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Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review*

Solomon Islands

Addendum

Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments and replies presented by the State under review

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Introduction

1. Solomon Islands presented its national report for the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review on May 10th, 2021. From this, Solomon Islands received 160 recommendations from UN member states to assist Solomon Islands implement its human rights obligations. After consideration of all the recommendations, the response to all 160 recommendations are indicated in this addendum.

2. Due to time limitations, consideration of the recommendations were carried out with relevant line government ministries and agencies only. Wider consultation at provincial government community level was not possible and as such some recommendations have been noted for further consideration. Other recommendations which have already been implemented have also been noted as the government considers work in this thematic area already completed.

3. Responses to recommendations are grouped thematically and responses to some recommendations appear under more than one heading where they relate to multiple issues. Solomon Islands is working towards a human rights reporting and monitoring mechanism and it will give scope to consider these issues further in the future.

International instruments – Ratification and accession

4. Solomon Islands immediate priority under this thematic area is to sign and/or ratify the following:

- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- UNCRC Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict
- UNCRC Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
- UN Convention on Transnational and Organised Crime

5. Solomon Islands notes the remaining recommendations to sign and ratify the remaining core human rights conventions along with conventions relating to labour and the Rome Statutes.

6. Solomon Islands

- Accepts 2, 6, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 31, 34, 37, 38.
- Notes 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.

International instruments – Treaty body elections, reporting, implementation and monitoring

Treaty reporting

7. The Government is committed to honour its human rights reporting obligations and supports the recommendations that speak to this. However, given the country's limited resources and competing national priorities, meeting its reporting obligations remains a challenge. This is why Solomon Islands has adopted a precautionary approach to the signing and ratifying of all international conventions including those human rights because of the “reporting burden”. A concept paper putting in place to establish a HR reporting mechanism was done in 2019. Furthermore, a redirection in Government Policy to address COVID19 impacts in the country, a lack of dedicated resources has stalled progress in translating the mechanism into action.

National human rights institution

8. Solomon Islands supports the recommendation to establish a National Human Rights Institution in line with the Paris Principles. In 2019, scoping study was under taken by the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children, and Family Affairs recommended the option of setting up a National Human Rights Institute (NHRI). There are recommended next steps that the government will be implementing for the realisation of this recommendation.

9. Solomon Islands
- Accepts 33, 36, 39, 40, 97.
 - Notes 32, 35, 45.

Domestic legislation, policy and framework for human rights in Solomon Islands

10. The Solomon Islands constitution provides for the protection of expression under the Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of the Individual (Chapter Two). Paragraph 12 speaks to the right of expression as well as the free exchange of information. Solomon Islands therefore supports the recommendations that address freedom of expression.

11. Solomon Islands
- Accepts 41, 42, 43, 44, 87, 88.
 - Notes 47, 48, 85, 98.

Human rights and health services

12. Solomon Islands accepts all recommendations that address the strengthening of policy and coverage surrounding universal healthcare. Basic healthcare services are provided to citizens free of charge. Solomon Islands remains steadfast in its approach to reducing maternal and infant mortality rates under its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals. The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) together with UNFPA have developed sexual reproductive health education in secondary school curriculum. However, Solomon Islands reserves the right to decide what it classifies as age appropriate information in this regard.

13. Solomon Islands
- Accepts 99, 100, 101.
 - Notes 50, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108.

Education and human rights

14. Solomon Islands supports all recommendations covering access to basic education for both boys and girls most especially in rural areas. Solomon Islands continues to implement its 'free education' policy for primary education throughout the country. Solomon Islands further supports all recommendations relating to compulsory education legislation and policy.

15. Solomon Islands
- Accepts 49, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113.

Right to development

16. Solomon Islands support the recommendation that speaks to the right to development in particular to strengthen its development policy and the full utilization of resources for the benefit of its people.

17. Solomon Islands

- Accepts 64, 65.

COVID19 and human rights

18. Solomon Islands further supports the recommendations urging it to adopt a human rights perspective in its COVID19 recovery efforts.

19. Solomon Islands

- Accepts 66, 67.

Human rights, environmental conservation, sustainable resource use and protection against exploitation

20. Solomon Islands continues to take steps to address human abuse and trafficking as a result of resource extraction. Solomon Islands welcomes the recommendations that address these important issues. Solomon Islands further notes that in many cases, the victims of such activities are women and girls and looks at addressing the whole spectrum of discrimination against women in all its various forms.

21. Solomon Islands

- Accepts 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73.

Human rights and climate change

22. As a small island developing state, Solomon Islands welcomes the recommendations focuses addressing climate change and sea level rise. Solomon Islands reiterates its national position that climate change is an existential threat that is threat to very existence of Solomon Islanders. It is both a security threat and a threat on the right to live for Solomon Islands.

23. Solomon Islands

- Accepts 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84.

Human rights and human trafficking

24. Solomon Islands supports the recommendation to develop, enact, and implement comprehensive anti-human trafficking legislation. With regards to the part of the recommendation that asks Solomon Islands to fully implement the 2020-2025 National Action Plan on Human Trafficking and ratify the 2000 United Nations Trafficking in Persons Protocol, Solomon Islands notes this parts of the recommendation.

25. Solomon Islands

- Accepts 86.

Human rights and tackling corruption

26. Solomon Islands accepts the recommendations to conduct credible investigations into, and impose and enforce criminal penalties for, government corruption through operationalizing the 2018 Independent Commission against Corruption.

27. Solomon Islands

- Accepts 89, 90.

Right to access justice

28. Solomon Islands also accepts the recommendation to ensure that the formal justice system is accessible to all, especially those living in rural areas and to vulnerable groups, such as women, persons with disabilities and the elderly population. This is an ongoing policy that is currently under implementation.

29. Solomon Islands

- Accepts 91, 92, 93.

Right to free and fair elections

30. Solomon Islands notes the recommendation to strengthen democratic elections by amending the Electoral Act to clarify eligibility requirements for voter registration with respect to residency.

31. Solomon Islands

- Notes 94.

Gender based violence – Advocacy and implementation

32. Solomon Islands welcomes all recommendations addressing gender based violence, in particular its implementation. Solomon Islands remains committed to implementing the provisions under the Family Protection Act as well as the recommendations from the review of the Act. Solomon Islands further remains committed to providing access to justice for survivors of gender based violence and a safe avenue for them to access assistance and recovery.

33. Solomon Islands

- Accepts 46, 95, 96, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129.
- Notes 124.

Women in leadership and economic empowerment

34. Solomon Islands accepts the recommendations to take further steps to increase the participation of women in public service and enhance measures for women's economic empowerment. The recommendation to increase efforts to increase the representation of women in decision-making positions in legislative, executive and judicial institutions are also accepted. With regards to the recommendation on equal wage parity for both males and females in the workplace, Solomon Islands does not encourage wage disparity according to gender but more on responsibility load of the work. However, as alluded to above, insufficient time did not allow for further consultation with all relevant stakeholders in order to obtain sufficient data regarding fair wage parity for both males and females in the workplace.

35. Solomon Islands

- Accepts 114, 115, 116, 130, 131.
- Notes 117.

Children's rights

36. All recommendations with regards to the rights of the child are supported. Solomon Islands once again would like to emphasise that corporal punishment is prohibited in schools throughout the country and it is provided for in the Solomon Islands Teachers Handbook. Solomon Islands is in the process of reviewing the Islanders Marriage Act with the view to increase the legal marriage age from 15 to 18 for girls.

37. Solomon Islands

- Supports 132, 133, 134, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 150, 151, 152, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160.
- Notes 135, 136, 149, 153, 154.

38. Solomon Islands

- Notes all recommendations regarding same sex issues (recommendations 51, 52, 53, 54 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63.)
