



PERMANENT MISSION OF SOLOMON ISLANDS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE BRUSSELS PROGRAMME (BPOA) –
SOLOMON ISLANDS**

Report on the Implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for LDCs

Analysis of the BPOA

Commitment 1: Fostering People Centered framework

- Building of necessary infrastructure to allow people to participate in the national economy is an on going development task of the government, a number of ships have been purchased with donor support, to meet the inter island shipping needs of the country as well as an effort of the State to reach out to the 80% of the population that resides in the rural area
- Create conditions for people to engage in income generating activities by investing in the rehabilitation and construction of domestic airports, wharves and roads to link and connect the scattered populations residing amongst the hundreds islands that make up the country
- Government provided assistance to develop a policy of supporting the development of indigenous business enterprise
- Government employment provided one third of the total formal employment

Goal 1: Attain a GDP growth rate of at least 7 percent per annum

Progress and constraints

- Prior to the ethnic conflict Solomon Islands was achieving an annual average growth of 5-7%.
- In 2000 following end of ethnic conflict, the economy contracted by -14.2%, the few major industries which contributed substantially to the economy halted operations namely Palm Oil, Gold and Fisheries. By 2001 the economic growth increased at a reducing rate to -9.1%, 2003 real GDP further increased at a reducing rate to -2.4%. It was only in 2004 that the economy took a positive turn registering real GDP Growth of positive 5.5%, due to increase of export of Logs

and copra among other economic activities in the productive sector. This has much to do with the re-opening of the fisheries industries, increase copra and coca production among other economic activities and of course the donor assistance received with the arrival of RAMSI in 2003

- The major constraint of the progress is the heavy reliance on logging to keep the State operating contributing 70% of Government income.

Priorities 2003-2006

- Normalizing law and Order and security situation
- Strengthening democracy, human rights and good governance
- Restoring fiscal and financial stability and reform the public sector
- Revitalizing the productive sector and rebuilding supporting infrastructure
- Restoring basic social services and fostering social development

Challenges

- To re-open closed industries namely Gold Ridge Mine and the Oil Palm Plantation both on Guadalcanal, progress has been made in the Oil Palm industry with the company restarting its operations under new management, the national fishing industry is operating but at the moment is doing so below capacity level. To date the Government is undergoing rebuilding and reforming of Government institutions to full capacity and continue to Government reforms

Goal: 2: Increase the ratio of investment to GDP to 25 percent per annum

- Solomon Islands has reformed its investment legislation and the Foreign Investment Act in 2005 with the objective of simplifying the process for foreign investment
- New Oil Palm industries have commenced operation in Solomon Islands and have found jobs for at least 1000 people
- Once the oil palm industry fully operational is expected to generate 7000 jobs

Progress and Constraints

- The Investment Act has come into force; the question is how to reduce operating costs of doing business in Solomon Islands with expenses associated with communication, transportation and basic utilities costs are fairly high.
- Prior to 2000 the domestic economy is foreign owned and part of the rebuilding is to encourage both local and foreign investors to invest in economic activities to encourage a broad business base for people to participate in businesses

Challenges

- The challenge is to reduce communication, transportation and services costs given the small market based economy
- As much as possible to spread development throughout the nine provinces of the country each in varying stages of development

Goal 3: Make substantial progress toward halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015

- No real assessment has been under taken in this area, there is to date no Government policy on those that live in extreme poverty as the rural population that make up more than 80% of the population live traditional subsistence farming.
- There are no extreme cases as identified by Solomon Islands Government MDG Report though difficulties and challenges of having the general population having access to basic social infrastructure remains

Challenge

- Of overcoming and providing basic services of the rural population can not be achieved without international support
- Presenting opportunities to the rural population can be achieved but with focused attention on providing them with a heads start in encouraging investment to take place in the rural areas

Goal 4: Make substantial progress towards halving the proportion of people from hunger by 2015

- No real data available on the issue though those facing extreme hunger remains to be seen

Progress/Constraints

- There is heavily reliance on imported food, work on the reduction of rice imports by encouraging community rice growing projects with support is increasing
- Rice growing programmes are beginning to reach out to the schools and rural population, both are advocated by ROC Taiwan and Japan
- Fish has supplement people's diet on a daily basis though with reduce fishing boats given the departure of the Japanese fishing firm

Challenges

- Ensure Solomon Islands is self sufficient, country imports USD 10 million of rice, the challenge is to introduce commercial rice farming to its rural population
- Carry out specific assessment on food security and adopt appropriate strategy
- To be able to effectively respond to food shortages in areas affected by bad weather, i.e. cyclones, heavy rainfall, and tidal waves affecting coastal areas

Commitment2: Good Governance and internal levels

The government's efforts to strengthen democracy, human rights and governance include the following action:

- Put in place supportive measures to assist Solomon Islands Public Service to on effectively and efficiently deliver public policy for the benefit of all

- Improve communication to all, by installing information technology to selected department including Police, Judicial and Legal Services
- Improve Parliamentary services
- Conducting national elections in a timely manner
- Strengthening of the Ombudsman office
- Auditing of Government accounts

The reform of Solomon Islands Public sector that has been operating on skeleton staff during the period 2001-2003 has seen various state institutions strengthened. The first and foremost is the revitalization of government revenue departments to be able to carry out their functions to provide services and collect needed revenues to support the proper functioning of the Government machinery. The internal programme started in 2001-2005 with the collective effort from the Central Bank of the Solomon Islands, the various government departments responsible for revenue collection that respond positively to the tightening measures instituted by the Bank and the collective information sharing that enable the collective effort of the various regulations to be used to harmonize government revenue collection. By 2003, key government services and machinery were functioning, and it already portrays a positive impact that the strengthening of the internal government machinery with the support of the people that enable the country to pull out of the civil conflict. The arrival of the RAMSI in 2003 was a welcome turn to further strength the framework now laid.

A new government was elected in 2001, which served its full tenure in Parliament that has provided political stability for the social fabric of the society to substantially address the civil conflict and bring in international assistance to the country.

Internally within the government machinery, the guiding principle of good governance prompted the review of the Government General Orders, in 2005, chief executive officers contracted as permanent secretaries now required to take oath to uphold the country's laws, give timely reporting and accountable for their department's annual performance and actions. Within the general fabric of the society, civil society networks become very active in voicing their views on the quality leadership, transparency, accountability of persons with public responsibilities. More so civil education awareness programmes within the communities on the need to choose leaders wisely for the 2006 national election, is now a force providing the impetus for the country move forward.

Within the legal framework, the government through the assistance of RAMSI and the international community has provided needed resources to have most of the civil conflict case brought to the courts and all outstanding cases to be scheduled and heard. The strengthening of the legal system too has been greatly enhanced since 2003.

Commitment 3: Building human and institutional capacities

- Commitment to achieving universal primary education is enshrined in Solomon Islands education policy
- The enrollment of children entering primary education has increased over the years though with increased, 6 out of 10 children entering grade one reach grade

6. Primary schools, net enrollment for boys and girls completing full primary education stands at 78.8%

- Literacy rate for 15-24 years of age was 62% in 1990 and 84.5% in 1999
- The country does not have a national university and sends all its students abroad for tertiary education

Goal 5: Making accessible through the Primary health system, reproductive health to all individuals of appropriate ages as soon as possible and no later than year 2015

Key areas identified under the national health plan review in 2003 which continue to form the basis for rebuilding and improvement of the overall health system in the country as:

- Improvement of management and supervision of services
- Access and improvement of care and quality of services
- Human resource development for health
- Morbidity and mortality reduction
- Environmental health
- Health promotion and education
- Reproductive health, family planning and population concerns
- Developing partnership in health development

The immediate challenge is to restore health services delivery in full to all provinces, particularly parts of the country that were affected by the recent civil conflict. This will require strengthening of the primary health care services and networking to incorporate community involvement to increase and maintain basic health services and programmes as well as to have access to essential medicines to protect and treat communities from old and emerging diseases.

Goal 6: Making available the widest achievable range of safe, affordable and acceptable family planning and contraceptive methods

- The percentage for use of contraceptive methods increased from 19% in 1999 to 24% in 2001
- The Ministry of Health in its public awareness programme is promoting and education the public on family planning and overall reproductive health services.

The challenge is to widely provide a range of safe and affordable contraceptive methods to sexually active age groups especially in the advent of the country now faced with the reality that among its population, 5 proven cases of HIV/AIDS infected persons.

Goal 7: Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality

- Solomon Islands is one of the most diverse cultures in the world made up of various ethnic groups speaking 80 different indigenous languages, Government

education policies does not make a distinction between ethnic groups rather tries to promote education for all

- In 1990 girls comprise of 44.7% of primary education, in 1997 increased to 45.8% and in 2003 to 46.7%

Challenge

- As one progresses in the education system, schools are located further away from immediate family place residence requiring students to attend boarding schools
- The challenge is to build more schools throughout the country

Goal 8: Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults

- Programme of adult literacy is ongoing,
- There is still a higher proportion of adult women are illiterate compared with adult men. In 1991 literacy survey showed that 44% of women are literate while 56% are literate or semi literate, for male only 31% were illiterate and 84% literate from 1999 census, 84% of males were literate compared with 69% for women
- Gender disparity in literacy among young people between 15-24 years is 81% of women compared to 87% for males, a gender disparity of 93%

Goal 9: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015 with focus on ensuring girls full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality

- There is equal opportunities for both males and females though the number of males continue to dominate the numbers as education progresses
- In 1990 girls comprised of 44.7%, this increased to 45.8% in 1997 and 46.7% in 2003
- Secondary schools girls make up 36.7% in 1990s this increased to 39.2% in 1997 and 43.2% in 2003
- Heavily subsidized primary education programme with external funding is ongoing in Solomon Islands, the challenge will be to take over the programme national level when the donor programme expires
- Boarding schools solely for females may improve the gender, that is some thing that could be pursued if externally supported

Goal 10: Reducing the infant mortality rate below 35 percent per 1000 live births by 2015

- Infant mortality rate is 31 for 1000 live births, 2002

Goal 11: Reducing the under 5 mortality rate below 45 percent per 1000 live births by 2015

- The under-five mortality rate for Solomon Islands in 2000 was 25 per 1000 live births
- Leading causes of illness and death among under 5 years are infectious and parasitic diseases, childbirth, and puerperium complications, fever and malaria, diarrhea, ear infections and acute respiratory infections.

Challenge

The national challenge is to provide health care to all children and be able to drastically reduce infant mortality rate among under 5 years of age. As a country coming out of conflict, health services to all our provinces is one of national priority and strive to make it accessible to all within our national health plan 2005 and beyond and continue to seek international support to assist the government in delivery of health services to our people.

Goal 12: Reducing the maternal mortality rate by three-quarters of the current rate by 2015

- Maternal mortality rate is 295 per 1000 live births in 2003 compared to 125 per 1000 live births in 1999, this is due to ethnic conflict country went through saw a reduction of health care during the period.
- Maternal death reported in 2003 showed that of 25 deaths, 52 % occurred at home and 48% in clinics.
- 2003 figures shows that antenatal coverage is 76% and postnatal coverage is 42%

Challenge

- The heavy physical work done by mothers in carrying out daily chores including slash and burn agricultural work have a bearing on the mother

Goal 13: Reducing the number of undernourished people by half by the year 2015

- Severe malnourishment in Solomon Islands is low, though the set back is available data.

Goal 14: Reducing by half by 2015 the proportion of people who are unable to reach or afford safe drinking water

- In 1999, 80.9% of the populations in urban areas have access to drinking water for the same year only 21.8% have access to piped water. Overall 29.8%
- The issue being that many of the village tend to reside beside natural sources of water that programmes to reach them will need much international support given that people live in isolated villages

Challenge

- The gap within the urban population not having access to water resources is due to the portion of population residing in rural areas.

- Resumption of the rural water supply and sanitation programme will require international support and the real challenge is when the programme expires and national government to take over

Goal 15: Reducing HIV infection rates in persons 15-24 of age by 2015 in all countries and by 25 percent in the most affected countries

- A HIV/AIDS strategy was completed by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services was completed and adopted in 2003. HIV/AIDS awareness education is also among the public health programme being promoted nationally especially among the young population in schools.
- The challenge is to have all young people of 15-24 years to have the basic knowledge on reproductive health and safe practices.
- Five cases of confirmed HIV/AIDS infected, one died, one left the country. Of the cases remaining, it indicates a large proportion among the population is infected. WHO estimates in 2004 that as many as 50 cases of HIV/AIDS infection in Solomon Islands.
- 2004, the Government set up the Solomon Islands National Aids Council (SINAC) completed a national multi-sectoral strategic plan that was passed in Parliament and will do advocacy for future interventions through behavioral surveys, blood testing among other avenues pursued that will assist the national health system to address the disease more appropriately in the local context within the country.

Goal 16: Increasing the percentage of women receiving maternal and prenatal care by 60 percent

- The percentage of births attended by trained personnel from 1994-2000 was 85 percent
- Maternal mortality ratio in 2001 was 195 per 1,000 and 184 per 1000 in 2004

Challenge:

- Improve access and quality of maternal care
- Increase advocacy and awareness
- Improve the statistical information on maternal care including more up to date national nutritional survey to clearly provide an accurate status on maternal health indicators for improvement in the health programmes promoting maternal health care.

Goal 17: Halving malnutrition among pregnant women and among pre-school children in LDCs by 2015

The national Family Planning Campaign, after identifying that the infant, child and maternal deaths are affected by the age of the mother launched this programme:

- High-risk pregnancies: occurred when mothers are less than 20 years old, Mothers older than 34 years, high birth orders and short birth intervals. Child mortality

occurred more among teenage pregnancies, and women over 40 years are less able to withstand stress of pregnancy, deliver and breastfeeding.

Goal 18: Substantially reducing infection rates from malaria, tuberculosis and other killer diseases in LDCs by the end of the decade, reducing tuberculosis (TB) deaths and prevalence of the disease by 50 percent by 2010 and reducing the burden of diseases associated with malaria by 50 percent by 2010.

- Incidence of malaria has been falling since early 1990s however since in 1998 cases has been increasing.
- Number of malaria cases increased from 74,865 in 2002 to 90,606 in 2003, ethnic conflict disrupted government malarial health programme including spraying of bed nets
- Reduction of Malaria is inscribed in Solomon Islands National Development Plans, success have been registered though the challenge of further reducing incidence of malaria remains
- Total number of tuberculosis cases in 2001 was 647 cases: this was reduced to 421 cases in 2002 and 293 cases in 2003

Goal 19: Promoting child health and survival and reducing disparities between and within developed and developing countries as quickly as possible with particular attention to eliminating the pattern of excess and preventable mortality among girl infants and children

- In responding to child health and infant survival, the Ministry of Health adopted and now implementing the integrated management of childhood illness (ICMI) approach which started in 1999-2000.
- Immunization of child against diseases like tetanus, measles, whooping cough, and polio were affected by the civil conflict but with the resumption of health services, the programme has now resumed in 2004
- Immunization rate reported in 2004 was in the range of 72-84 percent

Goal 20: Improving the health and nutritional status of infants and children

Severe national malnutrition was low with less than 1 percent prior to 2000. A recent data on nutrition to give a clear estimate on the current nutritional status of infants and children as the country continue to rebuild its economy is one that is being addressed through the Ministry of Health and Medical Services ICMI programme. A Food Hygiene Regulation was completed by the Ministry of Health in 2005 and waiting to be presented to Government for adoption.

Goal 21: Promoting breast feeding as a child survival strategy

- Breastfeeding in Solomon Islands is widely practiced and encouraged and is nationally promoted as one of the national public health awareness programme.
- Breast feed awareness programme is known to be cost effective, safe and accessible to breast feeding mothers.

Commitment 4: Building productive capacities to make globalization work for LDCs

- Like all LDCs Solomon Islands is positioned on the periphery of the international system and has a narrow based economy that is driven by agricultural products
- While trade opportunities exist, it can not be tapped unless the countries economy expands to include a process of industrialization of its economy.
- The lack of infrastructure and technology necessary to allow the economy to take off is lacking, serious support and investments will need to be made in this area

Goal 22: Increasing road net works or connections in LDCs to the current level of developing countries and urban roads capacities, including sewerage and other related facilities, by 2010

- Urban water supply is provided by the a Statutory Authority of which generally the bulk of the urban population have access to safe drinking water though not all
- The Statutory body that deals with water will soon be going through a reform process with the view of strengthening its management capacity
- More than 80% of the population are in the rural areas the Ministry of Health and Medical Services with external assistance have rural water supply programme. the programme has yet to reach out to the wider rural dwellers

Goal 23: Modernizing and expanding ports and airports and their ancillary facilities to enhance their capacities by 2010

- With external support especially from the EU seven new wharves was completed in 2005
- Selected domestic airfields were rehabilitated especially economic routes
- The country has two international ports on Guadalcanal and Western Province with satellite ports scattered across the country

Challenge

- Given the geography of the country scattered over more than one thousand kilometers eight hundred kilometers across have made issues of domestic air routes to a number of location not economically driven rather a development one
- Applying development programmes in isolated locations is a challenge for the government, that is away from modern communication and infrastructure

Goal 24: Modernizing and expanding railway connections and facilities, increasing their capacities to the

- Up grading of Solomon Islands only international airport was completed under Japanese funding last year 2005
- Roads and bridges are being up graded in two of the nine provinces namely Malaita and Guadalcanal

Goal 25: Increasing LDCs communication networks, including telecommunication and postal services and improving access of the poor to such services in urban and rural areas to reach the current levels in other developing countries

- A foreign company has a monopoly on providing telecommunication services
- The company recently switch to digital
- Mobile services is restricted to certain sectors of four of the country's nine provinces
- Television is aired free of charge – BBC and ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) though is restricted to only certain locations of the country
- TV is being looked into however yet to be established

Goal 26: Increasing computer literacy among students in higher institutions and universities by 50 percent and in junior high schools by 25 percent by 2015

- Many of the High schools are still without computers or provide computer training
- A number of schools recently took delivery of computers though the impact of computer literacy in Secondary schools remains small
- Tertiary education are all done abroad hence have access to computer and are all computer literate

Goal 27: Increasing average telephone density to 5 main lines per 100 inhabitants and internet connections to 10 users per 100 inhabitants by the year

- Internet usage is new and growing, the Government in its 2006 budget allocated funds to install information technology into the Government system

Commitment 5: Enhancing the role of trade in development

- Government in 2005 passed a New Investment promotion Act and had its Foreign Investment Board membership overhauled and procedures streamlined
- Trade in the Solomon Islands continues to be narrowly based on agricultural products including round logs, tuna, cocoa and copra
- There is very little trade within the region given all Pacific Islands Countries generally export the same products except for Fiji and Papua New Guinea which has a slightly bigger economic base
- The government is currently working with regional organizations in its trade facilitation programme, WTO member, encourage MSG free trade but the real challenge is to expand the national export base and be competitive in our trade.
- Fishing, forestry and agriculture are the principle productive sectors
- Fishing contributes 9% of the GDP in 2003
- Resumed operation after suspension in mid 2000, fish exports estimated to be 17% of exports in 2003-2004
- Forestry is 7 % of GDP in 2003
- Timber exports account for almost 70% of total exports for 2003-2004

- Agriculture accounts for only 5% of GDP in 2003, this is the sector where 80% of the population heavily rely on for their livelihood
- Cocoa represent 6% of total export in 2004 while copra account for 3%
- Overall agriculture export as a share of GDP are projected to grow to 3% in 2005-2006

Commitment 6: Reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment

- Solomon Islands is located in a region that is prone to natural disaster, 88.2% of the land is covered by forest, there is to date one area identified by the World Heritage as a protected area
- Logging remains one of Solomon Islands major income earner, logging has increased over the years and said to be done three times more than the sustainable rate in 1992 and five times the level in 2000
- A forestry bill was drafted in 2004 and has since referred to various stakeholders for further consultation
- People live traditional life that they live closer to the environment than people in urban areas, reliance on wood for fuel and including for small family industries such as drying of copra and cocoa is part of the less than half a million population

Challenge

- Much of the natural resources in Solomon Islands are customary owned, until alternative opportunities of generating income by the rural dwellers is provided for, harvesting of logs provides for a means of their income

Commitment 7: Mobilizing financial resources

- The above commitments and goals can not be achieved without donor support, Solomon Islands following its emergence from a conflict situation is greatly supported by its region commonly referred to as "Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands" (RAMSI)
- Restoring rule of law has been accomplished and stabilizing government finances, managing its huge debt burden
- Australia, Japan, European Union, Taiwan, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea

Goal 28: Donor countries providing more than 0.20 percent of their GNP as ODA to LDCs: continue to do so and increase their efforts

- Solomon Islands major donor partners include, Australia-37%, Japan (30%), European Union, (14%) Republic of China (Taiwan) (10%), New Zealand (5%) and Papua New Guinea

Goal 29: Other donor countries which have met the 0.15 percent target: undertake to reach 0.20 percent expeditiously

Goal 30: All other donor countries which have committed themselves to the 0.15 percent target: reaffirm their commitment and undertake either to achieve the target within the next five years or to make their best efforts to accelerate their endeavors to reach the target.

Conclusion and Recommendations

While achievements have been made in a good number of commitments, much of the development that is occurring is rehabilitation and catching up from negative growth experience during the conflict period.

Much has been able to be achieved with the assistance of RAMSI, without international partnership and support the road to recovery will remain long and painful. The economy is basically made up of foreign investors of which special effort is being made to reach out to the rural population economically.