



# SOLOMON ISLANDS

STATEMENT BY

THE HONOURABLE MANESSEH SOGAVARE  
PRIME MINISTER OF SOLOMON ISLANDS

AT THE

SIXTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New York, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2006

*Please Check Against Delivery*

Madam President,

I bring you warm greetings from the government and people of Solomon Islands. Allow me to begin by conveying my heartiest and sincere congratulations to you on your election as President of the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the General Assembly. Solomon Islands is confident that under your leadership and guidance, your service to the world will bear fruit in instilling global peace, progress and prosperity. My delegation assures you of our cooperation and support during your term in office.

Solomon Islands would also like to take this opportunity to applaud and pay tribute to your predecessor His Excellency Jan Ellison, Foreign Minister of Sweden who with truly admirable skills has achieved many reform initiatives since last year's World Summit. In particular the establishment of the Peace Building Commission, Human Rights Council, Counter Terrorism Strategy, Development Resolution, Management, and Secretariat Mandate Review and HIV/AIDS Declaration.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge our Secretary-General His Excellency Kofi Annan for his distinguish service to this premier institution. He has been a constant catalyst for change and stood out as a leader with vision, initiatives, patience, respect, persistence and faith in this institution. Solomon Islands continues to render him and the Secretariat staff our support and wish the Secretary-General well in his future endeavors. We sincerely thank him for his service.

Madam President,

Solomon Islands would also like to join others in warmly welcoming United Nations newest member, the Republic of Montenegro who was admitted into the United Nations family in June this year. We wish the new nation every success and look forward to working with it for the common good of the globe.

Madam President,

Democracy remains the bedrock of Solomon Islands political system. Four months ago my Government came into power after the country's seventh national election since attainment of political independence 28 years ago. We have had the honour of having the Electoral Assistance Division of the United Nations Political Department monitor and coordinate international observers overseeing elections in the country. Despite the positive verdict declared by the international observers, a minor hiccup during the second part of the election culminated into three days of riots. Solomon Islands looks at the incident as a wake up call, to do more for development for its growing population. I am pleased to say that the incident is now behind us, stability has been restored and a Commission of Enquiry has been set up to look into the matter.

Solomon Islands would like to thank all those that have participated in the election observer programme including the Commonwealth, Pacific Islands Forum, Australia, New Zealand and UNDP. My government has gone ahead and put in place an integrity

legislation that will strengthen the development of the party system in Solomon Islands and bring about needed political stability.

Solomon Islands like many young democracies are being challenged and tested. Governance is expensive and needs support to allow it to be nurtured and flourish. It should be an ideology that belongs to all and not only to those that can afford it.

Madam President,

The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands led by Australia, and supported by New Zealand and all Pacific Islands Forum Countries has just completed its third year. My Government has renewed the Regional Mission's term for another twelve months, given its success in transforming the country from a fragile to a stable state. In this regard, Solomon Islands is undertaking a comprehensive review of the Mission, in an effort to strengthen existing partnership with the objective of broadening the scope and role of the Mission, in taking a more developmental oriented engagement.

Madam President,

The theme of this Session, "Implementation of global Partnership for Development" demands a renewed commitment to existing partnership arrangements between developed and developing countries. It must present opportunities of reordering and closing the North – South divide within a strengthened multilateral system. Just last week, more than a quarter of the most vulnerable members of the United Nations, the Least Developed Countries met here in this august Assembly to review the Brussels Programme of Action. These are countries, that have special needs and require special attention. While we welcome the declaration issued by the High Level Meeting on the Mid Term Review of the BPOA, it is not the declaration that implements the BPOA; rather it is our action on honouring our international obligations and commitments.

Solomon Islands is a country of small communities, scattered across nine hundred islands. Sustainable development for Solomon Islands can only be achieved through global partnership, if development is directed on rural communities. The approach must have a sense of urgency and a common purpose of freeing rural population from living off themselves to one of realizing their economic aspirations, through the tapping of their resources via the transfer of appropriate technologies.

Madam President,

The shape and future of international relations depends on how we manage change. In the words of Charles Darwin, "it is not the strongest of species that survives, nor the most intelligent, rather it is the one that is most responsive to change". I am pleased to note this year the UN is looking at expanding its presence in the Pacific region. Such an approach strengthens United Nations relations with its members. Solomon Islands in this regard looks forward to the proposed upgrading of UNDP's sub office in Honiara to Country level.

Madam President,

Solomon Islands notes from the 2005 World Summit Document that rural and agricultural development is featured in the first part of the Summit Outcome. My delegation is heartened by a joint UNDP and UN Capital Development Fund proposed project to strengthen Solomon Islands provincial government system as well as investing in provincial infrastructure and communications. This proposal strengthens all principles of democracy and brings the state closer to its people. My government stands ready to assist in any way it can in bringing to full realization of such a worthy proposal. Solomon Islands calls on all partners to contribute, to better the lives of a people that for so long have been neglected.

Madam President,

Solomon Islands watches with concern developments in the Middle East in particular in Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine. It is sad to see parents burying sons, a conflict that claims the lives of more children than soldiers. Solomon Islands associate itself with the observations of Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Egeland, that something is truly wrong. Under such difficult circumstances, we must find the strength to trust one another and work tirelessly to find a permanent sustainable lasting solution to the crisis. The world looks to this organization for a solution and we must not fail it. This can only be done if we are prepared to seek a holistic approach in seeking a permanent solution to the Middle East question, by embracing all parties and the region, working within the spirit of the UN charter, through dialogue and consultation.

Madam President,

On Security Council Reform, in the words of our Secretary General, I quote ***“no UN reform is complete without the reform of the Security Council”*** unquote. The time is now ripe to balance on going reforms with Security Council reform. The Council’s inaction to contain certain conflicts for varying political reasons, questions its effectiveness, given its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. For the most vulnerable members of this organization, we do not have the luxury of waiting, for conflicts and potential conflicts to take root. With more than five billion dollars spent on UN Peace Keeping Missions, this is money better spent on development. Only with an enlarged Council armed with improved working methods, can we make the Council truly representational and accountable to the wider membership of this institution. Solomon Islands would like to see countries such as Japan and Germany as permanent members together with emerging powers, India and Brazil.

Madam President,

On the question of the representation of Taiwan, the continuous refusal by this organization over the last thirteen years of discussing the representation of the twenty-three million people of Taiwan to the United Nations. This creates an institutional gap in an organization, we all suppose to stand equal and own. Sadly my delegation wishes to register its disappointment that it's right to discuss the issue was denied last week. Solomon Islands feels the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter continue to be violated. The time has come for this institution to live within the rules that guide the behaviour and conduct of members and have an honest debate on the issue. Solomon Islands, renews its call on the United Nations to recognize the right of the 23 million people of Taiwan to be represented at the United Nations. Solomon Islands is also concerned on security threats on the Taiwan Strait. My delegation calls on all member states to distinguish our collective interests to preserve peace from narrow interests that threatens peace. Solomon Islands further calls on the United Nations, the body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security to mediate and engage with the People's Republic of China, Taiwan and other stakeholders in finding a permanent solution to the issue.

Madam President,

This year we will be electing a new Secretary-General. Solomon Islands a member of the Asian Group, would like to see a Secretary-General that has an interest in our sub region. For the last twenty-eight years since Solomon Islands became member of this noble institution, no Secretary-General has ever visited my part of the world. We would like to see our future Secretary-General to engage more closely with members states located on the other side of the globe.

Madam President.

On terrorism, Solomon Islands once again reiterates its condemnation of all forms of terrorism in whatever form and manifestation, wherever and whenever it may occur. Recent attacks in India and in various parts of the world underscore the fact that terrorism remains a threat to all. Solomon Islands looks forward to an early conclusion of the comprehensive Terrorism Convention and is pleased that talks between the UN Counter Terrorism Committee and member states including the Pacific region has began. It is our hope, the consultation will address the gaps within national mechanisms and where possible have a regional approach to the issues. I am pleased to report that with the assistance of New Zealand, Solomon Islands is expected to fulfill some of its Counter Terrorism Reporting Obligations during the course of 2007.

Madam President,

At last year's World Summit, 170 of our heads of State and Governments agreed to ensure developing countries in particular LDCs participate more fully in the global system. The lack of Agreement from the Doha Round continues to hurt small Island open market economies such as Solomon Islands. We do hope enough political will could be

garnered to confront existing differences and ensure that a universal, rule based, open, non discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system is established.

Madam President,

Solomon Islands continues to benefit from North-South cooperation to sustain its growth. We must continue to work on enhancing South-South cooperation. I am pleased to note developing countries such as Papua New Guinea has provided needed assistance in education and security. My Government is paying closer attention on renewable energy with India, Taiwan and Indonesia. It is our hope that with the cooperation of all our partners' appropriate technologies will be transferred so that communities would have access to modern and affordable energy. In this connection the Global and Environmental Fund; including United Nations Environment Programme could look at facilitating such initiatives. Solomon Islands would like to thank India, Taiwan, Indonesia, China and UN Department for Economic & Social Affairs (DESA) for enabling the Pacific Islands experts to meet and work on such a programme.

A number of developmental opportunities have emerged since the 2005 World Summit meeting. Amongst others, a HIV/AIDS declaration was adopted. Solomon Islands would like to see the Global AIDS Fund provide a complete package for the Pacific region, from treatment to awareness. It is cheaper to invest in a problem that is small, than treating a full blown pandemic. Solomon Islands would like the HIV/AIDS Global Fund to reconsider the Pacific regional project submitted during the 60<sup>th</sup> session.

Solomon Islands notes with regret that the recent five year review of the 2001 Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons did not agree on a final document. Solomon Islands continues to believe that the root cause of a gun culture emerging is development related. At some stage the Conference should focus more on addressing poverty issues within vulnerable countries, where gun culture is likely to emerge in a global effort to address the issue once and for all.

Madam President,

On the issue of international migration, following last week's high level meeting, Solomon Islands together with its regional neighbours, continues to seek opportunities and short term labour migration within its subregion and globally. While nothing concrete has emerged, the regional discussion has allowed us to better understand the receiving states position and hopefully will allow us to work towards striking an agreed balance. Solomon Islands feels that the pull factor from the South to the North is natural and is a win-win factor for the South to provide needed labour to cater for the North's growing economy at the same time benefiting financially.

Madam President,

The United Nations offers opportunities for member states to become responsible global citizens. Solomon Islands would like to see the recruitment procedure be taken at country level. We are also seriously looking at participating in selected UN Civil Police missions.

Finally, Madam President, a reformed and strengthened United Nations represents our best hope for a better future. Solomon Islands reiterate its commitment to work within the framework of international cooperation to address today's economic, social, cultural and humanitarian challenges.

Thank you, Madam President.