



# SOLOMON ISLANDS

STATEMENT BY

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MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

AT THE

GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 60<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF  
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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*Please Check Against Delivery*

Mr. President,

I bring warm greetings from the Government and people of Solomon Islands and congratulate you on your election as President of the Sixtieth Session of this Assembly. I would like to assure you of Solomon Islands support and co-operation during your term in office as you guide the work of this premier institution for the next twelve months.

My delegation would also like to commend and register its deep appreciation to your predecessor, our colleague the Honorable Jean Ping, Foreign Minister of Gabon, for his invaluable contribution and able leadership of the proceedings of 59<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly.

Solomon Islands also extends its gratitude to our Secretary-General, His Excellency Kofi Annan, for his vision, dedication and leadership in making the United Nations relevant and responsive to today's threats.

Mr. President,

This organization arose out of the ashes of World War II with the sole purpose of ensuring that never again will the world allow crimes against humanity to flourish. Sixty years on, genocide, terrorism, HIV/ AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and hunger continue to claim millions of lives annually. According to recent World Health Organization Report, preventable diseases such as malaria alone, claims more lives than today's conflicts put together. 1.5 - 2.7 million lives are lost out of 300-500 million clinical cases annually.

In this connection, Solomon Islands suffers the highest rates of malaria and maternal mortality than any other country in the Pacific region. My delegation is pleased to see the Summit agree on the establishment and implementation of quick win initiatives such as free distribution of both treated bed nets and anti malaria medicines. But more needs to be done, a comprehensive malaria eradication programme on public and environmental health must be initiated and implemented simultaneously.

Mr. President,

Despite these stacking facts, the world continues to spend more on military programs and equipment. The lack of progress on disarmament and non-proliferation with the continuing threat of terrorism begs the question whether the world has indeed become safer, stable and protected as the founders of the United Nations Charter envisioned. It further asks the question whether international frameworks and co-operations have indeed contained today's threats. Solomon Islands condemns terrorism in all its forms. In this regard, Solomon Islands is embarking on legislative process with New Zealand's support to increase its national capacity in enhancing regional security arrangements through the Nasonini Declaration and the Honiara Declaration on Law Enforcement, particularly threats posed by international terrorism and transnational crimes.

Mr. President,

In keeping with this year's theme "For a Stronger *and* more effective United Nations: Follow up and Implementation of the High Level Meeting", the challenge is on us to continue the reform process. As alluded to by my Prime Minister last week during the high level Summit, we must not solve today's problems with yesterdays solutions. Rather with a new vision that will build a stronger multi lateral system to confront threats and challenges of the twenty-first century. Solomon Islands notes and supports the Summit's Outcome document as a starting point for change.

Mr. President,

Current reforms to rejuvenate the multilateral system must occur at three levels - international, regional and national levels. The forthcoming Doha Process beginning in December this year provides another opportunity for the international community to equitably spread the fruits of globalization and take to task the imbalance that exists within the economic international system and address the challenges of vulnerable and fragile states. The Doha Development agenda must accord stable and predictable market access for all Least Developed Countries (LDCs) products, technology transfer and human resources development. For Solomon Islands to share the fruits of the multilateral trading system in a meaningful way, it must firstly address its domestic bottle necks that impedes its full participation such as supply side restraints and other "behind the border" complimentary policies that are conducive to a business friendly environment.

Mr. President,

The Programme for Action of the LDCs will be reviewed beginning next year. The lack of implementation of the Brussels Program of Action speaks of the international community's commitment to the 700 million of the world's most vulnerable population. Solomon Islands is off track in terms of meeting its MDGs obligation however, as an LDC in the Asia Pacific region is committed to meeting its Millennium Development Goals and seeks international support and attention in this endeavor. Poverty has no boundaries and we acknowledge and support the Jakarta Declaration For MDGs and other social service deliveries to be realized and sustained, Solomon Islands will need to grow its economy. Solomon Islands also calls for greater in country representation of the United Nations working in partnership to meet MDGs.

Mr. President,

Solomon Islands supports the proposed setting up of the United Nations Peace Building Commission. The Commission has a difficult and important role to assist countries coming out of conflict situations to reintegrate, reconstruct and rebuild state institutions to sustain peace, security and economic stability. In this light, the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) is a shining example, in which the Commission can draw lessons from. This demonstrates that with courage and determination, the principles and institutions of democracy and human rights can be safe guarded and protected. The two prong approach of law and order complimented with economic security in the spirit of true partnership will allow the opportunity for peace to prosper. Solomon Islands also welcomes the concept of responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity as contained in the Summit Outcome document.

Solomon Islands would like to register its deep appreciation to Australia, New Zealand and our good neighbors of the Pacific Island countries for their continued support and contribution towards RAMSI. We could not have done it without you. Thank you.

Mr. President,

If Solomon Islands is to progress beyond the initial crisis of law and order, the challenge still remains to nurture it and build an economy to sustain it. Solomon Islands per capita incomes are currently over 20% below the 1995 Gross Domestic Product. To repair this, Solomon Islands must address the harmful past policies of economic mismanagement, lack of fiscal discipline, deficiency in governance and capacity constraints at all levels.

Solomon Islands is well endowed with natural resources and a young population that can form a basis of a good labor supply. But it lacks both human capital and physical capital with poor infrastructure to lift productivity and deliver sustainable growth which is broadly based, rural focused and people centered.

That is why the Government is initiating a strategy to attract and build capital. This strategy is hinged on establishing a stable macro economic environment, creating simple business friendly tax and regulatory regimes, improving infrastructure and good governance. In the area of establishing a credible fiscal policy we have returned the budget into surplus, revenues are enhanced, expenditures are tightened and prioritized, monetary policies are being fine tuned and aligned, state owned enterprises continued to be reformed with steps to remove barriers to improve efficient shipping networks so critical for island nations. This will be coupled with the completion of the investment bill, a credible 2006 budget and the introduction of a fair and simple tax reform bill which will be brought before parliament in the next sitting.

Mr. President,

Debt levels remain crippling at more than 100% of Solomon Islands GDP. Talks with creditors have begun to establish a workable debt strategy. An innovative approach advocated by the Philippines for the conversion of debt for equity swap to finance MDGs projects is worth looking into.

Capacity building in governance free from corruption is vital for rural development, health and education. Leadership and governance which are critical for stability and economic development are being improved by the clarification of rules and expectations with an outcome oriented approach will improve the transparency of public processes and effectiveness of institutions.

Mr. President,

Solomon Islands acknowledges the contributions of Australia, New Zealand, PNG, Japan, EU, Taiwan, ADD and the World Bank amongst other donor partners in their support for these government initiatives to rebuild our fragile and shattered state. Solomon Islands must consolidate the gains on the security and economic front achieved in the past two years and move constructively forward. Much has yet to be done.

On climate change, the world continues to experience changing weather patterns and have seen an increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters. Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) such as Solomon Islands are more vulnerable and susceptible to natural disasters and calls for a renewed focus and concrete commitments by the international community to the issue in line with the Summit outcome document. My delegation welcomes the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol in February this year and call on those who have yet to ratify the Convention to do so at their earliest convenience. In the light of the Asian tsunami which occurred in December last year, it is cost effective for the world to invest in mitigation measures in particular renewable energy resources. The Hyogo Strategy negotiated at the Kobe Conference and the Mauritius Strategy paper in January this year provides an excellent starting point. Sadly, however, the G-8 Summit on Climate Change has not taken decisive action on climate change to which Solomon Islands as member of AOSIS urges them to reconsider as the issue of environment has an impact on the physical survival of SIDS.

Mr. President,

Closer to home, Solomon Islands wish to acknowledge the completion of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea. With the successful election of Papua New Guinea's newly autonomous province of Bougainville, we wish our closest Melanesian neighbor, even success in building on the political gains made so far and assures them of our commitment to all bilateral cooperative arrangements. Solomon Islands acknowledge Papua New Guinea's ongoing bilateral assistance to Solomon Islands.

Mr. President,

On the Security Council reform, Solomon Islands believes that the membership of the Council must reflect the political and economic realities of our time. In this regard, Solomon Islands supports the expansion of the Security Council and feels that countries such as Japan that has strong bilateral links with Solomon Islands should be accorded a permanent seat within the security council. Japan's inclusion will contribute towards bridging the divide between the multilateral institution and member states.

Mr. President,

This year marked the tenth year after the Beijing Platform of Action was launched. Achievements have been mixed. Solomon Islands believes that improving the welfare of women is an indispensable requirement for sustainable security. At the regional level, issues relating to the empowerment of women are being incorporated into the Pacific Plan that will be discussed by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in October this year.

Mr. President,

The United Nations was founded on the principle of maintaining international peace and security. Over the years, some threats continue to receive more attention than others. The Anti-Secession Law enacted by the Peoples Republic of China in March this year has threatened peace and security on the Taiwan Strait. The situation creates a security vacuum that if left unattended, will continue to fester and question the credibility of this premier multilateral institution. There exist no mechanisms to address such threats within the parameters of the UN Charter. Solomon Islands therefore renew its call to have the issue debated within this Assembly.

Mr. President,

In this regard, time has now come for this body to allow Taiwan, a major player within the international economic system, to take its rightful place within the United Nations. This august body can not once again ignore the plight of the 23 million people of Taiwan. Solomon Islands regrets the manner in which this Assembly has dealt with the issue allowing certain countries to dictate the agenda

On the Secretariat reforms, Solomon Islands would like to see the United Nations Secretariat reflect the diversity of its membership. The current recruitment process of having external rather than in-country examinations, have deterred potential SIDS applicants from applying, given the associated expenses.

Mr. President,

In conclusion Solomon Islands supports multilateralism and assure you Mr. President of our ongoing support for United Nations reforms.

I thank you, Mr. President.