



## ***RAMSI's 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary***

**Special Coordinator Graeme Wilson**

**RAMSI Headquarters, Honiara**

**16 October 2010**

I know it is a source of great satisfaction and pride for the thousands of your friends across the Pacific who have served with RAMSI over the past seven years that we - Solomon Islands and RAMSI - enjoy a strong and genuine partnership.

It is remarkable what this partnership has enabled Solomon Islands to achieve since RAMSI was first invited in by the government of the day seven years ago. It is particularly fitting that the person who was responsible for RAMSI coming to these shores, the then Prime Minister and now Speaker of Parliament, Sir Allan Kemakeza, is here tonight and I thank him sincerely for joining us.

Today we celebrate not only the achievements and strengths of this partnership but also our shared vision for a well governed, prosperous and peaceful Solomon Islands. This vision should help the citizens of this country face the future with confidence.

When you look back, the journey that RAMSI has shared with the Solomon Islands people and government over the past seven years has been a remarkable one – and not without its ups and downs. The journey continues and many challenges remain. But it is a testimony to the strength of this partnership that we in RAMSI are now working with the fourth Solomon Islands government to hold office since RAMSI first arrived in this country. We worked very well with the previous CNURA Government of Dr Derek Sikua and we look forward to working closely with the new NCRA Government of Danny Philip.

I welcome the positive references to RAMSI in the Government's Policy Statement and the kind remarks made by Prime Minister Philip during the launch of the statement. I have already had several productive meetings with the Prime Minister and members of his Cabinet and RAMSI looks forward to an ongoing constructive dialogue with the Government.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Prime Minister, Hon Danny Philip, for the first time to RAMSI's headquarters here at GBR.

RAMSI has always said that we will be here for as long as we are welcome and until the job we came to do has been completed. That commitment remains. At the same

time, it is important to remember that we need to plan for the day when our job is indeed done. That transitional planning will take place in close consultation with the Solomon Islands Government in the context of the Solomon Islands-RAMSI Partnership Framework. There is much work still to be done under that Framework.

I am looking forward to discussing with the new Government how we can work together to make sure that this transition is as smooth as possible and that the drawing down of RAMSI over the coming years occurs in parallel with capacity development and is done in a way that everyone is comfortable with and that seeks to ensure sustainable outcomes.

In that respect, I would like to pay tribute to all the RAMSI staff who are so committed to helping this country and to developing the capacity of their Solomon Islands colleagues and counterparts with whom they work very closely. It is a privilege to lead such an excellent and dedicated team.

Many of the staff are also involved in community activities. Just this afternoon, I was with about 20 volunteers from the RAMSI military and police contingents who were helping me conduct AFL football training and games at KGV. We are hoping to raise the money, with support from some local businesses, to be able to send the first ever Solomon Islands AFL team to participate in an important Under 16 regional tournament in Tonga in December.

It is also a privilege to be here in Solomon Islands and to have the opportunity to work with, and get to know, so many wonderful people both in Honiara and the provinces. I have had the good fortune over the past nearly two years to visit every province of Solomon Islands. I look forward to attending the opening of the Premiers Conference in Buala, Isabel Province, on Monday.

Finally, allow me to thank you all once again for coming out to GBR this evening to join us in celebrating the ongoing partnership between Solomon Islands and RAMSI, one that has stood the test of time and that I am confident will continue to make all of us here, and in the region, proud to be associated with.

Tangiu tumas.