### **Recommendation:**

- Practical aspect of culture
- The need for tangible change

### **Mr Steven Paukari - MCT**

- The need for a cultural mapping exercise in country and on East Rennell

## **Comments**

### **PS MCT:**

- Tourism angle- create concepts where workable on ground – which model best suits
- Identify pockets of challenges / activities and how best to address
- Cultural Mapping on East Rennell.

### **LALSU**

- Call for collaboration with Min. of Lands for PA Act
- How to mitigate the negativity with Rennell to promote the WHS image of it.

### **PMC**

- Need for a stronger legislation framework embedded
- Legal measures and make provisions for development in WHS

### **Dir- Culture**

- Call for recognizing WHS on East Rennell as National Project
- Possible areas to explore : Intellectual Property Right (IPR)- an economic benefit

## **PRESENTATION – MFMR Activities - Mr John Maefasimaoma**

### **Min. Fisheries**

- Few projects done
- Fisheries management Regulation 2018
- Community awareness of over harvesting coconut crab
- Review current fisheries ordinance
- Plan for awareness activities
- MFMR sectorial tour is carried out in 2019
- Livelihood activities e.g. Tilapia Farming

### *Challenges/ issues*

- Lack of budget allocation

## **PRESENTATION – MFR Activities – Mr Alfred Maaramo**

### **Min. Forestry- observer**

- Rehabilitation activities
- Land/forest importance in livelihood
- Review Forest Act- accommodate for other forest uses
- How to rehabilitate West Rennell

### **Forestry**

#### *Issues faced*

- Sustainable harvesting of forests
- Revenue generated for livelihood

### **Comments**

#### **PS MCT**

- Call for national Project – what mechanism can address budgetary support for strengthening enforcement
- Internal mapping of SIG core team on legislation focus on East Rennell/ other provinces for WHS

#### **NATCOM**

- Need for a Legal framework to establish in general on WHS Act
- Need to dialogue with development partners / seek assistance for WHS program

#### **Dir MECCDM**

- Important to consider Livelihood of the East Rennell

### **Forestry**

- Need to involve *Red Plus-* and identify a particular site in East Rennell to pilot *Red Plus*
- Progress of using PAA depend on consent for LO.

**Call:** Made by NATCOM there must be a legislation in place to protect WHS

### **Min of Mines & Minerals**

- How communities in East Rennell is affected for Prov Govt Assistance and support

## **Session 3 – Day 2, Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March**

### **PRESENTATION – MPGIS activities – US Mr Robert Dolaiasi**

#### **MPGIS- US- Mr Robert Kaua**

#### **Challenges**

- Ongoing economic pressures between East and West Rennell
- Upgrade of Existing road in Tigoa to East Rennell

#### **Recommendation 5**

1. CUTURE/ TRADITIONAL ASPECT-
  - Revitalizing eco-tourism potential in line with people’s socio cultural hospitality lifestyle
2. ENVIRONMENTAL/ INFRASTRUCTURE ASPECT- improve existing road
  - Airfield runway
  - Community paly ground
3. ECONOMIC ASPECT-
  - Boosting eco-tourism economic development around the lake

- Establishment of Village peace warden- community Governance in community- maintaining peace and order.

### Call:

1. Local expertise player on ground – Collaboration for maximum performance
  - Utilize well resource network
  - Outsourcing work / activities
2. Joint committees/ financial influence etc....
  - agree in principals and agree with financial support as well
  - call for Collaborations from SIG

### Comments

PMC- Identify the gap in strategic goal in the province.

Highlighted the 4 outcomes in MPGIS presentations

1. Economical
2. Social
3. Cultural
4. Environmental

### Recommendation: (Observation PMC)

- Issue of WHS- protecting the cultural and Environmental aspect of it.

### Call:

More Collaboration in terms of infrastructure – clinics & School infrastructure

If there is a possibility MEHRD and MPGIS collaborate to support infrastructure to meet the need/ resolutions

### **MCT – Dir Culture**

- MPGIS to be an avenue to channel assistance to Renbel
- Present as proposition
- Question the formulae each provinces were given funds
- Projectise Lake Tegano
- Increase revenue support to Province

### **MCT- PS**

- Question the possibility of PCDF. Could be an avenue to push Provincial Government for infra development
- Community governance concept for this area.

### **MECCDM- Director**

- Question the possible collaboration between MRD and MPGIS

### **PRESENTATION – UNDP Activities – Mr Teiba Mamu**

- How SIG to support project implemented in communities.
- SIG Core team to employ relevant legal framework

### **UNDP- Mr Teiba Mamu**

Recommendation 5 – Sustainable livelihoods for local communities.

### **UNDP's Involvement in East Rennell**

1. East Rennell Livelihood and conservation
2. Work With ERWHS Association

Ensure projects are successful in East Rennell.

### **Challenges**

- Capacity to handle projects

- Remoteness
- Ownership and sustainability
- Bad weather- slow implementation
- Organizational procedures vs local context

**Way forward:**

- Coordination and partnership between SIG, Agencies, Development Partners, LTWHSA
- Establishment on essential service

**PRESENTATION - Live and Learn**

**Call: for collaboration between SIG and stake holders**

- There must be a reporting mechanism in place

**Comments**

- UNDP- Support in technical reports
- MCT- Dir –Call: Use of networks to seek support externally
- Sharing of income benefit can be managed

**NATCOM**

- Responsibility to protect WHS
- Accountability

**Recommendation: (PMC)**

- It is important NATCOM to take stock of achievements.
- Key strategic Issue - Align ideas/ intervention on planning together



## Indigenous Rep:

- Observer: Clarify the right language (use) of name as **Tegano** in all official documents.

## Live and Learn

**Call:** For working together/ more collaborations

## MCT –PS

- Certain intervention need to focus more on East Rennell
- Livelihood projects must be narrowed down to East Rennell
- Implications of West Rennell development on East Rennell WHS

## PMC-

- Questioned if there are any political impacts in terms of Grants implemented projects.

## Response: UNDP

- Solar Panel
- Social Inclusion (gender)generated income for families
- Provide funds for Barana community Park

## PMC-

- Questioned the contribution of RENBEL Provincial Govt in the WHS program

## MCT-PS

- SIG Core team to analyze

## NATCOM

- SIG core team to put forward the challenge of zero budget allocation for this Program in each line ministries

**Way Forward:**

- Outcomes 1- Update from SIG with bearing program on East Rennell
- Outcome 2: Roles to direct ministries to be committed / linking to SIG roles by developing a presentable matrix tabulated – a mechanism to earmark budget for WHS program. Mechanism to drive the WHS program.

**Recommendation: MECCDM Dir**

- SIG Core team to identify priorities / work plan/ activities to follow

### 3. AGM Report- World Heritage Site Committee

**Lake Tegano World Heritage site association Brief Report 2017– 2019**

In 2013, Lake Tegano World Heritage site was officially declared by the UNESCO to be in the endangered list. This was a serious call to all stakeholders to collaborate to maximize the threats to the Lake Tegano World Heritage site.

The main threats to the World Heritage site were,

1. Logging and mining operated at West Rennell
2. Invasive species encroached into World Heritage site.
3. Over harvesting of marine resources as well coconut crab.
4. Internal issues amongst association members

After much dialogue and discussion with the UNESCO focal point, the state party (Solomon island Government) and other stakeholders, agreed to organise a Round table discussion to address these very crucial issues.

In our world Heritage site there were good number of people identified in different groupings in East Rennell to attend in the Round Table discussion.

The World Heritage Site Committee was part of the Round table meeting and discussions.

It was agreed that the National Government had recommitted to prioritise activities to elevate the status of East Rennell.

Since then our working committee and the people of east Rennell very conscious about the stagnancy of implementing what had discussed in the Round table.

These had created instability to the community of East Rennell, and few people from Tuhunui tribes supported the OTC logging company to extend to East Rennell world heritage boundary claiming they own the whole area of East Rennell. They see logging and mining are best alternatives to elevate standard of living in Rennell and also, a good challenge to the UNESCO and the National Government what they can do to assist the World Heritage site.

Mr Haueke and his few desperated followers supported the OTC logging company to settle their heavy machines at the Boundary point in the coast in late 2017, and the National Government had terminated their operational licences and shortly they took off.

Early 2018, these group (Tuhunui) secretly met at East Rennell and deigned a letter protested to the National government and the world Heritage centre that they (Tuhunui) withdraw their customary land from the world heritage program. Their concerned was, “we did not benefit from the World Heritage program”

Their alleged letter was circulated and reached the World Heritage Centre and causes a lot of disturbance which indeed tarnished the WHS status. The so called Tuhunui tribe claimed and even demarcated the 95% of whole East Rennell withdraw from WH program.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> August 2018, our Lake Tegano World Heritage committee facilitated public meeting at Tegano village to check with other tribal groups appeared in the consent letter and generally to solve the Tuhunui issue. The Tuhunui false claims instigated mix feelings to other tribal groups for not consulting them. The majority of our tribal leaders admitted in our discussion that they were not consulted neither mandated anyone in their tribe to give consent.

It was also noted that this so called Tuhunui group was so cunning to submit their false claim to pave their logging desires. After much discussion, we all agreed to write a letter to revoke and denied their claims

**Here are some valid points in our Public Meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> August 2018 at Tegano village, denied the so called Tuhunui tribal group claims.**

- a) There was no consultation made to each tribal groups in East Rennell.

- b) The mandated tribal chiefs were not consulted
- c) There were a lot of forging of signatories in supporting their claim
- d) There are no women's councils exist in East Rennell in supporting their claim
- e) There are about 12 Tribal groups exist in East Rennell and Tuhunui is one of them.
- f) Tuhunui's secretary, Mr Martin Tema made contrary comments to the content of the letter. He admitted that the demarcating of whole East Rennell own by Tuhunui tribe was not mentioned in their discussion. . (See photo during our public meeting at Tegano village)

We regret that the revoked letter did not reached the Focal points due to unreliable hand delivered mail.

Our committee consulted Mr Robert Cassier from UNESCO if they could assist our Paramount Chief Niuman Tegheta Nikamatu`a to facilitate or conducting a meeting with his Tuhunui tribal group and East Rennell Council of chiefs to resolve the issue, however, Robert Cassier is yet to respond to this urgent call.

#### **Lake Tegano World Heritage site association management plan**

In 2013, Ms Anna Price undertook wide consultation in East Rennell to develop the Management Plan of Lake Tegano World Heritage site. In 2014 the committee received a draft copy. The committee and the people of East Rennell demanded the state party is to facilitate or review the LTWWSA Management Plan throughout East Rennell communities as well Honiara based people but to date, it never eventuate.

Late 2018, Mr Trevor Maeda from the MECDM reached our WH site and successfully conducted an awareness meeting about the Protected Area Acts (PAA)

The people agreed that the management plan should be the driving mechanism to legally protect the World heritage Site.

Currently our communities and the people of East Rennell had acquainted themselves with their traditional knowledge to protect the site and doing things in a sustainable ways. Due to the rapid population growth and poor yield of garden crops, most families rely on processed food which need money to meet these demands.

Because of these high demand, the people of East Rennell tempted to access to these resources with no care attitude and our Association needs to review and adopt the management plan to legally minimize the over exploitation of resources.

The draft management plan needs revising to a simpler and workable approach. The committee will consult the state party to make sure the management plan is to be revised in the communities soon.

#### **Lake Tegano World Heritage Site Association Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

The LTWHSA Annual General meeting should be facilitated last year 2018, however, due to the financial constraints it did not happen. In early October 2018, the committee seek financial assistance from National Commission UNESCO facilitate the AGM. The funds was available in early December but due to poor communication and Banking system, funds were not able to accessed and so delaying the AGM.

The committee keeps updating the Association for the deferments of the AGM and they are well aware of the situation.

Currently, the chairman for LTWHA got stranded in Honiara to due transportation difficulty and bad weather. The AGM hopefully will convene early next month. The committee will assure resolutions in the AGM and anew appointees will be made known to the state Party and other international potential partners as soon all formalities are done.

Thank you  
George Tauika,  
Caretaker chairman, Lake Tegano World Heritage Site Association.

## STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT 2021 - SOLOMON ISLANDS

### BRIEF SUMMARY UPDATE

#### **Introduction**

The Lake Tegano World Heritage Site Association (LTWWSA) as a custodian of the East Rennell World Heritage Site (ERWHS) has been making considerable efforts to remove the site from the List of World Heritage in Danger in collaboration with the Solomon Islands Government core team for East Rennell World Heritage Site.

The Solomon Islands Government (SIG) Core Team for World Heritage Site consists of Min. of Culture & Tourism, Min. of Agriculture & Livestock, Min. of Fisheries & Marine Resources, Min. of Education and Human Resources Development, Min. of Infrastructure & Development and Min. of Environment, Conservation, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management whose mandates are linked to the core business of ERWHS. The SIG core team for ERWHS is collaborating with Solomon Islands National Commission for UNESCO (SI NATCOM) to carry out core activities and tasks agreed during the round table meeting in 2017 and RMM recommendation in 2019 to address issues of ERWHS for the removal of the site from Danger List.

This report will provide progress update information with regards to the status of tasks implemented in East Rennell to ensure East Rennell World Heritage Site is removed from the danger list. Additional information herewith has been included as ERWHS and SIG progresses and plans for sustainable and management of the property.

The report covers five main indicators for the removal of the WHS property from the list in danger.

#### **1. Forest cover in the East Rennell World Heritage Site property is maintained.**

The type of forest as observed at the site, are all dense forest with good mixture of commercial and non-commercial tree species. The forest undergrowth remains intact and soil exposure to direct rainfall and excess sunlight is limited hence, remains protected and maintained.

#### **Issue**

- **Proposed road development from Sugani to Bagu and Kiakoe is located in the western end of the lake** - Located within the boundaries of World Heritage Site, East Rennell. This proposed road construction already has the approval from the Min. Infrastructure Development and an application was made to Min. Forest & Resource for exemption on the felled logs along the construction site. Also an agreement was made with the developer who will partner with the landowners in terms of selling and sharing log revenues.

## Potential threat

- Forest loss not only harms the land, but the resulting siltation eventually kills corals and affects marine life offshore. However, this is insignificant for East Rennell where the proposed development site is located and where there is lack of water sources like rivers and stream.
- The high land rainforest within the catchment area has been heavily disturbed by major logging activities and has shown significant level of damage to the natural forest cover.

## LTWWSA / SIG Action

- Ministry of Environment Conservation, Climate Change and Disaster Management (MECCDM) has carried out an Environmental Assessment Scoping report in response to request made to the division by landowners of the piece of land (identified for road construction) to assess environmental status and condition along the area of interest for any potential environmental impacts on road development which may give rise to the need for conducting an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) later on.
- Focal point, Conservation Division confirms that the decision for either approval or withdrawal of the road proposal is currently pending awaiting report from Forestry and possibly further deliberation by Ministry of Environment Conservation Division, Min. Finance & Treasury, Ministry. Culture & Tourism and Cabinet.
- The SIG Environment Act of 1998 under section 25, is the legal document that safeguards the developer not to carry on the road development as yet as far as granting of development consent is concerned.
- The scoping report identifies more responsible developments would help ensure that they are protected for future generations.

## **2. Any extractive activities in West Rennell and or areas outside of the ERWWS boundary (logging, mining) are managed to ensure no negative impact on the OUV.**

Although logging and mining activities ceased to operate in West Rennell, the environmental impacts of these activities on the environment and livelihood of East Rennell people is evident.

## Issues

- **Massive death of flying foxes** – the mysterious massive deaths of flying foxes reported in Lake Tegano is an issue yet to investigate.
- **Social problems** – anti-social behaviours in the communities is imminent as a result of logging and mining activities in West Rennell
- **Food security issues** – due to tropical cyclone Harold and continuous heavy rain in 2020 and early 2021, local communities have now started to experience severe consequences of food security and daily subsistence
- **Proposed Road construction** – is identified within boundaries of WWS which is likely to affect the OUV of the site.

**Oil Spill** – The oil spill in 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2019 by MV Trader Solomon Islands in Kangava Bay is just 2 km away from the World Heritage boundary. In the following month, almost 80 tons of crude oil spilled in Kangava Bay damaging marine resources as one major source of food.

### **Potential threats**

- The massive deaths of flying foxes poses a threat to the food chain cycle and will affect the ecosystem. Also such occurrence is said to harbor diseases and spread of diseases to human beings in the community and will cause environmental impact on the OUV of the WHS.
- The site for road development had very limited/ nil water catchment areas, no cave waters and few underground sources. There are no rivers or streams and sedimentation from inland source into marine environment will be very low due to the very limited soil in the area.
- According to the July 2020 Environmental Assessment/ Scoping report, top soil exposure is eminent but the natural process of re-colonization will take very long period of time to fully regain its healthy status but the rate of soil erosion in the proposed area is predicted to be very low because of the topography of the area.
- Land degradation has been identified as another possible impact that this proposed development is likely to cause. The excavation of earth for road construction may accelerate soil erosion due to felling, exaction, loss of top soil, however, according to this July 2020 Environmental Assessment Scoping Report are all insignificant.
- The anti-social behaviour looming in the communities is affecting the social fabric of the community –ie; family
- Local communities are isolated as the monthly shipping services between Honiara and the site has been cancelled due to bad weather.
- There is also an important sociological impact because communities are forced to abandon their traditional farming practices and use the little amount of cash they have left to purchase rice or noodles from the logging companies in West Rennell with whom they are at odds
- The continuous rain has flooded the gardens with brackish lake water and has disrupted farming activities.
- The oil spill in February 2019 is a threat to food security and marine resources as food source for East Rennell people.

### **LTWHS / SIG Action**

- The actual cause of dead flying foxes is yet unknown but WHS focal point / MECCDM is currently working on deploying a team to further investigate the matter.

- NATCOM advises the Chairman of LTWWSA, George Tauika to seek projects under Rapid Response Facility (RRF) Small Grant Application for emergency funds
- Environment Assessment Scoping Report 2020 considers that the road construction must be of standard design to achieve the minimal impact on environment and ensuring no negative impacts on the OUV
- MECCDM conducted community consultations 2019 -2020 which aims to ensure people are well informed of the development and their position to harness the potential of World Heritage status in general and the relevance of the such development whilst respecting its primary purpose and mandate of protecting the Outstanding Universal value of World Heritage site.
- The MECCDM through the 2020 Environmental Assessment Report ensure to develop good environmental practices and management systems for East Rennell to protect the OUV of the World Heritage Site.
- SIG with substantial intervention from Australia and New Zealand averted the disaster hence, no oil seems to have reached the World Heritage site.
- MECCDM conducted a 7-day environmental assessment in March 2019 to monitor the oil spill in Kangava Bay and surroundings and the continuous monitoring of impact is ongoing including socio-economic implications for communities in East Rennell.
- The SIG decision to implement the findings of the oil spill is to work on ways to address the effect of oil to ensure that it will not badly affect livelihood of the East Rennell people.

### **3.Threats to invasive species have been Identified and minimized and biosecurity measures have been established to control threats to the OUV**

The two main invasive species identified here are rats and snails.

#### **Issue**

- **Invasive species of rats-** According to Bird Life International report, rats are well established in areas of habitation on Rennell Island, along coastlines and roads, while rats are not detected inside large areas of intact forest.

#### **Potential threats**

- **Damage to vegetation/ crops-** the rats feed on the crops in the garden hence, threatened food security and livelihood of the East Rennell people
- **Economic/ financial problem –** There are not enough crops for consumption and selling
- **An unknown pest -** (the name is yet to be verified) sucks the sap from the Taro leaves and stalks.
- **The humid ground -** is also infested by Nematode which rots the taro before it can be harvested. The Taro either wilts and dies or is regarded as unfit for human consumption

## **LTWHS/ SIG Action**

- NATCOM and LTWHS Support Bird Life International to implement a 3-year project to control invasive species (rats) to ensure safeguarding Rennell Island Livelihoods and biodiversity from invasive species. Also to ensure that villagers create local incomes from traditional handicrafts and other incomes on food security.
- In a workshop organised by NATCOM for SIG line ministries including the Prime Minister's Office were requested on March 12-13, 2020 to provide technical support for the development of research priorities based on threats experienced in ERWHS. for technical support. (RMM recommendation 5&7)

## **4. Coconut crab and other marine resources are harvested in a sustainable manner based on traditional resource use regimes**

In 2012 and 2013, the Committee urged the SP to make an immediate assessment of the overexploitation of Coconut Crab and other marine resources. An International Assistance Request was approved in 2012 for conducting survey activities although monitoring of coconut crab was not included in the survey.

In 2013, the Committee requested to apply harvesting regimes based on traditional resource management practices, including the restrictions recommended by the 2012 IUCN mission. In 2019 RMM's report, it again reiterates the need for sustainable harvesting using traditional resources.

### **Issue**

- **Over-exploitation of marine resources and coconut crab**- is an ongoing issue in East Rennell because people do depend on these resources for food.

### **Potential Threats**

- **Food security threatened** – overharvesting of these resources affects food security and food shortages.
- There is also an important sociological impact because communities are forced to abandon their traditional farming practices and use the little amount of cash they have left to purchase rice or noodles from the logging companies in West Rennell with whom they are at odds.

## **LTWHS/ SIG Action**

- Awareness was done in 2018...by Conservation division on Protected areas and messages on ensuring coconut crab not be over harvest has been emphasised.

- The Ministry of Agricultural/agroforestry has planned to strengthen food security of local communities based on traditional farming methods. The Ministry provide and expert to advice on agricultural practises and agroforestry activities.

## **5. The management by ERWHS association, SIG and land owners plan for the sustainable development and management of the property (WHS)**

There are number of issues that came up with regards to the management of LTWWSA and SIG plans for the sustainable development, management and protection of the site.

### **Issues**

- **Termination of LTWWSA by Paramount Chief of East Rennell** - creates issues between two parties concerned.
- Association Management Plan by MECDM and NATCOM is still pending.

### **Lack of legal protection of LTWWS**

- **Renbel Provincial Ordinance** -The Rennell Bellona Provincial Government has not yet passed an ordinance that could be used to ensure protection of East Rennell WHS and activities on West Rennell that will have an impact on the WHS.
- **Protected Areas Act 2010**- Landowners of the WHS area need to allow and accept that their land to be declared as Protected area to be guided by the Protected Areas Act 2010.
- **World Heritage Act** – Solomon Islands is yet to enact a National World Heritage Site Act. The reason why no legal binding of activities done within the boundaries of WHS and also ensures that SIG is committed and obliged to support World Heritage Sites ratified by Solomon Islands Government.

### **Potential threat**

- The termination of LTWWSA issue is pending consultations from both parties-landowning & tribal groups and the Association. The longer it is pending, the more threat it will pose to the communities and the association.
- East Rennell is a World Heritage Site, it has no legal protection under Solomon Islands law, hence, East Rennell people can do whatever they wish for their own benefit and neglect the OUV of the site.

### **LTWWSA/ SIG Action**

NATCOM and SIG core Team for World Heritage Site consultations in Honiara with Paramount Chief, Mr. Newman and Supporters/ tribal representations and on

ground consultations in East Rennell scheduled for mid-March 2021 through the support of NFIT project. NATCOM with LTWWSA is supporting this initiative in endorsing and assisting with finalisation of the project's budget & implementation.

- Solomon Islands government through NATCOM will start the initial work to coordinate the development of world Heritage Site Act in 2021.
- The continuous consultation of Protected Areas Act 2010 has halted due to the Covid 19 pandemic but is sure to continue this year 2021 by WHS focal point (MECCDM)
- Finalisation of the **Draft Management Plan** is in progress
- Small grant (GEF) implemented by ERWWS Association is progressing, See updates below

	Villages	Implemented project
1	Hutuna village	1. Poultry ( layer) – on going
2	Tegano Village	2 Poultry ( Broiler) – on going
3	Niupani village	1. Piggery – ( complete) 2. Small scale fishing project – ( on going)
4	Tevaitahe	1. Piggery – ( complete) 2. Small scale fishing project – ( on going)

Although this project is quite slow in the early stage, the result as foreseen here is multiple. It will due March, 2021.

- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to be developed and to be signed between Provincial Government, East Rennell World Heritage Site Association Committee, Land owners, Solomon Islands Government. This is still in working progress with other government line ministries.