

# **Solomon Islands National Report for**

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Third International Small Island Developing  
States Conference on Sustainable Development

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## Executive Summary

This is a preparatory report for the Solomon Islands towards the Small Islands Developing States (SIDs) Sustainable Development (SD) Conference in Samoa next year. The report assessed substantive issues pertinent to the 4 conference objectives (assess progress & gaps, seek political commitment, identify new and emerging challenges and opportunities, and priorities for the conference), identified key issues and barriers to the implementation of the conference objectives, and practical and pragmatic actions at the country level, and identified opportunities for cooperative partnerships.

Progress towards meeting commitments under the Barbados Plan of Actions (BPOA) and the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (MSI) was reportedly low. However; notable milestones of progress have been achieved in the recent three years. Political commitment is paramount to sustaining the high visibility of sustainable development and equitable allocation of national resources for SD initiatives. To this end, Solomon Islands has demonstrable internal political commitment evidenced by the progress it has made in spite of the constraints it faces.

Nevertheless, more needs to be done by building upon the gains of past efforts, learning from short-comings, embracing challenges, harnessing the opportunities, prioritising interventions and implementing them accordingly. Additionally the international community especially developed countries also need to meet their commitment to assist SIDs such as the Solomon Islands with implementation of their SD plans.

The priorities of the Solomon Islands for the 2014 Conference centres on the economic pillar of SD with a clear intention to provide the necessary resources to address the environmental and social protection pillars. Listed below is a synthesis of priorities derived from relevant national policy documents:

- Equitable and Sustainable Rural and General Economic Development
- Good Governance and Leadership at all levels
- Invest in Human Resources, Education Infrastructure and Institutional Development
- Improve Health and Medical Services
- Improve Water Supply and Sanitation
- Law and Order and Peaceful Country
- Improve Social and Cultural Services
- Promote Green Growth
- Improve the Integrity of Marine and Oceans Environment and Resources
- Increase Education and Employment Opportunities
- Sustainability of Livelihood and Access to Basic Infrastructure and Services
- Environment Protection and Resource Management

- Invest in Renewable Energy Resources to progressively replace fossil fuel use for electricity generation
- Enhance ICT Connectivity
- Promote Private Sector Development
- Promote and Develop the Tourism Sector
- Promote and Invest in Sustainable Agriculture for National Food and Water Security
- Promote and Invest in Sustainable Oceanic Fisheries through measures such as expanding pole and line, onshore landing and processing of catch, investment in the local fishing industry and ensuring appropriate infrastructure to support fisheries development.
- Build on the Gains from MDGs, MSI and Rio+20 outcomes
- Merge the Inter-Governmental Processes of MDGs and SD goals
- Cost Effective and Sustainable Service Delivery Modality for SD goals

In addition to these national priorities, the Solomon Islands remains convinced that SIDs are special cases of SD given their unique environmental, social and economic vulnerabilities; nevertheless, they also possess varying degrees of resilience against their vulnerabilities. Consequently, the international community should continue and increase its assistance to SIDs to enable meet their SD goals and commitments under internationally agreed SD programmes such as the MSI.

The key barriers of meeting the objectives of the conference centre mainly on the lack of comprehensive national assessment framework covering both government and non-government institutions, and sustaining political commitment for SD.

Challenges and opportunities for SD are driven by both internal and external factors. The challenges are numerous but are not entirely new and processes are already place to address some of them. Challenges such as the abuse of the cultural practice of compensation and corruption which are driven primarily by internal factors (within the control of the country) should be prioritised for appropriate action. Likewise, there are also numerous opportunities and the key ones are as follows: heighten the awareness of political parties and groups about SD, equitable allocation of development budget to all 3 pillars of SD consistent with national priorities, build on gains of past development efforts, merge reporting and assessment processes for SD goals and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), promote and utilise green growth to underpin economic development, promote education for sustainable development as a means to orient future generation towards SD, and harness local cultures and their hybrids to promote SD on the ground.

Immediate practical and pragmatic actions to aid the implementation of the BPOA and MSI lie on the implementation of the national development strategy, and maintenance of a conducive enabling environment through peace and security, giving equitable budget allocation to all pillars of SD, elimination of corruption and increasing the capacity of relevant government agencies with functions aimed at

eliminating corruption, and promotion of racial and gender sensitive development policies.

There are many opportunities for cooperative partnerships. However, any cooperative partnership the Solomon Islands is a party to should accrue quantifiable benefits. In terms of the MSI themes, the following are particularly amenable to cooperative partnerships: Climate Change and Sea Level Rise, International Trade and Development Finance, Management of Wastes, Health, Science and Technology, and Information and Communication Technologies.

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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BPOA	Barbados Plan of Actions
CBSI	Central Bank of Solomon Islands
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
NDS	National Development Strategy
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MECDM	Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDPAC	Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination
MSI	Mauritius Strategy of Implementation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
SBD	Solomon Islands Dollar
SD	Sustainable Development
SINU	Solomon Islands National University
SIDs	Small Islands Developing States
SKM	Sinclair Knight Merz
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USP	University of the South Pacific

## Introduction

This report was prepared in line with Solomon Islands preparations for the Third International Conference on Sustainable Development (SD) of Small Islands Developing States (SIDs) to be held in 2014. The above conference was mandated under the UN General Assembly resolution A/C.2/67/L.40 with the following objectives:

- Assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the Barbados Plan of Actions (BPOA) and Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (MSI) building on *inter alia* existing reports and relevant processes;
- Seek renewed political commitment by all countries to effectively address the special needs and vulnerabilities of SIDs by focussing on practical and pragmatic actions for the further implementation of the BPOA and MSI, *inter alia* through mobilisation of resources and assistance for SIDs;
- Identify new and emerging challenges and opportunities for the SD of SIDs and ways and means to address them including through the strengthening of collaborative partnerships between SIDs and the international community;
- Identify priorities for the SD of SIDs for consideration, as appropriate, in elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda.

In particular this report addresses the following areas:

- Discuss substantive issues relating to the conference objectives.
- Identify the key issues and barriers to addressing the objectives of the 2014 conference;
- Practical and pragmatic actions at the country level; and
- Identify opportunities for cooperative partnerships with the international community.

This report<sup>1</sup> was prepared based on desktop review of national reports prepared in line with the BPOA and MSI, and national reports of their global partner processes such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Post-2015 development agenda and national position papers on SD. Further information was drawn from national and regional reports pertinent to the conference to which this report is prepared for, suggestions from a stakeholder consultation workshop<sup>2</sup> and written feedback from key stakeholders including civil society organisations.

## Progress in the implementation of BPOA and MSI

The approach taken to assess the progress in terms of the implementation and the BPOA and the MSI was to review the conclusions of the pertinent national assessment reports.

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<sup>1</sup> A major drawback to this report is the limited time frame available to the author to prepare the report. An amended process described herein was agreed upon after consultation with MDPAC and UNDP.

<sup>2</sup> See Annex 1 for a summary of issues raised in the workshop.

The Rio+20 report reported some progress towards meeting commitments made in international and regional processes for SD especially in climate change and biodiversity conservation. Overall, it concluded that the progress was low and fell short of meeting its commitments mainly due to the skewed focus on the economic pillar of SD, which inadvertently relegates the social and environmental pillars to becoming secondary priorities.

The skewed focus was also evident in the 2013 development budget, where development estimates when classified according to their contribution to functions of government showed the dominance of the economic

pillar in terms of fund allocation (see Table 1). Whereas the economic pillar was allocated close to 35% of the development budget, the allocations to environmental and social protection are both under 1%. The skewed funding allocation was also observed to be an on-going practice. On the other hand, the sum of the allocations to those development categories with cross-cutting and enabling functions can also be considered to be also supporting all three pillars and therefore reduce the disparities in development budget allocation across SD pillars.

**Text Box 1**

The Rio + 20 report (2011) being the latest report directly related to both the BPOA and the MSI concluded as follows:

The consensus reached regarding progress towards SD and elimination of poverty is that in both, the progress is low and fell short of meeting commitments made in the international SD process originating from the Earth Summit in 1992. The factors responsible for the low progress are numerous, and tied closely with the predominant development paradigm where economic growth is given more importance over the other two pillars of SD and the Solomon Islands' increasing vulnerability to economic, social and environmental maladies and marked low endogenous capacity to adequately address them.

**Table 1. 2013 Development Budget Estimates**

<b>Development Budget Category</b>	<b>Estimate \$ SBD</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Rationalised against 3 pillars of SD</b>
General Public Service	\$392,838,407	19.4	Cross-cutting and enabling
Public Order & Safety	\$187,860,663	9.3	Cross-cutting and enabling
Economic Affairs	\$707,320,452	34.9	Economic Pillar

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