



DISPLACEMENT SOLUTIONS



Ursula Rakova of Tulele Peisa outlining the resettlement of Carteret Islanders to Tinputz on Bougainville

The Bougainville Resettlement Initiative Meeting Report

Canberra, Australia

11 December 2008

"Forced climate migrants everywhere - and in particular those being displaced now in PNG - need to feel a sense of justice in the universe; without this we will be assured of living in precisely the type of world that we are seeking to prevent."

1. The above quote from one of the participants at the Bougainville Resettlement Initiative meeting held in Canberra, Australia on 11 December 2008 capture the sentiments of a meeting that was widely felt to be a unique, first of its kind, gathering on finding specific solutions for climate-induced forced migration. The meeting was convened to assist in facilitating resettlement solutions for forced climate change migrants from four atolls which were in the process of being inundated to the island of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea. In 2007 the national government of PNG and the Autonomous Bougainville Government agreed to resettle the 6000 inhabitants of the Carteret and three other atolls to the much larger island of Bougainville. Some 3500 Carteret Islanders and another 2500 island dwellers from three other nearby atolls (the Mortlock, Tasman and Nuguria Islands) will need to resettle on Bougainville due to increasing land loss, salt water inundation and growing food insecurity. The meeting sought to identify the components of a model resettlement process for forced climate change migrants from the atolls, building on the remarkable achievements of Tulele Peisa, an organisation formed to assist the displaced from the Carteret Islands. Tulele Peisa, meaning "Sailing the waves on our own", aims to "maintain our cultural identity and live sustainably wherever we are".

2. The resettlement process from the Carteret Islands to Bougainville is one of the first organised resettlement movements of forced climate change migrants anywhere in the world. As such, it offered unique policy and planning opportunities to learn the lessons of previous resettlement exercises unrelated to climate change, such as involuntary resettlement due to development and infrastructure projects, which have virtually always been unsuccessful. In convening the meeting, Displacement Solutions felt that the fact that displacement was already occurring in the Pacific and that requisite resettlement measures were already underway, would provide a solid basis for analysing the modalities of resettlement thus far and what lessons there might be for use elsewhere in a region where forced climate change displacement will dramatically increase in future. In bringing together for the first time the key stakeholders in the Carterets resettlement process, namely representatives of the displaced population, officials from the Autonomous Bougainville Government entrusted with the resettlement process, landowners on Bougainville, representatives from AusAid and others involved in various human rights efforts within civil society, the meeting aimed to open political space on Bougainville and more broadly within PNG and Australia to work out the dynamics of a more sustainable and adequately financed resettlement plan.

3. Carteret Islander Ursula Rakova, the Director of Tulele Peisa, gave an in depth and impressive presentation on the resettlement efforts that had already been made and the strategic planning processes made to guide these efforts. While the resettlement process had been approved by the Government with considerable support, the remnants of the conflict of the 1990s and subsequent political uncertainty regarding the future political status of Bougainville, had resulted in a lack of political will, administrative capacity and the financial means required to take it forward. The communities threatened with displacement

had therefore been obliged to take matters into their own hands and organise the resettlement process themselves. Thus, Tulele Peisa was born.

4. Demand for resettlement had increased since the process had started due to the fact that the impact of climate change on the Carterets was becoming ever more apparent. Rising sea levels and loss of land have, among other things, contributed to a decrease in food sources, leading to a situation where the Carterets - an atoll people have called home for more than 200 years - were now unable to sustain the entire population. The situation is deteriorating rapidly; in 2006, only 3 families wished to resettle, while in 2008 some 38 families - more than twelve times the amount of only two years earlier - expressed a desire to relocate to Bougainville. Tulele Peisa estimates that some 300 families (approximately 1750 people) will ultimately need to be relocated if the Carterets continued to disappear into the sea. Families with six or more children will be given priority for resettlement, together with families facing chronic food insecurity. Tulele Peisa hopes to retain a small population on the Carterets, but most of the population will need to resettle on Bougainville, including most of those with income earning potential, in particular 18-45 year-olds. Social mapping and population data collection is already underway.

5. The resettlement process developed by Tulele Peisa first involves a number of steps on the atoll itself. Initially the Council of Elders was mobilised and the plans discussed and approved. The plan was then put before the ABG and endorsed. Once the plan was approved, the group then set out to raise awareness of the issues throughout the islands comprising the atoll and developed a Task Force Committee which became the lead body responsible for elements of the resettlement process. Ceremonial preparations were then carried out, followed by the mobilisation of public and private resources.

6. In terms of activities on Bougainville, the Carterets Integrated Relocation Plan involves a well thought out 14-step process, which when completed, leads ultimately to successful resettlement by those moving to Bougainville. The fourteen steps are:

- 1) Scoping out available land
- 2) Identifying traditional land owners
- 3) Negotiating with land title holders
- 4) Engaging with landowners
- 5) Exchange programmes
- 6) Entering into land negotiations
- 7) Carrying out social and resource mapping
- 8) Planting gardens
- 9) Identify families using objective selection criteria
- 10) Prepare families for relocation
- 11) Prepare host families for relocatee arrivals
- 12) Building homes
- 13) Moving families to the new resettlement sites
- 14) Exchanging traditionally valuable items such as shell money

7. Importantly, the organisation has been very conscious of possible resentment by host communities and has sought to promote inter-marriage between Carteret Islands and Bougainvillians as one means of developing social cohesion and mutual respect.

8. According to preliminary estimates by Tulele Peisa, some 14 million Kina (US\$ 5.3m) will be required between 2009-2019 to resettle all of those who wish to resettle on Bougainville. It was widely agreed by meeting participants that these funds should, to the maximum possible extent, be provided by the PNG national Government in accordance with their legal obligations towards the citizens of the country. Many of the meeting participants expressed strong views that the PNG Government should immediately earmark funds to purchase land on Bougainville for the purposes of resettlement and to provide adequate compensation to those forced to resettle. According to one participant, the fact that the PNG Government's annual budget totalled more than 7 billion Kina (US\$ 2.7b) was indicative of the fact that at least a portion of the required funds were available domestically, and that these should be sought and utilised to assist the forced climate migrants from the Carterets and other atolls.

9. At the same time, many present emphasised the need for the international community, in particular the Government of Australia, to seek to identify funds that could be allocated to those involved in the resettlement process, including Tulele Peisa, to assist them in better achieving their objectives on behalf of the resettled population. While Tulele Peisa has already achieved a great deal with very limited financial resources, in order to achieve its longer term objectives of providing housing, land and properly solutions to all of those in need, additional funds will be required. An initial budgetary allocation of 2 million Kina (US\$ 760,000) was earmarked for the purposes of resettling some of the Carteret Islanders, however, to date **none** of the funds allocated for this purpose were ever used for these purposes according to the official present from the Autonomous Bougainville Government. As a result, the funds were returned to the general budget unspent.

10. The identification of land for the resettlement process was the key challenge facing those needing to resettle. In terms of the resettlement criteria developed by the Carteret community, some 1,500 hectares (ha) of land would be required to accommodate all 300 families (5ha per family), with an additional 1500 ha of land required for resettlement from the other three affected atolls. Tulele Peisa has developed a laudable land goal for each family which proposes that each resettled family receive land use rights over 5ha of land; 1ha would be allocated for housing and personal gardens, 3ha for livelihood purposes, including the growing of cocoa and copra, and the remaining 1ha set aside for purposes of reforestation. Based on the experience of an earlier resettlement process that had failed, the Islanders felt that it was important that sufficient land was allocated to each family to enable them to earn a livelihood so that the resettlement would be sustainable. This had led to their conclusion that 5 ha per family would be required, in order to provide sufficient land for farming cash crops.

11. To date a total of 81 ha of Catholic Church land near Tinputz has been identified on Bougainville for use by those to be resettled. This was seen as a good start, but still leaves a dramatic shortfall of more than 1400 ha of still to be identified and made available for the purposes of resettlement. Because more than 96% of Bougainville is governed by customary land rules and allotted using traditional land arrangements, an emphasis thus far has been

placed on securing portions of the remaining 4% of the land which is divided between private owners and State land. The Carteret Islanders did not have the financial resources needed to buy land themselves for the resettlement process, while the government also lacked the political will to either purchase or expropriate land. Five families have thus far been resettled.



Meeting participants

12. There were also a number of obstacles to obtaining clear legal title to land in Bougainville which will make the continued acquisition of new land for resettlement ever more challenging. Most land was subject to competing claims by customary landowners, and establishing clear title was a complex (and often unclear) process. In many instances, there are four levels of land rights holders on Bougainville: Traditional owners, the government, the title holder and the user. Complex layers of rights such as these almost by their nature guarantee that crucial issues such as ownership, control and security of tenure need to be very carefully managed. To date, the Carteret communities have been granted land owned by the Church, but they had also entered into direct negotiations with traditional landowners to maintain good relations and integrate more deeply with local communities upon resettlement. They still do not, however, have clear title to the land on which resettlement would take place. The importance of establishing clear title to ensure security of tenure for all those resettled was emphasised by a wide range of participants. UN Habitat and UNHCR referred to problems which had occurred in PNG and elsewhere in the world where this had not been resolved, leaving those resettled in an extremely precarious position. The need for ensuring the five indispensable elements of successful resettlement were also emphasised by several participants. These were: land, shelter, infrastructure, environment and livelihood. Ensuring these attributes of acceptable resettlement together with security of tenure and related housing, land and property rights were seen as important ingredients in developing an effective plan to assist the forced climate migrants begin life anew.

13. The representative of the Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG), Kapeatu Puaria, made a presentation on the constraints faced by the local government in implementing the resettlement process. He indicated that "There is a decision and a policy, but there is no Government plan on resettlement". He acknowledged that the ABG had little, if any, capacity for socio-economic planning, and that the ABG had not conducted any planning for the resettlement of those affected by climate change in the Carterets or other outlying island atolls. He confirmed that land expropriation can only be carried out by the PNG National Government. The role of the national PNG government was, therefore, vital in ensuring political and financial support for the process. The uncertainty surrounding the political status of Bougainville in the wake of the ongoing peace process, with a referendum on independence envisaged in several years time, left the ABG with unclear powers and minimal funding from the national budget. Some issues may be resolved following impending elections for a new ABG, allowing it to review and hopefully improve its approach to resettlement. Mr. Puaria indicated that the discussions at the meeting would provide new impetus to the process, as the importance of planning for the human impact of climate change had become clear, and the ABG had learned of many new ideas about how to do this in a sustainable and equitable manner. In response, participants from donor governments indicated that they would be likely to support a new local government plan if it demonstrated that a clear strategy was in place.

14. The ABG official noted that there would also be a need to resettle islanders threatened with climate change displacement on other outlying island atolls, including the Mortlock, Tasman and Nuguria islands, but that this would be more difficult than for those from the Carterets. The Carteret islanders were Melanesians, the same ethnic group as the population of Bougainville, and as a result had strong tribal and cultural ties with Bougainville. Those from the Mortlocks and Tasman islands and a portion of those from Nuguria, however, were Polynesian which could complicate relationships with host communities and customary landowners. It was emphasised by several participants that carefully managing these cultural differences must form a central theme once resettlement from these atolls commences.

15. A large landowner from Bougainville who had previously offered to sell his sizable landholdings to the government for the purposes of resettling the entire atoll population which is relocating to the island also made an impassioned presentation during the meeting, covering the political history of Bougainville and his own role in helping to end the violent conflict of the 1990s by involving the United Nations and other mediators. Bougainville's economy and infrastructure had been devastated by the brutal conflict, leaving the large plantations that had been a mainstay of the economy ransacked, and the port and airport destroyed. All of the labourers from mainland PNG had also fled, leaving local businesses without a workforce. While there was now interest in redeveloping land and restarting some of the plantations, vast resources would be required to do so. Due to the fact that he lacked such resources, Mike Forster offered to sell his 2700ha of land at the Raua Plantation - the second largest land allocation on Bougainville, to the government with a view to using the land to resettle islanders from the four atolls. Unfortunately, he indicated that the what could have been a win-win-win deal for all involved was unable to be closed with the local Government. As noted earlier, the national PNG government had apparently earmarked money for the resettlement process which could have been used to purchase of land, but

this money had ultimately gone unspent. Forster was therefore placed in a position where he had to sell the land, which had been in his family since 1923, to other private interests who plan to develop the land for agricultural purposes, and perhaps tourism. Due to his continued interest in ensuring that the Carteret and other islanders were resettled in a proper way, he had sought assurances from the purchaser that some land would still be made available to them. However, the precise arrangement envisaged by the purchaser was not yet clear. Many of those present applauded the efforts of Mike Forster to offer his land for the purposes of resettling the forced climate migrants, and encouraged the new owners of the Raua Plantation and other private landowners on Bougainville to allocate at least a portion of their lands to resettle islanders requiring new land sites.

16. The point was made by both representatives of the landowners and UNHCR, based on its experience of resettlement of refugees in the north of PNG, that in order to make resettlement sustainable, there was a need not only to identify and allocate land, but also to develop it together with the necessary infrastructure such as roads. This would also require significant resources and alternative sources of income. Landowner representatives argued that the Carteret Islanders should also consider the possibilities for those resettled to provide labour for some of the plantations that may re-open, or labour in other sectors that may emerge (such as tourism), rather than placing all of their emphasis on those resettled relying on the use of the land as the sole source of income. In this respect, one landowner representative felt that 5ha per family seemed to be somewhat excessive, and queried whether those being resettled could explore other food and income-generating activities such as fishing, the traditional activity of many islanders. The representative of the Carteret community indicated that the 5ha figure was an ideal and that the critical point was to ensure that those resettled were also given the means to maintain a livelihood so that the resettlement would be sustainable.

17. A leading expert on resettlement, Professor Anthony Oliver-Smith, made a detailed presentation on lessons-learned from various resettlement exercises that had been conducted around the world. Some of the key issues necessary for successful resettlement included appropriate site selection, settlement design which was socially and culturally appropriate rather than being driven merely by economic factors, culturally appropriate housing, and community participation in the planning process. Model “resettlement action plans” had, in fact, been developed over the years, which might be adapted for use in the Carteret/Bougainville process to take it further forward. Other presentations by UN Habitat, the International Commission of Jurists and other organisations highlighted the need to address shelter, infrastructure, environment and livelihoods aspects. The fact that the PNG had recently ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which placed obligations on the government to conduct planning to avoid the homelessness which would arise from the sinking of the Carterets, might also be used to place pressure on the government to devote more attention to the issue. It was felt that the Covenant could provide a useful framework for developing the best possible resettlement plan.

18. The mobilisation of financial resources was identified as critical, given that land had to be purchased from somewhere in order for it to be allocated to the islanders for the purposes of resettlement, that housing needed to be built and that new livelihood options needed to be developed. The representative of Tulele Peisa noted that under their current

plan, it was hoped that 100 families could be moved by 2015. The only land available for this purpose would likely be privately owned and would therefore need somehow to be purchased. There was some discussion about the potential for funding being obtained from private philanthropy organisations, as well as the Global Adaptation Fund established to address climate change, although both were dismissed as unlikely sources.

19. Participants agreed upon a number of concrete steps that should be taken to take the resettlement process forward:

a) A concrete Resettlement Plan was clearly required in order to avoid the mistakes of the past, and also to avoid going back to square one every time more families from the Carterets needed to be moved;

b) A multidisciplinary fact-finding mission should be sent to Bougainville, the Carteret Islands and the PNG capital Port Moresby, comprised of various experts on resettlement, UN and NGOs, to meet with all relevant stakeholders from the community, government, donors and the private sector, and assist in drawing up such a plan;

c) A key feature of the Resettlement Plan would be to cost the resettlement process, so that it could form the basis of resource mobilisation efforts;

d) During the fact-finding mission, discussions should also be held with the PNG government about resettlement planning for the other three atolls where the process was expected to be more difficult; and

e) It was noted that the Carterets situation was a vanguard study in terms of being one of the first organised climate change resettlements, so the Resettlement Plan could be used as a model elsewhere.

20. Displacement Solutions' Director Scott Leckie closed the meeting by again emphasising the need for all forced climate migrants to feel a "sense of justice in the universe" and the importance of all participants and others to do whatever possible within their respective fields to ensure this. He again reiterated the commitment of Displacement Solutions to expand its efforts in support of forced climate migrants from the Carteret and other atolls and its willingness to work together with Tulele Peisa and others to ensure that this first large resettlement of forced climate migrants is carried out in a manner that takes both the rights and the needs of those to be resettled seriously. He closed by again stressing the need to treat this first large group of forced climate migrants as *rights-holders* as this will then set an important benchmark against which all other subsequent movements of forced climate migrants can be judged.

Annexure

1. Meeting Agenda

2. Meeting Participants

1. Meeting Agenda



DISPLACEMENT SOLUTIONS

THE BOUGAINVILLE RESETTLEMENT INITIATIVE

A One-Day Invitation-Only Meeting Hosted by Displacement Solutions

Venue: University House, Canberra

11 December 2008

09:00	Welcome, aims of the meeting, introduction of participants <u>Speaker:</u> Scott Leckie, Director, Displacement Solutions
	<u>The Current Crisis</u>
09:30 - 10:30	The Voices of the Displaced <u>Speaker:</u> Ursula Rakova, Tulele Peisa Inc. (Carteret Islands)
10:30 - 11:30	The Voice of the Government <u>Speaker:</u> Kapeatu Puaria (Autonomous Bougainville Government)
11:30 - 11:45	Coffee break

11:45 - 12:15 **The Voice of the Landowner**

Speaker: Mike Forster (Owner of Raua Plantation)

12:15 - 13:00 **Discussion**

13:00 - 14:00 **LUNCH**

Towards Viable, Concrete and Rights-Based Solutions

14:00 - 14:20 **Will Resettlement Work? Which Issues Must Be Addressed?**

Speaker: Anthony Oliver-Smith, University of Florida

14:20 - 14:40 **How Can Human Rights Help The Displaced?**

Speaker: Roger Normand, Director of the Asia and Pacific Programme of the International Commission of Jurists

14:40-15:00 **What Role for the International Community?**

Speaker: Dan Lewis (Chief, Post-Conflict and Disaster Recovery Section, UN Habitat Programme)

15:00-15:30 **Discussion**

15.30 - 15.45 **Coffee Break**

Where To Go From Here? - General Discussion

15.45 - 16:15 **Building a Common Platform and a Win-Win-Win Solution Involving The Islanders, the Government and the Landowner**

16:15 - 17:00 **Concrete Next Steps - Who Does What, When, Where and How? How Can This Case Assist Other Climate-Affected Nations?**

17:00 **Meeting Closes**

2. Meeting Participants

Meeting Organiser

Scott Leckie - Director, *Displacement Solutions (DS)*

Participants

Mike Forster, *Bougainvillian Landowner*

William Hilton-Thorp, *AusAid*

Dan Lewis, Chief, *UN Habitat*

Solomona Lotoala, *Representative of the Government of Tuvalu*

Nic Maclellan, *OXFAM*

Godfrey Mantle, *Mantle Group*

Jennifer Noble, *AusAid*

Roger Normand, Director, *International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) Asia and Pacific Office*

Anthony R. Oliver Smith, Professor of Anthropology, *University of Florida*

Ian Prentice, *Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies*

Kapeatu Puaria, *Bougainville Autonomous Government*

Ursula Rakova, Director, *Tulele Peisa Inc*

Mr Betarim Rimon, *Representative of the Government of Kiribati*

Simad Saeed, *Maldivian Climate Change Expert*

Tony Simpson, *International Commission of Jurists*

Rick Towle - Pacific Regional Representative, *UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*

Lailey Wallace, *Displacement Solutions*

Kirsten Young, *Displacement Solutions*