



# People With Disability Solomon Islands (PWDSI)

P.O Box 331

DSE Building Lombi Crescent Street, New Chinatown.

Honiara, Solomon Islands

Phone: (+677)25608

Email: pwdsimanager@gmail.com

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### 1.1. People with Disability Solomon Islands overview of activities

People with Disabilities Solomon Islands (PWDSI) is the National Disabled Peoples' Organization, registered under the Charitable Trusts Act (Cap 115) in October 2003. The organization's mission is to promote and advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities in Solomon Islands. PWDSI is a founding member of the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), the regional focal body for disability which aims at building the capacity of Disabled Peoples' Organizations in the Pacific. PWDSI established Self Help Groups in six of the nine provinces in the country in collaboration with Solomon Islands Deaf and Blind Associations and the Blind and vision impaired association. In addition to supporting its members, it empowers two working Committees on Women and Youth with Disabilities groups. These working committees are responsible for advocacy and awareness programs and organizing of annual events such as the International Days of Persons with Disabilities. In 2015, PWDSI on behalf of about 70,000 persons with disabilities also submitted an Universal Periodical Review Report (UPR) as a joint submission together with other Civil Society Organizations to the Committee.

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### 3. Executive Summary

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The report highlights the key human rights issues affecting persons with disabilities in Solomon Islands. People with Disabilities Solomon Islands (PWDSI) calls on the National government to immediately ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. PWDSI observed that people with disabilities are facing increasing challenges in resources allocation and services provided by the National Government. However, despite the government's commitment to address disability issues, there is little that the National government has done for disability. Few Disability Inclusive Policies have been developed, but the government is not committed to quickly endorsing the policies so that it will consider disability issues in its implementation plans.

### 4. Introduction

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- 4.1. Since the development of the Universal Periodic Review in 2015, the government of Solomon Islands signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability in 2008 and its optional protocol in 2009. PWDSI acknowledged the National Government for its signatory efforts, however more efforts are needed to ensure the promotion, protection and the realization of the rights of persons with Disability.
- 4.2. PWDSI brings to the Human Rights Council, an alternative view on actions to improve the Human Rights situation for Solomon Islands, specifically the rights of People with Disabilities. This report applied a desk review method, collating information from the following documents: Solomon Island National Disability Policy (now known as the Solomon Islands National Disability Inclusive Development Policy). Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review for Solomon Islands (2016).
- 4.3. This alternative UPR report will focus on six key issues: **1).** Non ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability. **2).** Lack of resources committed to support the implementation of the national disability inclusive development policy. **3).** National coordination between the Government and Civil Society Organizations. **4)** National Disability Bill Government commitment to towards the Solomon Islands Disability Inclusive Education Policy. **5).** Government commitment towards the Solomon Islands Disability Inclusive Education Policy. **6)** Endorsement of Gender Mainstreaming Policies.
- 4.4. PWDSI acknowledged the technical support and capacity building provided by the Pacific Community – SPC Human Rights and Social Development Division and the Pacific Disability

Forum in compiling this report.

## 5. Issues and Recommendations:

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### 5.1. Issue 1: Non-Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

**5.1.1.** The Republic of Korea, Philippines, Mexico, Algeria, France, Slovenia and Panama through the A/HRC/32/14, cycle 2, page 20, recommendations 100.24, 100.25, 100.26, 100.27, 100.28, called upon the Government of Solomon Islands to immediately ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. PWDSI acknowledges the national government for its endorsement of the National Health Strategic plan 2016 to 2020<sup>1</sup> that referred to rights of People with Disability and ratification of the CRPD. A ratification consultation by UNESCAP and the Pacific Disability Forum was undertaken in 2017 to support the disability focal ministry, i.e. Ministry of Health and Medical Services in its effort to push forth ratification. The joint effort provided a ratification brief to the Ministry of Health and Medical Services. The consultation was carried out across government ministries and the DPOs. PWDSI is, however, concerned that despite previous UPR recommendations, and the fact that this is the third call by PWDSI to the Solomon Islands Government to ratify the CRPD, it has not done so.

#### 5.1.2. Recommendation

**5.1.2.1.** The Solomon Islands People with Disability Community through the PWDSI strongly calls on the Solomon Islands Government to immediately ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

### 5.2. Issue 2. National Government endorsement of the revised National Disability Policy

**5.2.1.1.** PWDSI is currently collaborating with the Government to review the Solomon Islands National Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2015 -2018 (SINDID Policy 2015-2018). The policy aims to shift the health model of disability to a people-centered model, and with a Human Rights Based Approach. PWDSI is concerned, however, that the SINDID Policy 2015-2018 was never endorsed by Cabinet. The lack of commitment to endorse this national policy reflects a lack of responsive government to address the needs and rights of people with disabilities. Moreover, PWDSI is concerned that the executive arm of the legislature has not put a measure in place to endorse the revised policy. Through its inclusive budget analysis work with the Pacific Disability Forum, the Government's spending on persons with disabilities as a share of GDP is below 0.05. The spending is centred around the three social ministry – Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, Ministry of Health and Medical Services and Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs between 2018 - 2020. However, it is difficult to ascertain how much is spend for the inclusion and

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<sup>1</sup> Solomon Islands National Health Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.daisi.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Strategic-Plan-for-Solomon-Islands-2016-2010.pdf>

participation of persons with disabilities as data are not disaggregated.

#### **4.2.2. Recommendations:**

4.2.2.1 . The Solomon Islands People with Disability Community through the PWDSI calls on the government to urgently:

1. Endorse the revised Solomon Islands National Disability Inclusive Development Policy.
2. Through the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, develop a costed implementation plan and allocate budgetary and human resource for the implementation of the new Solomon Islands National Disability Inclusive Development Policy including resourcing of the Organisation's of Persons with Disabilities.
3. Establish a Coordination Council and Secretariat to ensure effective implementation, monitoring and coordination of all Disability programs, projects and activities in the country.

### **5.3. Issue 3: National coordination between National Government and Civil Society Organizations**

**5.3.1.** According to World Health Organization (2018), Disability is diverse, and while some health conditions are associated, People with Disabilities have the same general health care needs as everyone else and need to access mainstream health care services. Therefore, disability is also a human rights issue. PWDSI recognizes the need and urgency for the Ministry of Health and Medical Services to work collectively with other relevant ministries and civil society organizations to immediately take proactive steps to address human rights issues affecting people with disabilities. From PWDSI's professional experiences a coordinated mechanism through a formal partnership agreement will strengthen coordination, collaboration, mutual respect and understanding with PWDSI, other relevant CSOs and Government agencies.

#### **5.3.2. Recommendation**

5.3.2.1. The Solomon Islands People with Disability Community through the PWDSI calls on the National Government through the Ministry of Health and Medical Services to urgently develop a partnership agreement with Civil Society Organizations working to promote the rights of people with disabilities.

### **5.4. Issue 4: National Disability Bill**

**5.4.1.** According to the MHMS National Health Strategic Plan 2016-2020, objective 8.2 specifies the development of a Disability Act by 2018 to ensure all health services and facilities are accessible to People with Disabilities. PWDSI acknowledges the government for making this commitment in its policy, however it is concerning that the government through the MHMS has done nothing regarding the Bill to give effect to the implementation of the above strategic plan. The effort of the Government through the Ministry of Health and Medical Services is commended for the comprehensive review of all pieces of laws and regulations in 2018. The review was undertaken by UNESCAP in partnership with the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS) in 2018. The findings would guide the improvement of the draft National Disability Bill or even draft a CRPD compliant legislation that will uphold the rights

of all persons with disabilities in Solomon Island.

#### **5.4.2. Recommendation**

- 5.4.2.1. The Solomon Islands People with Disability Community through the PWDSI recommends that the National Government through the MHMS to Collaborate with PWDSI, Ministry of Justice and Legal Services (MJLA) and other key stakeholders to immediately begin work on the proposed Disability Bill, using the findings of the legislative reviews to inform the Disability Bill in compliant with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This will promote and protect the rights of all persons with disabilities from all forms of discrimination and promote full participation of their lives and development in the country.

### **5.5. Issue 5: National Government commitment towards the Solomon Islands Disability Inclusive Education Policy**

- 5.5.1. PWDSI collaborated with the Government to develop “The Solomon Islands Disability Inclusive Education Policy”, under the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD). Despite its endorsement from the National Education Board in 2017, the policy is yet to be submitted to Cabinet.

#### **5.5.2. Recommendation**

- 5.5.2.1. The Solomon Islands People with Disability Community through the PWDSI recommends that the National Government urgently endorse the Solomon Islands Disability Inclusive Education Policy and ensure commitment in budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Education for the inclusion of children and persons with disabilities attain the highest level of education.

### **5.6. Issue 6: Endorsement of Gender Mainstreaming Policies**

- 5.6.1. PWDSI acknowledges the efforts of the Solomon Islands Government to advance gender mainstreaming in its Education Policy, Gender in Leadership Policy and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy (GESI), it provides an enabling environment to advance the rights of People with Disabilities. However, PWDSI recognizes that the mentioned policies still need Cabinet endorsement.

#### **5.6.2. Recommendation**

- 5.6.2.1. The Solomon Islands People with Disability Community through the PWDSI recommends that the National Government urgently endorse the relevant gender policies and provide respective budgetary allocation for its implementation including specific allocation for the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities across the program cycle.