



SOLOMON ISLANDS

STATEMENT BY

**THE HONOURABLE LAURIE CHAN
SOLOMON ISLANDS FOREIGN MINISTER**

AT

**THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE 59TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Check Against Delivery

Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me on-behalf of the Government and people of Solomon Islands to convey to you our warm and sincere congratulations on your election as president of this session of the United Nations General Assembly.

through the Pacific Islands Forum - under its security mechanism as enshrined in "the Biketawa Declaration" responded to Solomon Islands' nine-one-one (911) call.

This regional security mechanism is in harmony with the spirit of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. The Mission led by our bigger regional neighbour Australia and strongly supported by New Zealand and other Pacific Islands Forum member countries went beyond mere restoration of law and order and security. In a spirit of Pacific cooperation and partnership (between Solomon Islands and Pacific Islands Forum member countries), a long-term approach of strengthening the country's state institutions was set in place, thus allowing the processes of healing, reconstruction, rehabilitation and nation building to continue the course of unifying Solomon Islands' less than half a million (but diversified) people who speak some eighty different local languages.

The success of the Regional Assistance to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) in promptly stabilizing the country within a period of three months - collecting some 3,700 weapons without a shot being fired - presents a fine example of the significance of regional co-operation to resolve conflict situations. On this note, I wish to pay tribute to all our Pacific neighbors, UNDP, Human Rights Commission, WHO, European Union, the Republic of China (on Taiwan), Japan, United Kingdom, International Red Cross and the civil society – who have assisted and are continuing to assist in the process of our country's on-going recovery and rehabilitation.

I must also underscore my belief and conviction, that in order for peace to be achieved it must be desired, and, importantly, might I add, a workable mechanism must be there to ensure its realization and sustenance. In this regard, my Government is fully convinced that the positive results achieved by our partnership with RAMSI could be sustained through our recently adopted National Economic Recovery, Reform and Development Strategy (NERRDP) which provides a blue print for an integrated process of development and

Mr. President,

On the issue of Palestine, my delegation subscribes to the view that resolution of the Middle East conflict can only be possible through negotiations. It is in this spirit, that we call upon all parties to abide by the quartet's road-map for peace, and, urge a halt to all acts of aggression.

Turning to the global fight against terrorism, the recent terrorist attacks especially in Iraq, Indonesia, and the Beslan School in Southern Russia manifests the continuing menace and evil of terrorism at large. We have witnessed many innocent lives, including children and women, being lost due to these senseless terror attacks. My delegation offers its deepest condolences to those who have lost loved ones during these uncondonable incidents. Solomon Islands condemn in the strongest possible terms such acts of terror and fully support international efforts to combat this scourge. In this regard, I also wish to join others .in calling on the global community to support small states to build their national capacities toward ongoing efforts aimed at combating transnational crimes such as arms smuggling, drug trafficking, people smuggling, money laundering, and terrorism.

Mr. President,

The Charter of the United Nations promotes the economic and social progress of member states especially those facing special developmental problems. For a country recovering from a post-conflict situation, Solomon Islands considers international frameworks such as the Brussels Programme of Action for LDCs, and, the Barbados Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as vehicles for enhancing peace and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Solomon Islands is a (SIDS) and an (LDC), where its development challenges are multifacet in nature. Unfortunately, the level of international cooperation envisaged for the programmes, either have not materialized or have been minimal. Despite this, my government is undertaking reforms that include the appointment of a National Focal Point for the Brussels Programme of Action. Hence, we are hopeful that with better coordination Solomon Islands can take full advantage of and maximize all opportunities the programme has to offer.

The issue of debt servicing continues to present challenges albeit obstacles to the development programmes of many poor developing states. Debt burdens continue to divert attention in national budgets away from the development of necessary infrastructures and the delivery of basic and essential social services. Solomon Islands therefore calls on the international community give greater attention to the issue of debts.

Mr. President,

Solomon Islands attach much importance to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and these have been mainstreamed into our National Economic Recovery, Reform and Development Plan (NERRDP). While we will use the 2005 high level event mentioned in the Secretary General's 2004 Report on the Implementation of the MDGs to take stock of our progress, we are confident that the NERRDP can serve as a road-map for the medium to long-term implementation of our commitments. The NERRDP provides a useful framework within which important issues such as economic and institutional reforms, good

governance, upholding of democracy and its values of freedom, and, respect for the basic principles of human rights can be nurtured and harnessed for the betterment and improvement of the livelihood of our peoples and society, including the sustenance of peace in our country.

Solomon Islands would like to pay closer attention to the emerging health threats it faces. In particular, Malaria remains the predominant cause of death of amongst children in Solomon Islands. The lack of data on HIV/AIDS presents a threat to the country and has the potential of having a devastating impact on its economy and social structure. With the support of the WHO, Aids Global Fund and Japan, we are determined to put in place appropriate and preventive actions.

Mr. President,

Solomon Islands, which, is geographically scattered across some 1800 kilometers, comprising of almost a thousand of small islands and atolls, has an agriculture-based economy that is dependant on the environment. Sustainable management of resources is essential to guaranteeing the security of our future generation.

The recent hurricanes that hit the Southern United States, Bahamas, Grenada, Haiti, and Jamaica in the Caribbean over the past few days and cyclone Hieta which devastated Niue, flooding in Fiji and continuous heavy rains in Solomon Islands all bring home the stark reality of our worlds vulnerability to natural disasters. Solomon Islands understands the great challenges and pain which smaller island developing states face in dealing with the magnitude and impact of such disasters and the challenges of recovering. To this end, we share our condolences and sympathy for the loss of lives and properties caused by the recent cyclones in Grenada and Haiti and would urge the international community to assist in relief efforts to those that are affected.

Generally, Solomon Islands strongly feels that more could be done by the international community toward safeguarding our environment. Hence, we acknowledge the partnership of the Global Fund in assisting the environmental programmes globally, and would encourage that the focus of further assistance should extend to other sectors of sustainable development such as energy, water and sanitation.

My delegation has closely followed the review of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) and the development of a G77 Strategy paper. Whilst negotiations are still on-going, Solomon Islands as a member of AOSIS acknowledges that the strategy paper strengthens the BPOA and places it as an action oriented programme we can all identify with. We are hopeful the Mauritius meeting will revitalize our efforts towards protecting our environment and enhancing sustainable development, including new and emerging issues which have been identified by SIDS.

Mr. President

Trade remains a significant source of economic growth and development for many developing states. Regionally, Pacific Island countries have gradually began the process of regional integration. South-South trade cooperation amongst the Forum Island Countries

has culminated in the entry into force of the Pacific Islands Trade Agreement (PICTA) last year, and the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Trade Agreement is being reviewed with the view to further broadening its scope and markets ten years since its inception. Intra-regionally, the Pacific members of the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States are negotiating an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union under the aegis of the Cotonou Convention. These developments manifest the continuing preparation by small island developing economies in the Pacific Islands Forum region for their gradual adaptation into the broader process of globalization of the world economy.

Solomon Islands notes that the recent UNCTAD XI convened mid this year in Sao Paulo, has built confidence and consensus on the ongoing multilateral trade negotiations. Solomon Islands supports the process and urges a more participatory and inclusive process which ensures that no one is left behind, especially the small and vulnerable island developing economies and least developed countries. We are mindful that the inherent structural

Mr. President,

To conclude, I would like to call upon this august body to get real and confront the increasingly varied and complex challenges we face today. The purpose and role of the United Nations is ultimately to create a peaceful, just and prosperous world that offers hope to all. This requires that the organization is made flexible, innovative and responsive to the ever-changing global demands and hence, the onus is upon us to make bold and tough decisions that would breathe new life into our organization.

I thank you, Mr. President.