



**SOLOMON ISLANDS**

**STATEMENT BY**

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
SOLOMON ISLANDS TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**BEFORE THE  
SIXTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY GENERAL DEBATE**

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Mr. President,

On behalf of the Government and people of Solomon Islands I extend warm congratulations to Your Excellency Sam K. Kutesa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uganda on your election as President to our 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly. My delegation reaffirms the core function of the General Assembly as chief deliberative body on all global issues. We look forward to working with you in “Implementing a transformative Post 2015 Development Agenda”, a theme you have chosen for this session.

Mr. President,

My delegation pays tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency, Dr John Ashe, who has done a sterling job in setting the stage for a Post 2015 Development Agenda. Under his watch, he convened four High Level events and two thematic debates in shaping the new development paradigm. President Ashe also guided the work of the Open Working Group in developing universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Today, we now have seventeen carefully crafted and delicately balanced SDGs accompanied with 169 targets. The goals are attached with means of implementation section, if honoured, will trigger a seismic shift in the way we do business.

Mr. President

We look forward to the UN Secretary-General’s Post 2015 Synthesis Report later this year. That report will provide structure to our Post 2015 negotiations. My delegation is mindful of the fact that the outcome of the Third Financing for Development Conference scheduled for mid 2015 will feed into the negotiation process. Solomon Islands commits itself to ensuring that our people own and buy into the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

Mr. President,

Solomon Islands’ scorecard on MDGs remains mixed across all eight goals. We are on track on some, off track on others and in between on 3 goals. However, we remain committed in consolidating our MDG gains and begin to build a foundation to integrate the new Development Agenda at all levels, nationally.

Mr. President,

For sustainable development to grow roots in any country, it needs to be nurtured in a politically stable environment. Solomon Islands National Parliament passed Political Party Integrity legislation in May. The Act, allows political parties to develop and operate in a regulated and systematic manner, instilling a predictable and stable political atmosphere, an essential condition for development.

I am pleased to inform this august Assembly, that under the leadership of Prime Minister Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo, Solomon Islands 9<sup>th</sup> Parliament concluded its 4-year term early this month. As the people, anxiously look forward to exercise their right to vote in the forthcoming national general election, we will, do so, using the biometric voter system for the first time. As a young democratic state, we are constantly improving our governance systems and correcting past election irregularities. We could not have achieved this without international support and partnership. To all our partners, I convey Solomon Islands deep appreciation and gratitude.

Solomon Islands would like to also take this opportunity to congratulate Fiji and New Zealand’s newly elected governments. We stand ready to strengthen our bilateral relations with our two neighbours and address issues of mutual concerns. We also convey our best wishes to the Kingdom of Tonga on its November national general elections.

Mr. President,

Gender violence is a major economic leakage in any country’s development. It reduces women’s productivity in all three dimensions of sustainable development. Gender violence also imposes a cost on the wider society. Last month, Solomon Islands Parliament, rose up to its international obligation under CEDAW and passed Family Protection legislation. The Act protects families from domestic violence, deals with perpetrators and provides practical support to victims of violence. The legislation has received strong national visibility and promotes gender equality.

Solomon Islands wishes to acknowledge UN Women's "Markets for Change Project" in the country. The project, aims to improve market governance and onsite services for women. It recognizes and addresses our rural women's challenges, will hopefully encourage more women to engage in economic activities.

2015, marks the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPOA). Solomon Islands conducted a national review on its implementation of the BPOA and has identified three areas of achievements; recognition of gender equality, economic empowerment of women and awareness of gender violence. We believe in the notion that progress for women is progress for all. We remain committed in implementing the BPOA.

Mr. President,

The Third International Conference on Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) convened in Samoa, reaffirmed SIDS as a special case for sustainable development, given their unique and particular vulnerability. The once in a decade Conference adopted the SAMOA Pathway, which outlined 19 priority areas. The outcome document called for a comprehensive review of UN support to SIDS, in this connection, Solomon Islands seeks closer relations with the UN. We would like to see UNDP Sub Office in Solomon Islands upgraded to country office status. After more than three decades of UN managing Solomon Islands relations from abroad, it is time to invest in the relations in my Capital.

On another related matter, Solomon Islands continues to be under represented in the composition of UN staff, we are however grateful and welcome UN's annual recruitment drive in Solomon Islands and hope to fill our employment quota soon with Solomon Islanders joining the diverse UN staff.

Mr. President,

Health remains a precondition for sustainable development. Solomon Islands continue to demonstrate its commitment in improving the health of its people. In July, the first twenty Solomon Islands doctors graduated from Medical School in Cuba. Solomon Islands would like to thank Cuba for scholarships awarded to remaining 80 Solomon Islands Medical Students. This year alone we will witness more than thirty new doctors joining the health service in Solomon Islands. It is the vision of the Government to double the number of doctors in country in the next two years, continue to strengthen our health care infrastructure, putting in place health and social protection systems and work towards making health coverage in Solomon Islands universal.

Solomon Islands joins the international community in calling for the lifting of the economic and financial blockade imposed on Cuba by our friend and partner the United States of America. After more than five decades of sanctions on Cuba, it is time to reset relations between the two neighbours based on good neighbourly relations that respect territorial integrity and political sovereignty.

Mr. President,

One of the principles of the SDG is that we must not leave anyone behind. There are states knocking on the door of the UN, ready to take on multilateral responsibilities. The Republic of China continues to seek full and effective participation with three United Nations specialized bodies, namely, UNFCCC, World Health Organization and ICAO.

These UN bodies, deal with urgent global issues, we all have an interest in, from climate change, to the evolving health challenges. ICAO work to keep our travelling public and air services safe. I wish to note that 45 million passengers pass through the Republic of China in 2012. We just do not have the luxury of time of turning a blind eye to needed cooperation. The global challenges before us are too big for narrow interests to take a 'wait and see approach' and keep postponing needed action.

Republic of China is a country that has transformed itself from a developing to an industrialized country. Republic of China is the 27<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world, has experience, technology and capability that our shared agenda can benefit from. We have all to gain and nothing to lose by inviting Republic of China becoming 195 member of the UNFCCC, 192<sup>th</sup> member of ICAO and 195<sup>th</sup> member of WHO.

Mr. President,

Solomon Islands partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum under Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) continues to create positive conditions, allowing the country to begin limited rearmament of our Police Force. The private sector and international community also have responded to the changing environment with the European Union upgraded its representation in Honiara and more non-traditional partners accrediting their envoys to Solomon Islands. A new commercial bank was incorporated and entered Solomon Islands market making it the fourth commercial banks now providing financial services to our vibrant population.

Mr. President,

Sustainable development for Solomon Islands as a coastal state includes its seabed resources beyond its 1.3 million square kilometres Exclusive Economic Zone. Solomon Islands registered a number of continental shelf claims with the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. My delegation is pleased to see one of the claims is now being examined by the UN Sub Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. We look forward to further engagement with the Sub Commission during the course of this session.

Mr. President,

The world is faced by a series of crisis and conflicts in Africa, Middle East and now in Europe. In dealing with conflicts, we must exert greater effort in seeking peaceful settlement of disputes. We must collectively counter extremism, terrorism, crimes against humanity and protect civilians, operating within the letter and spirit of the UN Charter.

The Security Council being the UN principal organ for the maintenance of international peace and security must be part of the solution. Despite world leaders calling for the early reform of the Security Council in 2005, nine years on, we are still working at it. At the 10<sup>th</sup> Inter-government negotiations on Security Council reform in July, there was an overwhelming support for the expansion of UN Security Council membership and making the Council more transparent and accountable in terms of improving its working methods. An Advisory Group mandated by your predecessor produced a non-paper; it has provided structure to the last session's discussions and should be used as a basis for negotiations during this session. We look to you Mr. President for leadership on this.

Turning now to the recent outbreak of Ebola, the gravity, scale and spread of Ebola Virus in West Africa is unprecedented and demands urgent international cooperation. Ebola disease has halted services and disrupted the lives of many people in affected countries. Solomon Islands support our Secretary General's action to establish the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response and acknowledge global efforts in mobilization of resources to combat the disease as a matter of urgency.

Mr. President,

Decolonization remains an unfinished business of the United Nations. If we are to deliver on "the Third decade for the Eradication of Colonialism 2010-2020", we need the cooperation of all parties including the administering powers, the non-self governing territories and regional and sub-regional organizations to honour the commitments under the Charter and the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

The Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) is made up of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and the FLNKS continue to follow the question of New Caledonia in the UN Decolonization Committee. The Group welcomed the visit of the Committee to New Caledonia in March and note concerns relating to the territory's electoral concerns and needed legislation in keeping within the spirit of the Noumea Accord. These issues have implications in preparing for a credible referendum process consistent and in conformity with universally accepted principles and practices of self determination defined by resolution 1514 (XV), 1541 (XV) and other relevant resolutions of the Assembly.

My delegation would also like to acknowledge the diligent work of the Committee of 24 in examining the question of French Polynesia. Solomon Islands continues to reaffirm its support for the inalienable rights of the people of French Polynesia to self-determination in accordance to the UN Charter. It is our hope the Decolonization Committee will visit the Non Self Governing Territory in cooperation with the Administrating power and all parties.

Solomon Islands as a member of MSG is working in collaboration with Indonesia on human rights concerns in Papua and West Papua, the two most eastern provinces of the Republic of Indonesia. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of May, 2014 Solomon Islands established its Embassy in Jakarta with a genuine intention to continue to work together with Indonesia on many important issues of mutual concerns, including the ones taken up together by members of the MSG.

Mr. President,

Solomon Islands welcomes the World Conference on Indigenous People. As a nation, more than 90% of our populations are indigenous Melanesians and Polynesians speaking more than 87 different languages. Our diverse cultures are under threat due to forced relocation from ancestral homes as a result of sea level rise. Their right to live in harmony with nature is being threatened by the declining health of the planet.

Climate change remains the greatest challenge of our time. It calls for the widest possible international cooperation by all. Solomon Islands has ratified the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol this month. We encourage Parties to the Protocol who have not ratified the amendment to do so as soon as possible. It is in our collective interest to see the Protocol enforced.

We remain deeply concerned on the slow progress of climate change negotiations and hope the UN General Assembly could invite the UNFCCC to conduct its negotiations in New York, where diplomats from all Parties of the Convention are located all year round. We need to accelerate the pace of negotiations. This must be done, working with our technical experts in the process.

In looking at the 2015 Climate Change Agreement, Solomon Islands would like to see a credible Agreement that guarantees SIDS and LDCs survival. The Agreement must be comprehensive in scope, addressing mitigation, adaptation, finance and technology transfer. It must be inclusive and respects and responds to the special needs of SIDS and LDCs. The Agreement must be flexible enough to respond to changing science and is adequately resourced.

Mr. President,

Climate change risk remains at the forefront of our sustainable development path. The magnitude and intensity of flash floods that occurred in Solomon Islands last April claimed lives, homes and destroyed infrastructure. Damages and losses is equivalent to 9.2% of Solomon Islands Gross Domestic Product. It has created new expense pressure, prompting the Government to borrow and secure grants externally. Solomon Islands remains grateful to its neighbours Australia, New Zealand Nauru, Tuvalu, Samoa and Papua New Guinea including Turkey, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Botswana, Sri Lanka, and the Republic of China (Taiwan) amongst others who have support our national rehabilitation and recovery efforts.

Mr. President,

Despite the disaster challenges, Solomon Islands remains determined to build a resilient society. We are on track in developing two hydro projects in partnership with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank in two of our provinces. In partnership with Japan we are expanding our port facilities to promote and enable domestic, regional and international trade. Since the last session, I am pleased to say a number of domestic airports and some 18 bridges were constructed further uniting our scattered population. It would not have been possible without the support of Australia, New Zealand and European Union; to our traditional partners we express our gratitude.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) confirms that without additional mitigation actions we are heading to a 3.7 - 4.8 degrees Celsius world. The Report indicates that by 2030, 89% of coral reefs are projected to experience severe coral bleaching with temperature increasing to 1.5 degrees Celsius. By 2050 at 2 degrees Celsius we are looking at 100% coral reef bleaching. These developments will occur during our generation and will have an impact on tourism industries and fish stocks and potentially driving households in SIDS into poverty traps. We call on the international community to respect the principles of fairness, justice and putting SIDS and LDCs at the heart of international cooperation.

Mr. President,

My delegation welcomes the UN Secretary-General's Climate Summit last week. We also support your proposal of convening a High Level Debate on Climate change during the course of this session. We do so because our lives depend on it.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by reaffirming Solomon Islands commitment in striving for a just, equitable and inclusive world. Implementing the Post 2015 Development Agenda provides our first and last line of defence in guaranteeing a sustainable future for our present and future generations.

Thank you Mr. President.