

Presentation on the
Summary of CCRA
preliminary findings in
Solomon Islands

Prepared by:

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CCRI Team in Solomon Islands



Overview of Networking Indigenous Peoples Network (NIPS)

- NIPS was registered in 2010 to address the issues of interest and challenge to indigenous people as owners of lands, territories and resources in the Solomon Islands
- NIPS has mainly been focused on concerted awareness campaigns targeting communal, provincial, national and regional issues affecting indigenous people's rights
- NIPS members are clan, tribes and community based organizations
- NIPS affiliates with the following;
 - Global Forest Coalition
 - International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity
 - First Peoples Action Network
 - Access and Benefits Submissions to the UNPFII

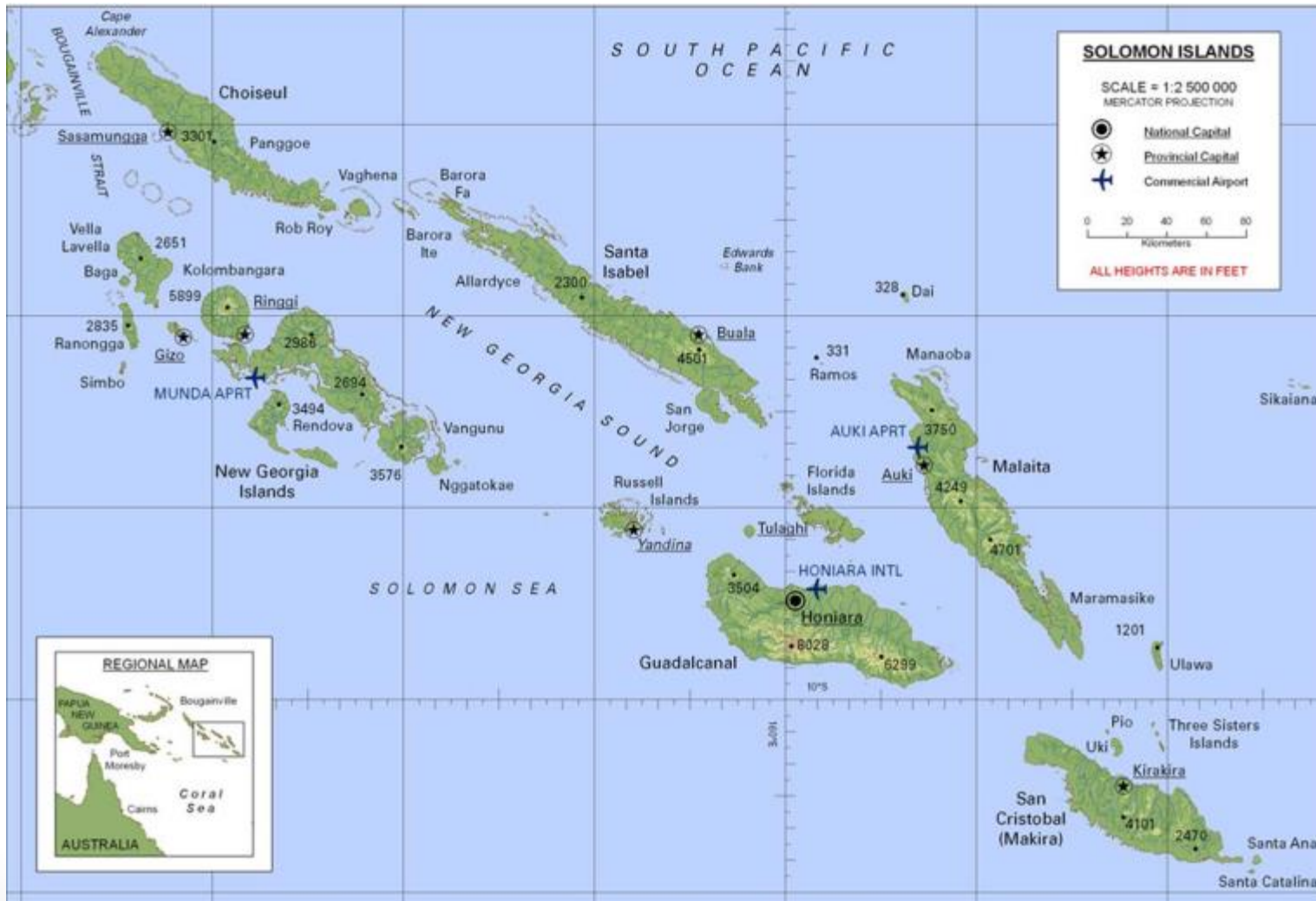
Overview continues...

- World Heritage Submissions by IWIGIA

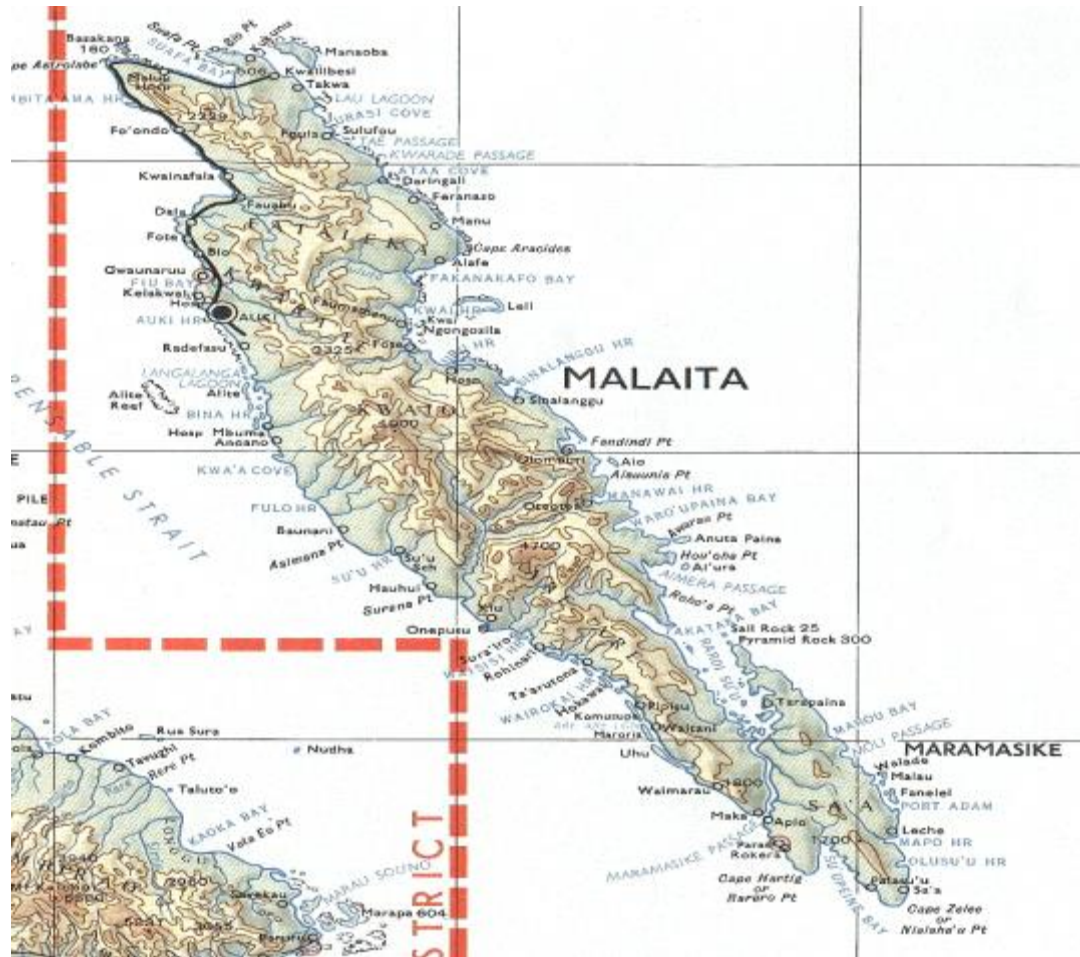
In the Pacific NIPS is a member of:

- Indigenous World Association
- Pacific Indigenous Peoples Caucus
- NIPS is current co-chair of World Network of Indigenous Peoples (WIN)

Map of Solomon Islands



Map of Malaita Province



Sulufou Island, Northeast Malaita



A little girl from Sulufou sitting on a jetty on coral stones at Sulufou Island



Fera Subua Island, North East Malaita



Overview of Sulufou and Fera Subua Communities, Northeast Malaita

- The CCRA was conducted by NIPS with two communities, in Sulufou and Fera Subua in northeast Malaita in the Solomon Islands
- The two islands were built on artificial islands made out of coral stones
- Sulufou consists of five tribal groups and Fera Subua consists of three tribal groups
- Certain lands or territories are owned by tribal groups and restricted to certain people to enter
- Both communities depend on land and sea resources for survival.
- Land dispute is still a major issue
- Given the high population, over exploitation of land and sea resources for survival is one major issue
- The sea level rise has caused a huge impact on the lives of the people living on both artificial islands especially the women and the children

Overview of CCRA process

- Questionnaires
- Workshops
- Face-to-face interviews with leaders from both communities
- Presentation of consolidated findings to the Sulufou and Fera Subua chiefs and elders at a national CCRI workshop in Honiara
- Development of a CCRI advocacy strategy and a legal review
- Preliminary report on key findings

Children and women of Sulufou during the workshop



Group discuss with women of Fera Subua community during CCRI workshop in Fera Subua



Description of community conservation practices

- Both these two communities have traditional conservation practices such as;
- preservation of small streams for drinking, taboo over fishing grounds or reefs, preservation of lands after certain months of cultivation and preservation of custom taboo sites.
- Dolphin hunting is considered one of the traditional practices that is sustainable. The elders and chief ensure that the dolphins are not over harvested by declaring to the community the time frame before next harvest or hunt is done, normally after a year or two. Dolphin teeth are very significant because they can be used for paying of bride price and settlement of disputes and the meat is a delicacy for the people in the northern region of Malaita province, Sulufou and Fera Subua included.

Community practices cont...

- A biological impact would be when preserving the small streams the surrounding trees are also preserved, which helps conserve the ecosystem.
- Custom or taboo sites are still respected to date and they play a great role in the conservation of the ecosystems in the areas.

Customary Institutions

- The custom house or beu to'ofi' is an important meeting place for chiefs and elders in both communities. Only men are allowed to enter this place. This is a place where decisions are made or customary laws are reinforced or traditional knowledge practices are taught to the young men.
- Women's voices on issues affecting them are taken into consideration during community meetings at the community hall where the whole community is gathered and then taken up to the Custom House

Threats and Challenges

- Survival of traditional knowledge and overharvesting of land and sea resources are two major internal threats.
- The western lifestyle has had a major impact on the lives of people which have resulted in community governance not being recognised and respected in our communities.
- Due to the high cost of living and population rate, people found it difficult to manage the harvesting of their land and sea resources. The resources were over harvested to meet their economic and livelihood needs.
- One of the major external threats is the sea level rise which has impact not only on these two communities but other islands throughout Solomon Islands. This is one of the biggest challenges for these two communities.
- Due to high sea level rise, relocation to the mainland is one major issue affecting the community.
- Another external threat is conflicts between customary and state laws, for example, insufficient recognition of indigenous peoples' traditional stewardship, governance and knowledge systems in national environmental laws.

Customary Law Vs National Law

- The Protected Areas Act never specifies the extent of certain powers of indigenous people of traditional conservation in certain provinces. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism are currently reviewing this legislation to include Intellectual Property Rights.
- The Fisheries Act recognises every customary usage of marine fisheries across the country. It can encounter these threats however; each province should have a customary fisheries act that is recognised nationally given the different cultural contexts in Solomon Islands.
- The Land Act recognises the current usage of customary practices in the passing of lands in each province, the rights of landowners, evidences such as original copies of history books, orally spoken histories and the number taboo sites.

Customary Law Vs National Law cont...

- The National River Waters Act does not mention any indigenous people's rights; the Minister has the power to declare the erection of dams, bridges and the diversion of water pipes.
- The Solomon Islands Government has not yet endorsed the "*United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*". This should be pursued alongside promoting inclusion of the rights of indigenous peoples in all of these acts to encounter these threats.
- The National Adaptation Programmes of Actions (NAPAs) under Article 4.9 of the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) recognizes the specific needs and special situations of the Least Developed Countries or islands. There may be opportunities to promote indigenous peoples' rights and community conservation initiatives in the Solomon Islands' NAPA.

Conclusions and recommendations

- Although the CCRA was conducted in the two communities, the people felt more needs to be done to address the climate change issues affecting them.
- They highlighted the following as their priorities:
 - **Promotion of Traditional Knowledge and customary practices**
 - **Resettlement of Sulufou and Fera Subua to mainland inland**
 - **Establishment of a custom house and community house**
 - **Mapping of land resources, traditional boundaries and taboo sites**
 - **Training on conservation and replanting of mangroves**
 - **Economic livelihood of the people in both communities**