



SOLOMON ISLANDS

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE ON
THE AGENDA ITEM
“WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY”**

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Mr. President,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity in participating in this debate. My delegation wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report.

The role of women as actors to pacify and seek peaceful settlement to today's conflict is an indispensable requirement for sustainable peace and development for developing countries in particular countries such as mine that is one of the 18 of the 49 LDCs emerging from conflict.

During our ethnic conflict, a group of women from multi-ethnic backgrounds within the country gathered under the own initiatives approached and spoke to militants on both sides as mothers, using their respective cultural norms, drawing militant's attention to social and human consequences of their action, the women gained their trust and confidence and provided essential items across conflict lines. This is a country of more than half a million people, speaking some 87 different languages.

Mr. President,

For the last seven years Solomon Islands is assisted by the Regional Assistance Mission for Solomon Islands commonly referred to as RAMSI. The Mission is made up of our Pacific neighbours led by Australia and strongly supported by New Zealand. RAMSI has provided us space and support to promote and implementing resolution 1325 nationally and government system wide.

Solomon Islands has restructured its security institution. For the first time in its young history it has more women in its Police Force, the Police Force has established a unit to deal with post conflict sexual and gender based violence in coordination with other Ministries manned by gender sensitive and human rights trained officers.

On the issue of mainstreaming gender funding within the wider government system, this is work in progress. I am pleased to say that a base line data has been established allowing Solomon Islands small women's machinery to develop strategies to enhance gender capacity within the national system.

Mr. President,

Having said this, the challenge is huge, as Solomon Islands social system, structure, institution and values are centered on its natural resources. Eighty per cent of Solomon Islands land are customary owned and are undocumented. Traditional land operates under three land tenure systems namely matrilineal, patrilineal or the chiefly system.

To localizing 1325 in small islands developing states we must look at the challenges women face on a daily basis, in particular the impact of climate change which is now a threat multiplier. Climate change induced population relocation is up rooting populations from low laying ancestral land into high raised islands which is another land tenure system. This is creating another time bomb if it is not well managed as land allocated is fixed and suffers from over use, reducing crop yields that in a matter of time will see displaced populations entering customary land trigger hotspots for conflicts.

The frequency of national disasters have placed women with food security, disempowered as their land gets swallowed up by sea level rise and water security forcing mothers to make difficult choices of spending more time seeking food to put on the table neglect sending their children to school.

Equipping our women with technologies to store traditional crops will better prepare them to manage the disasters they confront more frequently.

Mr. President

On the issue of Governance, Solomon Islands adopted a political system (Westminster system) that does not recognize the traditional decision making role of women in tribal societies. Women's traditional role gets subsumed by modern decision making process that further weakens the power base of women in their traditional setting. I am pleased to say Solomon Islands has not shied away from looking at the issue of gender representation within our national parliament. An ambitious plan for temporary measures to advance women's participation was launched last year however it did not receive enough support and needed more consultation which we hope will receive attention over time. The initiative did generate a tsunami of interest and is something we have an on going conversation on. I merely mention this as women in our part of the globe live and operate in two worlds, a traditional and modern world.

Mr. President,

Solomon Islands has adopted various conflict prevention mechanisms in an effort to avoid the country from sliding back into conflict. The South African model of Truth and Reconciliation Commission is operating, allowing victims to seek justice as well as forgiveness. The Government is looking at a notion of complementing that with a forgiveness bill to bring a process of former militants seeking reconciliation with society.

Mr. President,

Some of the challenges faced by the country in implementing 1325 include establishment of a gender early warning systems, however it was project driven that the initiative slowed down when the project ended. It is important that whatever gender related activities we carry out it must be sustainable and established in existing gender institutions in particular faith based women groups are rural based, community focused and meet frequently.

Mr. President,

Secondly there needs to be a shift in approach by the United Nations in supporting implementation of resolution 1325 from adopting a one size fits all approach of over regionalization of issues that disregards the varying development levels of the Pacific SIDS and country specific needs get brushed aside. In this respect over the years Solomon Islands continues to call for upgrading of UN presence as we are managed out of a regional office abroad.

Thirdly, it is important that much of the multilateral system must work for small countries. Too often we see that we are too small for the global system to work for us.

In conclusion, Solomon Islands join others in welcoming the operationalizing of UN Women and look forward to working with the new gender entity.