

## PRESS RELEASE

### **SIEC and SECSIP welcome the support of SolRice for the upcoming VOTER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**

HONIARA --The Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Programme Phase II (SECSIP II) welcomes the support of SolRice, a leading rice distributor in the country to collaborate in an innovative action to assist the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) in its nation-wide dissemination of electoral awareness materials for the 2019 elections. SECSIP is one of the main projects of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the Solomon Islands.

On 30 May 2018, UNDP and SolRice signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together with a view to enhancing the outreach of SIEC voter awareness materials through SolRice's networks and distribution channels. With some 900 islands, this Pacific country faces enormous logistical challenges when it comes to circulating information to its citizens.



Left to right: Azusa Kubota, UNDP Country Manager, Philothea Paul, Media and Communications officer SIEC, James Bradford, Sales Manager SolRice

SolRice has agreed to allow self-adhesive plastic document envelopes carrying voter awareness leaflets to be affixed to its 40lb bags of rice. The bags carrying the Voter Information material will be transported and distributed throughout the country, reaching villages even in the most remote parts of the Solomon Islands. The first phase of this action will focus on the distribution of voter registration information leaflets to encourage the registration of eligible citizens. This will be followed later in the year by a second round of information on how to vote.

This collaboration is expected to make a significant contribution towards accomplishing the challenging mission of reaching out to inform citizens of their rights and responsibilities as voters.

Said Moses Saitala, Chief Electoral Officer of SIEC: “We are extremely grateful to SolRice for its cooperation in this innovative action. Through this collaboration we expect to expand our outreach to isolated communities. This is, I believe, a great example of a private entity cooperating with the public sector and generously contributing to the exercise of the democratic rights of the citizens of Solomon Islands”

SECSIP II is a continuing long-term partnership with the SIEC. The project receives financial assistance from the Australian Government, the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

For further information, contact: