



# SOLOMON ISLANDS STATE OF ENVIRONMENT REPORT 2008



Ministry of Environment Conservation and Meteorology  
July 2008

Prepared by;  
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Solomon Islands

For;  
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The Director of Environment and Conservation Division and his staff for the coordination and provision of relevant information,

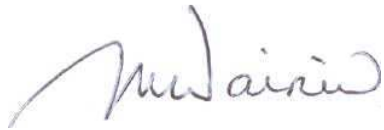
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- Ministry of Forests
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- The Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources.
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development
- As well as the Forestry Management Project operating within the Ministry of Forests.

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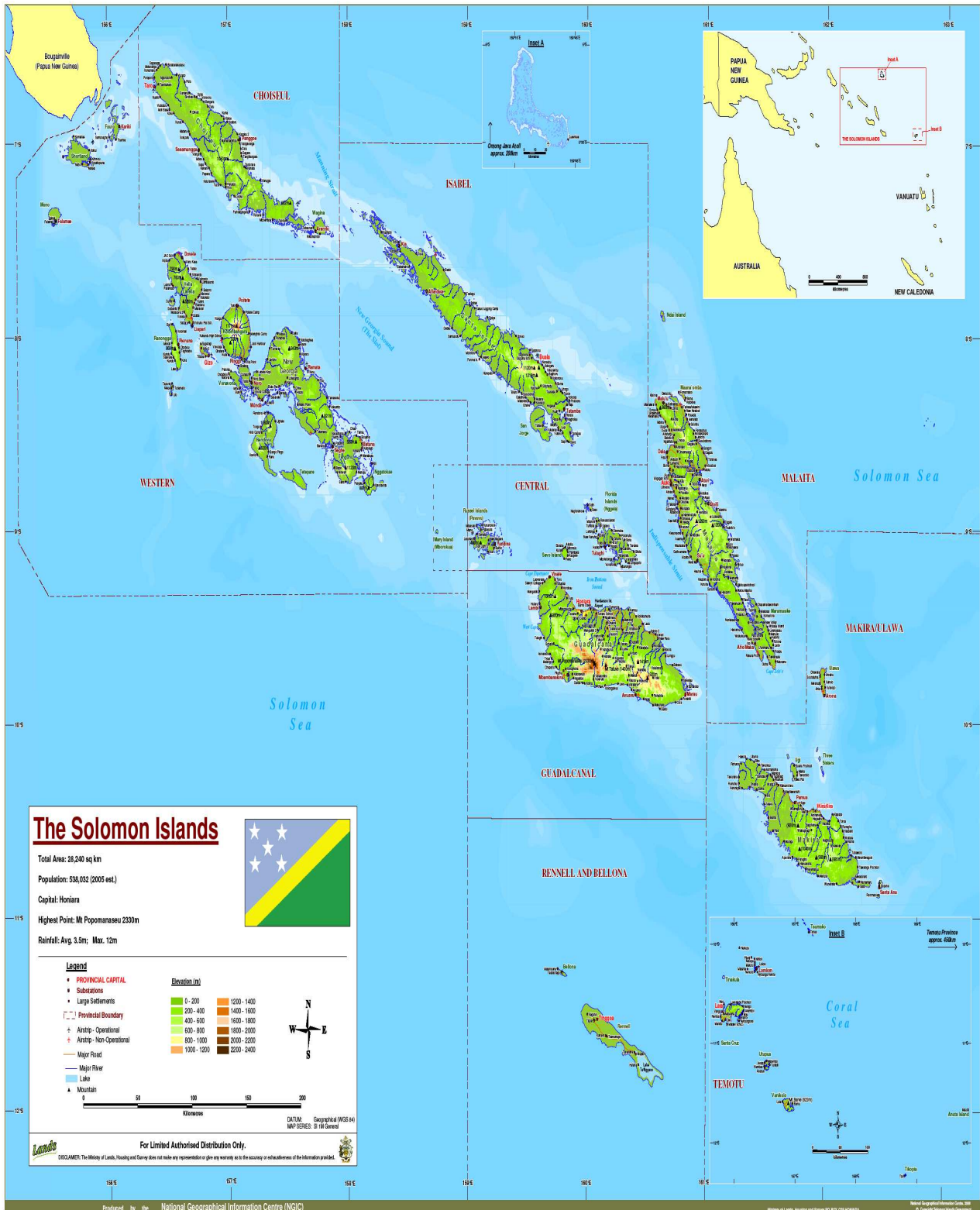
Dr Chris Filardi and Patrick Pikacha for constructive comments on the Draft Report,

and finally to staff and specialists within PHCG for assistance with the report production.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Morgan Wairiu', with a large, sweeping initial 'M'.

Dr Morgan Wairiu  
PHCG Ltd.

# SOLOMON ISLANDS MAP



## FOREWORD



The rapid pace and level of exploitation of the country's natural resources cannot be isolated from the environmental challenges with which the country is faced. At the same time, it should be remembered that environmental sustainability is critically important to the country's economic and social development. The Coalition for National Unity and Rural Advancement (CNURA) Government recognizes and attaches considerable importance to ensuring the environment and natural resources of Solomon Islands are protected, managed and sustainably used for the maximum benefit of the people and government of Solomon Islands.

The production of the State of the Environment Report for Solomon Islands through Cabinet endorsement demonstrates CNURA's commitment to promote sound environmental practices in the country. This report which fulfils Section 8 of the Environment Act 1998, is the first such report produced under that Act. The importance of this report lies in its role as a first step in identifying the major environmental issues the country is facing and informing government regarding priorities, policy options and responses to priority issues. It accomplishes this by gathering in one place, the current state of knowledge about the country's environment.

Completion of this long overdue report was identified as a priority in my Ministry's Corporate Plan 2008 – 2010, and it represents a comprehensive reference document for government, one which should enable it to make well considered decisions about increasing human activities and their effects on the environment. It should also be an important vehicle for raising awareness at all levels of government and among the donor community of the importance of environmental issues experienced by the country.

I wish to record my sincere appreciation for the outstanding and professional efforts of staff of my Ministry and in particular the Environment and Conservation Division for their hard work in coordinating the successful production of this report. Also, I wish to extend my appreciation to Pacific Horizons Consultancy Group for the work and efforts put into completing the report despite the very limited timeframe imposed to deliver this product. Its comprehensive nature is a tribute to their efforts.

As a first step in identifying environmental priorities for the country, it is my hope that the findings of the report will be used by all stakeholders in guiding their aspirations for sustainable development in Solomon Islands.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gordon Darcy Lilo'.

**Hon. Gordon Darcy Lilo, MP**

Minister of Environment, Conservation and Meteorology.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report was commissioned at the end of May 2008 with delivery of the final product by end June 2008. As such, it has been researched and written over a very compressed timeline. Considerable shortcomings and inconsistencies in data needed to be tackled in this period, and so a rapid desk assessment approach was used with limited opportunity for peer review and feedback.

Information was limited and the report depends significantly on grey literature and unpublished materials produced by a range of organizations within the country. Although not satisfactory from a formal scientific viewpoint, this information has been used wherever it is deemed credible and preferable to no information at all.

Detailed description of the current status of the environment is given with equal focus on both the terrestrial and marine environments. It also includes minerals and mining, land resources and soils. The report highlights the country's development reliance on the environment from both subsistence and monetized perspectives, and the significant impacts of this reliance on the status of the environment.

A brief overview of the national and environmental context is provided to set the scene for further synthesis and analysis of the causes of environment changes or trends and associated consequences. Major causes include rapid population growth and pressures, commercial plantation agriculture and forestry, logging, urbanization, mining fishing, pollution, energy production and use and climate change. The socioeconomic changes visited on Solomon Islands due to environmental change include: Fresh water stress, soil stress and degradation, forest depletion, loss of biodiversity, fish stock depletion and coral reef degradation. The social, cultural and economic changes include: urban drift, diet change, malnutrition and diseases,

community conflict over resources, and shifting cultivation intensification.

Current or ongoing national programmes are presented which include both national initiatives and those under international environmental agreements which Solomon Islands is a signatory. These are mainly enabling activities which include development of strategies and capacity assessments to meet the country's obligations under the conventions. They do however, complement and directly support national initiatives and environment protection and management.

The current institutional arrangements, policy and legal framework for environment protection and management are also described. It highlighted weak institutional capacity, inadequate legal framework and lack of clear policy directives to manage and safeguard the countries environment and resources there in. As a result, the country's resources have been over used with little benefit to the country.

Major environmental issues were highlighted, major barriers identified and set of recommendations made to adopt broader national policy and development on environment and recognized the importance of environmental management and protection.

## ACRONYMS

AAGR	Average Annual Growth Rate
APACE	Appropriate Technology for the Community and Environment
ARDS	Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy
AMCA	Arnavon Marine Conservation Area
BD	Biological Diversity
BSSE	Bismarck Solomon Seas Ecoregion
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	Community Based Organisations
CBSI	Central Bank of Solomon Islands
CDC	Commonwealth Development Corporation
CI	Conservation International
CITES	Convention on Illegal Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
CNURA	Coalition for National Unity and Rural Advancement
CST	Central Solomons Terrain
CUSO	Canadian University Services Overseas
EBA	Endemic Bird Area
ECD	Environment and Conservation Division
EEZ	Economic Exclusion Zone
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIS	Environment Impact Statement
EPPCL	Eagon Pacific Plantation Company Limited
EHD	Environmental Health Division
EA	Enabling Activity
ECD	Environment and Conservation Division
FSM	Federated State of Micronesia
FSPI	Foundation for the People of South Pacific International
GCC	Grand Coalition for Change
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GPPOL	Guadalcanal Plains Palm Oil Limited
ICLARM	International Centre for Living Aquatic Resources Management
INGOs	International Non-Government Organizations
IUCN	World Conservation Union
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KFPL	Kolombangara Forest Products Limited
kW	Kilo-Watt (Thousands of Watts of power)
LMMA	Locally-Managed Marine Area
LMOs	Living Modified organisms
MECM	Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Meteorology
NAPA	National Adaptation Plan of Action
NBF	National Bio-safety Framework
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NCSA	National Capacity Self-Assessment

NERRDP	National Economic Recovery, Reform and Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIS	National Implementation Strategy
OFCF	Overseas Fishery Co-operation Foundation of Japan
OJPT	Ontong Java Plateau Terrain
PER	Public Environment Report
PHCG	Pacific Horizon Consultancy Group
RIPEL	Russell Islands Plantation Estates Limited
RR	Restricted Range
SIEA	Solomon Islands Electricity Authority
SIFMP	Solomon Islands Forest Management Project
SIG	Solomon Islands Government
SILMMA	Solomon Islands Locally Managed Marine Areas Network
SIPL	Solomon Islands Plantation Limited
SIVB	Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau
SIVEC	Solomon Islands Village Electrification Council
SIWA	Solomon Islands Water Authority
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SOE	State of Environment
SOPAC	South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission
SPPL	Sylvania Plantation Products Limited
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SSMT	South Solomon MORB Terrain
TDA	Tetepare Descendants Association
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United States
VFEP	Village First Electrification Programme
WPTA	Western Province Tourism Association
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

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