

Fanmutia
Malha'a
27th April, 2010

Mr Terterani Rigamoto
Chairman
Council of Rotuma
Ahau.

Noa'ia 'e Mauri ko Gagaj.

This letter serves to formally acknowledge receipt of your official correspondence of Thursday, 18th February 2010 which confirms my appointment as a member of a recently formed **Think Tank** group to assist the Council of Rotuma. I apologise for this rather late reply as this letter had to be returned to me from Suva..

In any case, I **thank you** for the opportunity to be of further service to our community in this capacity and **accept** the appointment with great **pleasure, appreciation** and **humility**.

For your information, I was co-opted as a member of a similar group when I was the **Permanent Secretary** for Home Affairs and Immigration in 2000-2002. This group which was made up of senior civil servants was formed by **Ms Marieta Rigamoto**, Rotuma's former Parliamentarian to assist her in planning and coordinating the implementation of Government's development plans for Rotuma during her tenure in office.

When I was elected to Parliament in 2006 as Rotuma's sole member in the House of Representatives, I had planned to set up a **Working Group/Committee** to assist **Senator Dr John Fatiaki** and I in our joint efforts in the performance of our duties as Rotuma's Parliamentarians.

Representing our small community effectively by endeavouring to properly coordinate and address all our many varied and demanding **socio-political** and **economic needs** was going to be quite challenging and a daunting task indeed, hence my early attempts to formalize the establishment of such a forum.

I was equally conscious and cognizant of the need to have all the **Seven Districts** (Itu' Hifu) **represented** in this Working Committee in order to establish and maintain the forum's **integrity** and **credibility**. It was to be a forum of professionals and intellectuals from within the public and private sectors, personnel who has had an **exemplary track record** of **service** and **achievement** in their respective fields of employment and expertise.

I also realized that it was desirable that membership should be for those who **regularly interact** with the community in Rotuma and within the wider diaspora throughout Fiji..

Furthermore, members must be prepared to **make sacrifices** and work on a **voluntary basis**.

The council of Rotuma should be represented by the Chairman and it is my humble opinion that this forum should be headed by the person who can best command the trust and respect of the group and properly represent and coordinate the interests of all Rotumans with the Government of the day.

Such a body should have been established and properly mandated, but regrettably my intention and plan did not materialize because of circumstances beyond my control.

In view of the above, I therefore **totally endorse** the concept and **support** the establishment of the Think Tank group as indicated.

However, with the establishment of such a forum, but more importantly for it to **function effectively**, it is considered **logical** and **prudent** that certain **basic procedures** and **protocols** are clearly stipulated and followed in how it should perform its primary role.

The fundamental issue is the formulation of a **Strategic Plan** for Rotuma which should be predicated on a **Grand Vision** for our island and its people. This Vision must be **in accordance** and **reflect** the **Government's Strategic Focus**. All Development/Work Plans are to be based on these Parent documents.

My views expressed herein should not be construed as negative nor presumptuous. They are based on my experience of more than four decades of formulating such documents as a former Military

Commander, United Nations Assistant Secretary General and Operational Force Commander, Permanent Secretary, High Commissioner and Ambassador and more recently as a Government Minister of State.

You may recall that when I attended my first Council of Rotuma meeting in June 2006, as Rotuma's Elected Parliamentarian, I had asked for the Council of Rotuma's Strategic Development Plan for Rotuma. I was surprised when I was told that such a document had never been produced and I further offered to assist in the formulation of a Development Plan for Rotuma and its people. A Development Plan has now been produced to coordinate the Interim Government's development programmes for Rotuma.

It is imperative that the key requirements of such a Development Plan (**Objective, Key Result Areas KRA, Key Performance Indicators KPI's, Targeted Outcomes and Timelines**) are clearly stipulated for it to be **relevant, realistic and workable**; therefore it must be based on a **Vision** referred to earlier.

In this regard, I would like to provide for your information and consideration a **Strategic Vision** for Rotuma and its people. It is based on my **experience, observations and perceptions** as a very concerned and committed member of our small community who strongly believe that the present status quo **must change**. In fact, we need a major **paradigm shift** and a **new psyche** in how the whole management and administration system is to function. The contribution of the Think Tank group should assist the management machinery, thus enhancing the **maintenance of socio-political cohesion and economic progress**, and the **preservation and maintenance of our very unique identity, culture and traditions** as one of this planet's smallest indigenous ethnic communities.

I further contend that our leaders at all levels must **establish** and **accept** a common and shared Strategic Vision which should also be understood and utilized as a **Base** and **Focal Point** from which all development policies should centre on.

I believe that this proposed Strategic Vision is also in line with the **National Focus and Intent** of the **Interim Government's Peoples Charter for Peace, Prosperity and Progress**, and the attainment of **Good Governance** for Fiji and Rotuma. I further consider it

appropriate that it be used as a guide in the meantime (and further amended as necessary) whilst we await the results of the ***Review of the Rotuma Legislations*** (Rotuma Act Cap 122 and the Rotuma Lands Act Cap 138) and the ***final outcome*** of the Interim Government's ***Recommendations*** for change as outlined in the People's Charter.

STRATEGIC VISION

***“ROTUMA is to remain as a Haven
for its indigenous community within a Peaceful and
Prosperous Fiji, a place where its people should continue to
Preserve, Maintain and cherish their unique
Traditional and Cultural Heritage, Love and
Respect one another, Acknowledge and
Appreciate Almighty God's Mercy and Blessings on
their lives; Enjoy and properly Utilize the island's very rich
and abundant Land and Marine Resources; Preserve
its Clean and pristine Environment; and at the same time
Ensure that it remains an island Paradise which present and
future generations would be proud to call HOME.”***

I further believe that this Strategic Vision would be a logical and appropriate extension to the ***Solemn Pledge*** and ***Affirmation*** which was made by our Chiefs and forefathers when they ceded Rotuma to ***Her Majesty, Queen Victoria*** and the ***Britannic Government*** on the 13th May, 1881;

***“Hugag ‘esea ma fe‘eni
Tae la ‘utakia is Famor
Rotuma se rere.”***

Moreover, I also believe that in addition to the above;

**"Hugag 'esea ho'am Hairot'akiga
Hugag'esea ho'am Haifakte'akiga
Hugag'esea ho'am Hai'afaiiga
Hugag'esea ho'am Hai'aleleiiga
Ka 'ati'se;
Hugag'esea ia 'ahel"ua HAIHANISIGA."**

As Rotuma's last Elected Parliamentarian and more recently Council of Rotuma's **Special Representative** with the Interim Government, I have been profoundly concerned and equally worried about the pervasive **lack of respect** and **reverence** to the traditional chiefly leadership, the Council, the elders and the overall general behaviour of our people towards one another.

This rather **apathetic** and **disrespectful** attitude and mindset is regrettably endemic and has permeated throughout all levels within our community and **must be checked**, if we are to retain our **traditional values**, culture and **identity** as a race.

As a strong advocate for the **preservation** of our traditional cultural values and beliefs, I am convinced that it is now hightime for those of us in leadership positions to set the pace and trend for others to emulate, if we are to **survive**, **prosper** and **progress** within our beloved Fiji.

We must **accept reality** and as leaders **improve** our performance individually and collectively in **setting good examples**, **identifying priorities** and equally important, **working together** in peace and harmony towards effectively meeting the challenges that often confront us in improving the lot of our people.

We must endeavour to be inspirational in the manner in which we lead our people.

We know the challenges because we have talked about them for sometime now. What has unfortunately impeded our progress to date is the **failure of communal leadership** at all levels, coupled with the irrelevance and insignificance of our village politics and rivalries, the ease with which we are often distracted by trivia and petty jealousies,

and our chronic reluctance and avoidance in “biting the bullet” and making the right choices and decisions.

We must have the moral courage to stand up for our own convictions for the benefit of the people.

After having spent most of the past three years here in Rotuma, I have sadly witnessed how our much treasured virtues of **care** and **love** for one another (**haihanisiga**) being replaced by an ever present and growing **materialistic** and **selfish attitude**. I have often heard and watched as people complain of **poor leadership** and **neglect and** turn away in disillusion and frustration because of a leadership they perceive to be **vacillating, self serving, dishonest** and **unrighteous** in its work. Our people have consequently become very **distrustful** and **cynical** indeed.

I am convinced that the formation of the Think Tank to assist the functions of the Council of Rotuma is timely and apt.

Although the Interim Government has been very sympathetic to our plight and has been equally supportive and will continue to play a pivotal and crucial role in funding the implementation of developing programmes, we on the other hand must play our part by **appointing** the **right caliber of people** to the forum and ensure that it **functions effectively**.

We will have to **accept responsibility** and instill an **ethic of honesty, commitment** and **achievement** in ourselves and our people and hopefully shirk the preponderance of a **“Wait and See and Handout”** mentally that for too long has hampered productivity and progress.

We must also learn to be more **hardworking** and **self-reliant** in meeting our fundamental needs.

Therefore, let us be the generation of Leaders that is going to be bold and resolute enough to be committed as a team and move our people beyond the **bitterness**, and **distrust** that has divided and fragmented our people for too long.

Let us learn from the mistakes of our past, but not become victims of the past. Let us accept the fact that our people are now **better**

educated, are **aware** of their **constitutional** and **legal rights** and have become very **critical** and **judgmental** in how we interact and perform as leaders.

Let us utilize the Think Tank forum as the platform to map out and launch our strategies to **Change Attitudes, Perceptions** and create a work ethic that would be conducive to the attainment of **better outcomes, increased levels of productivity** and a more **focused, committed** and **disciplined** community.

Throughout our short history a new generation has risen up and done what is supposed to be done.

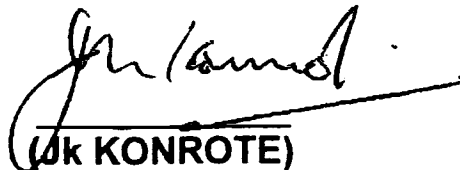
Today we are called once more to do the right thing by creating the Think Tank and ensuring that it performs effectively.

It is now incumbent upon us to deliver and fulfill our peoples' expectations.

Our people depend on us; therefore let us not disappoint them by being complacent for they deserve nothing less than our **total commitment**, so let us get it right.

Once again thank you and I wish the Think Tank well and every success in its deliberations.

Respectfully submitted and **God Bless**.



(Jk KONROTE)
Major General (Ret'd)
Rotuma's Last Elected Parliamentarian
Council of Rotuma's Special Representative
With the Interim Government.

cc: **Mr Tomasi Tui, Deputy Secretary, Director Rotuma Development Projects, Prime Ministers Office,**
LTCOL I.Vasu, Commissioner Eastern Division,
Mr Nicholas Ting District Officer/Rotuma.