



SOLOMON ISLANDS

Statement by

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Counsellor**

Permanent Mission of Solomon Islands to the United Nations

**Fifty-second Session of the Commission on Status of Women
On the Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women
and to the Twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly
entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace
for the 21st Century": Implementation of strategic objectives and
actions in critical areas of concern and further actions and
initiatives: financing for gender equality and the empowerment
of women**

New York, 25th February-7th March 2008

Mr. Chairman,

Solomon Islands would like to begin by aligning this statement with the Statements issued by Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the G 77 and China and statement issue by Tonga on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Countries.

The Commission on the Status of Women has been discussed for more than sixty years. It predates more than half of the UN membership and has been a series of events, frameworks, institutions and Summits. The challenge of improving the lives of women all over the world remains elusive.

Mr. Chairman,

The time has come for us to stop and think why and how best could we truly improve the quality of lives of all women despite all these frameworks and events. The fact is, little has been done by the world in closing the structural divide and inequalities that exists between women, in the North and those in the South. Increasing cost of food, fossil fuel, the impact of Climate Change, HIV/Aids and Malaria has further marginalized the women from the international financial and economic systems. The lack of progress on Doha negotiations, as well as the lack of implementation of international agreed frameworks has not helped. This is the 52nd Conference yet we sound like a broken record, saying the right things but have not matched words with resources.

Mr. Chairman,

We must now move beyond policy, to action oriented outcomes. Secondly the international community must now focus on the informal sector of society where more than 80% of our women live traditional lives, the reluctance of the market or private sector to invest in the informal sector has seen what little women earn are spent on school fees or health needs. The Government is emphasizing a robust rural development policy with the view of opening up opportunities in the rural area and ensures women participate in all processes of decision making that guarantees the security of all women.

Mr. Chairman,

My sub region Pacific continues to be identified by the UN as off track in terms of meeting its MDGs. Solomon Islands is a country emerging from conflict, as such, holistic cross societal post conflict reconciliation within the spirit of Security Council 1325 is an on going exercise. It is crucial that we address the root causes of conflicts and explore ways and means of making the UN system more responsive to the needs of women. This could be accomplished with a strengthened UN presence in countries and streamlining and the UN gender institutions and programmes. Gender remains a cross cutting issues hence would appreciate a report from the UN Executive Coordinating Body on what each UN agency is doing and assisted Solomon Islands in its collecting and analyzing gender related data for utilization and to be fed into the wider Government system.

Mr. Chairman,

As far as financing for gender equality and economic empowerment of women are concern, for many developing countries including Solomon Islands, major sources of finance are from three main areas: ODA, Trade and Government Taxes. Funds however remain insufficient, placing the Government under financial strain that it has to borrow externally as a way out to finance much of its development programmes.

Such scenarios have placed many developing countries in debt. In the case of Solomon Islands, debt serving accounts for 30% of the country's GDP. It is time to think outside of the box and examine innovative concepts. As far back as 2005, Philippines has proposed in converting debts into MDG programmes allowing countries to use their domestic resources to carry out, gender related activities. My delegation hopes the review of the Monterrey Consensus scheduled for this year will re-examine the concept with a serious eye.

Macro Credit scheme is a success story yet it fails to be used as a tool internationally in opening up economic opportunities for the most vulnerable in our societies. We urge special effort by the UN to take this concept forward.

On the issue of Climate Change, Solomon Islands low laying atolls are already being impacted by Climate Change. The fact that the population practice subsistence agriculture, our lives are interconnected with the health of our fragile environment. There are technologies and resources available for adaptation and mitigation activities, we hope the Bali outcome will ensure LDC/SIDS get their fair share.

Just in April last year, a tsunami claimed 50 lives, cost of damages is more than 100 million, and people are still rebuilding their lives. The issue is there are countries that are well equipped and could better cope to manage impacts of climate change and disasters. For many SIDS and LDCs it remains a development issue.

The Commission to recommend to the Monterrey Consensus review that process must strive to ensure inclusiveness and targeted measures and decisions to address mobilising of international financial resources for gender related developments in small vulnerable economies.

The international community through Doha Round must take bold decisions to put in place better terms of trade especially for the most economic vulnerable countries such as LDCs and SIDS for their agricultural products in eradicating poverty in the developing countries, a sector where majority are women

The CSW to ensure the review of the Monterrey seek to improve the international financial architecture that meaningfully relate and set achievable conditions for small economies and LDCS to engage and are gender friendly.

The ODA must be integrated to directly support national development efforts to ensure national ownership and sustainability

Development partners and donors community can play a role in encouraging investments in LDCS/SIDS that can open up employment opportunities to support national gender policies.

The Commission to ensure the review of the Monterrey must seek to maintain flexibility to make principle changes that can transform the multilateral process of building partnerships that are responsive to mobilizing financial flows that can be tapped to address the financing needs and development challenges of women in the least developed and small economies..

I close by thanking UNDP for bringing over two of our Gender NGO representatives and for matching such support with resources and would like to see that such support remain in train and assure you Mr. Chairman of my delegations cooperation and support during the Conference.

Thank You