



# SOLOMON ISLANDS

STATEMENT

BY

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AT THE

GENERAL DEBATE

OF THE

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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Mr. President,

I bring you warm greetings from the Happy Isles and convey my Government and peoples' profound congratulations on your assumption as President of the 64<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. We are confident, under your leadership that we will harvest the opportunities the global agenda has to offer.

My delegation further takes this opportunity to commend your predecessor, His Excellency, Father, Miguel d'Escoto Brockman. He indeed provided exemplary leadership and inspired us to realize our unique collective strength. Throughout his tenure in office, he has kept the most vulnerable people at the front, center and back of all our engagements. We wish him "God's Blessing" in his future endeavors.

Mr. President,

The global financial and economic crisis has presented immense challenges to the international community. Simply put, the effects of the crisis are impacting on all members of the UN family. Consequently Solomon Islands economy has been hit by low commodity prices, declining revenues and widening budgetary deficits. My country responded by freezing all government recruitments; reducing national recurrent and development expenditures by 35%. Between 2008 and 2009 our economic growth has taken a negative dive from 6% to 1%, which is affecting the delivery of services to our people.

The world has taken measures in addressing the systematic fragilities of the international financial system. To this end, Solomon Islands welcomes the outcome of the June Financial Crisis Conference, calling for greater cooperation by all, including the reform of Bretton woods institutions. We remain hopeful that the stimulus package dished out, reaches out to the poorest of the poor, as many, will be under stress for a long time to come.

Mr. President,

The frequencies of natural disasters are threatening developments across the world. Climate Change continues to affect the lives of our people. This is creating new pockets of poverty and remains a multiplying threat. Unless an ambitious outcome emanates from Copenhagen, we are fighting a losing battle. I join the call for urgent action, particularly for Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs). For us Climate change poses the most serious threat to our survival and viability, undermining our efforts to achieve sustainable development.

Solomon Islands fully subscribe to the Alliance of Small Islands Developing States Declaration issued this week. The benchmark for the negotiations must be founded on the vulnerability of SIDS and LDCs. Science tells us that the future of low lying islands is uncertain unless deep and ambitious cuts on harmful green house gas emissions is undertaken by Annex 1 countries by more than 45% below 1990 levels by 2020 and more than 95% below 1990 levels by 2050, given their historical responsibility. We call for the global average temperature to increase well below

1.5 degrees Celsius if we are to prevent acidification of our oceans, threatening our very existence.

Deforestation and forest degradation contributes nearly 20% of green house gas emissions. Solomon Islands agree that this should be one of the mitigating solutions in protecting the health of our environment. We further urge that this be considered as an outcome in Copenhagen. My country is currently carrying out an inventory of its forests and intends to participate in the carbon market. We also hope, multilateral financial mechanisms will become available to the most vulnerable in ensuring appropriate technology transfer in renewable energy receives the attention it deserves.

Mr. President,

As a peace loving country, we need to seriously seek a stable international system. This can be achieved by calling for global restraint on all military spending and taking firm commitment to begin a holistic multilateral disarmament negotiation. This is an issue that has been stalled for years on end and continues to be weakly addressed through piecemeal multilateral arms agreements.

Mr. President,

Solomon Islands emerged from a conflict situation eleven years ago. This year, marks the sixth anniversary of the partnership with the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, commonly referred to as RAMSI. Under the partnership, State institutions have been strengthened; political stability has allowed our parliament to pass some thirty laws in less than twenty-four months. The public service is reaching out to our scattered populations within our hundreds of islands. This is indicative that change is happening.

Mr. President,

This year, our relationship with RAMSI has progressed from one of assistance to that of partnership. A partnership framework has been entered into between Solomon Islands and RAMSI. It provides for a framework of cooperation between the two parties, with clearly defined joint strategic goals, distinct roles and commitments with the overall objective of creating a secure, stable and self sustaining socioeconomic and political system for all Solomon Islanders.

The Foreign Relations Committee of our National Parliament has completed its review on *'The Facilitation of the International Assistance Act'* and will be submitting its report to the National Legislature in November this year.

I take this time to thank my Pacific neighbours for their continuous support and contribution to the Regional Mission. It is our fervent hope this partnership could increase its international visibility, and interact more with the UN as provided for under relevant chapter of the UN Charter.

Mr. President,

As part of our nation building and healing process, Solomon Islands instituted its Truth and Reconciliation Commission in April this year. The Commission was officiated by Noble laureate, retired Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu of South Africa. The Commission allows Solomon Islands to visit one of the darkest chapters of its history and we do so with courage, perseverance and a desire to seek a just and permanent peace within our growing nation. To this end, we thank UNDP and all partners for their support.

Mr. President,

Our time bound Millennium Development Goals is fast drawing to a close. Solomon Islands supports the proposal of convening a Review Summit next year. Solomon Islands hopes that the forthcoming gathering will re-invigorate global partnership to realize the Millennium Development Goals within the given time frame.

My country also welcomes the decision of the General Assembly to convene the Fourth United Nations Conference on LDCs in 2011. Similarly we welcome the review of the Small Islands Developing States Mauritius Strategy, scheduled for next year. Both review processes should strengthen global partnerships and commitments provide for under agreed international cooperative frameworks.

Mr. President,

85% of Solomon Islands population resides in the rural areas. Therefore a rural focused development approach has been adopted in our efforts to meet our MDGs. Solomon Islands is posed to make some gains in achieving some of the goals through various partnerships. In this regard, I am pleased to acknowledge that with New Zealand and the Republic of China support, Solomon Islands is now offering free basic education for its children right up to third forms. Work on eliminating malaria, Solomon Islands number one killer has also started. The programme has commenced in one of our nine provinces. My Government thanks Australia for its support and contribution. Furthermore, I wish to thank the Republic of China, the European Union and other development partners for their contribution to the advancement of the Government's rural development policy.

Human development remains a key ingredient in our fight against poverty. Solomon Islands launched its school of tourism this year. We have shifted resources to develop our tourism industries to offset projected revenue loss as a result of reduced harvesting of natural forests. The same policy also applies to agriculture, fisheries, and the mining sectors.

Mr. President,

South South Cooperation continues to invest in our people; it has guaranteed the education of fifty students studying in Cuba. My country thanks Cuba for the gesture. Solomon Islands also thanks its Melanesian neighbor, Papua New Guinea for its ongoing bilateral assistance to Solomon Islands in increasing our presence in Port Moresby and for scholarships offered to our

students studying in Papua New Guinea.

Mr. President,

Global dynamics have changed, since the United Nations was established 64 years ago. Membership then numbered only 51. Reform of the Security Council has eluded us for the last 15 years. We therefore with haste need to increase the legitimacy of our Council in strengthening its role in preserving international peace.

On this note, my delegation is pleased to see the debate on Security Council reform progressed into informal intergovernmental negotiations, at the last session. We are equally pleased to further note three rounds of negotiations has occurred in the last eight months, signifying that the multilateral seed of reforming our institutions have been sowed. We need to ensure it takes root at this session.

Mr. President,

United Nations Secretariat's relations with member states are important, Solomon Islands interactions with our institution has grown and matured over time. The Government is now finalizing allocation of land to the United Nations to have a permanent home in my capital. We hope the Secretariat will reciprocate the gesture and seriously consider having a fully fledged country presence. Comparatively, my country despite having one of the largest sub regional country programmes, relations continue to be macro managed from abroad. My delegation takes this time once again to renew our call to upgrade UNDP's country presence in Solomon Islands from Deputy Resident Representative Level to Resident Representative.

It would be remiss of me not to welcome UNDP's new Administrator, the Honourable Helen Clark. We wish her every success in her tenure in Office and confident that she will look at all issues with a fresh pair of eyes. Development after all is one of the highest calling of our institution.

Solomon Islands also encourages the UN Secretariat to ensure its staff represents the diversity of its membership, in particular states that have yet to fulfill their quota.

Mr. President,

Coastal states with continental shelves in the last couple of months have made submissions to extend their respective territorial claims beyond their 200 Exclusive Economic Zones. I am pleased to inform this Assembly that Solomon Islands submitted a number of claims and we look forward to working with the Continental shelf subcommittee.

Mr. President,

Whilst extending respective EEZ is a sovereign decision, we are mindful of our global environment responsibilities. Solomon Islands is one of the six countries of the Coral Triangle Initiative. Three months ago, leaders from Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Timor Leste, Papua

New Guinea and Solomon Islands met in Indonesia and agreed to work collaboratively across political boundaries. To conserve 75% of the world's coral species, 40% of the world's reef fish species and 51 of the world's mangrove species. Our populations rely on our marine resources for survival and income. We hope to keep it that way for generations to come.

Mr. President,

Good information and data is vital to allow national and international systems in making informed decisions. In this connection we would like to see UN support for our national statistics office for the collation of data in real time and its distribution to all decision makers.

Mr. President,

To foster a vibrant economy, investment in infrastructure is needed. I am pleased to say we have finally enacted a law that will open up our telecommunication industry to competition.

Mr. President,

On the issue of human rights, Solomon Islands recognises that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing. All human rights must be treated in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing and with the same emphasis. This is one of the principles of our newly established Human Rights Council. Solomon Islands continue to support the internationally agreed principles of our Council.

Unfortunately issues of human rights, continued to be heavily politicized, divisive, country specific within the third committee, disregarding the universal principles of cooperation and dialogue. My delegation would like to see, Universal Periodic Review be the reference point of assessing countries human rights situation.

Mr. President,

Before saying something on Taiwan's Cross Strait relations, Solomon Islands conveys its sympathy and, embraces the pain, and suffering of all those impacted by Typhoon Marokat. We also acknowledge the spirit and strength of the Government and people of the Republic of China in rising above the tragedy with resilience to rebuild their lives and recover from the natural catastrophe.

Mr. President,

My country continues to follow Cross Strait developments with deep interest. A new era of relations is emerging between the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China. Relations have been marked by increased series of engagements. Direct flights, shipping, postal cooperation, food safety amongst others have been initiated. This people centered approach continues to build bridges of trust, tolerance, confidence; we wish this positive interaction every success.

This year my delegation is encouraged to witness Taiwan admitted as an observer of the World Health Assembly and hope with all sincerity similar overtures will be accorded to Taiwan by other UN specialized organizations.

Mr. President,

On the Middle East question, my delegation associate itself with Finland's former President, noble peace prize receipt, Mr. Martti Ahtissaari: "no conflict cannot be solved and no conflict must be eternal" unquote.

To find lasting and just peace in the region, it needs the determination of all members. For 62 years the matter has been discussed within this Assembly. Solomon Islands believe a politically negotiated two state solution can be reached under the right conditions. We support all international efforts in finding a lasting and permanent solution.

Mr. President,

In our effort to create a better world, dialogue and cooperation between religions and cultures, there must be the medium of overcoming stereotypes created by a few. Extremists thrive on mistrusts, fears and suspicions and have used them to their advantage. They must be isolated. My delegation acknowledges the initiative of Saudi Arabia in bringing together leaders from the East and West in promoting global culture of peace. It presents a new beginning that we should all build on.

Mr. President,

We must all work towards stabilizing the international system, this means, those with power must not victimize the weak from health and social needs, be it for ideological, political or security reasons. Unilateral and regional economic blockades, punitive action by States and intergovernmental institutions must and should be replaced with genuine cooperation and sincere dialogue. In his regards we call on the international community to fully engage with Fiji. Solomon Islands continue to do so at all political level as a Melanesian neighbour.

Mr. President,

In closing, against the many challenges we are confronting today, the words of Abraham Lincoln in 1862 still holds true. I quote "The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew." unquote.

Thank you Mr. President