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## Solomon Islands

The present report is a compilation of the information contained in reports of the treaty bodies and special procedures, including observations and comments by the State concerned, in reports of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and in other relevant official United Nations documents. It is presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints. For the full texts, please refer to the documents referenced. The report does not contain any opinions, views or suggestions on the part of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights other than those contained in public reports and statements issued by the Office. It follows the general guidelines adopted by the Human Rights Council in its decision 17/119. Information included herein has been systematically referenced in endnotes. The report has been prepared taking into consideration the periodicity of the review, and developments during that period.



## I. Background and framework

### A. Scope of international obligations<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. International human rights treaties<sup>2</sup>

|   | <i>Status during previous cycle</i>   | <i>Action after review</i> | <i>Not ratified/not accepted</i>  |
|---|---|----------------------------|---|
| <i>Ratification, accession or succession</i>                          | ICERD (1982)<br>ICESCR (1982)<br>CEDAW (2002)<br>CRC (1995)<br>OP-CRC-AC (signature, 2009)<br>OP-CRC-SC (signature, 2009)<br>CRPD (signature, 2008) |                            | ICCPR<br>ICCPR-OP 2<br>CAT<br>OP-CAT<br>OP-CRC-AC<br>OP-CRC-SC<br>ICRMW<br>CRPD<br>ICPPED |
| <i>Reservations and/or declarations</i>                               | ICESCR<br>(reservations: arts. 7 (a) (i), 10 (1), 13 (2) (a) and 14, 1982)  |                            |   |
| <i>Complaints procedures, inquiries and urgent action<sup>3</sup></i> | ICERD, art. 14<br>OP-ICESCR (signature, 2009)<br>OP-CEDAW, art. 8 (2002)<br>OP-CRPD (signature, 2009)   |                            | OP-ICESCR<br>ICCPR<br>ICCPR-OP 1<br>CAT<br>OP-CRC-IC<br>ICRMW<br>OP-CRPD<br>ICPPED        |

#### 2. Other main relevant international instruments

|  | <i>Status during previous cycle</i>                                | <i>Action after review</i> | <i>Not ratified</i>   |
|--|--|----------------------------|---|
| <i>Ratification, accession or succession</i> |  |                            | Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide              |
|  | Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (signature, 1998) |                            | Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court<br>Palermo Protocol <sup>4</sup> |
|  | Conventions on refugees <sup>5</sup>                               |                            | Conventions on stateless persons <sup>6</sup>                                     |

| <i>Status during previous cycle</i>   | <i>Action after review</i>                      | <i>Not ratified</i>   |
|---|---|---|
| Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and Additional Protocols I and II <sup>7</sup> |   | Additional Protocol III to the 1949 Geneva Conventions <sup>8</sup> |
| ILO Convention No. 29 <sup>9</sup>  | Seven ILO fundamental conventions <sup>10</sup> | ILO Conventions Nos. 169 and 189 <sup>11</sup>                      |
| Convention against Discrimination in Education                                      |   |   |

1. The United Nations country team noted that, since the previous universal periodic review, Solomon Islands had ratified a number of International Labour Organization (ILO) fundamental conventions.<sup>12</sup> It commended the ongoing efforts of Solomon Islands to ratify the international human rights treaties and optional protocols to which it was not yet party, as recommended in the 2011 universal periodic review,<sup>13</sup> and to implement those instruments through domestic application.<sup>14</sup> In 2014, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women encouraged Solomon Islands to consider ratifying ICCPR, CAT, ICRMW, ICPPED and CRPD,<sup>15</sup> as well as the Palermo Protocol.<sup>16</sup>

2. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) noted that, although Solomon Islands had accepted the universal periodic review recommendations to accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness,<sup>17</sup> the Government had not yet done so.<sup>18</sup> It recommended that Solomon Islands accede to those conventions.<sup>19</sup>

## B. Constitutional and legislative framework

3. The country team observed that Solomon Islands had initiated a constitutional reform process. The Constitutional Reform Unit was at the final stage of consultations. However, the timeline for when the new federal constitution would come before Parliament was not clear.<sup>20</sup>

4. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted with concern that a new draft federal constitution maintained article 15, paragraph 5, subparagraphs (c)-(e), of the current Constitution, providing for exceptions for discrimination that was based on customary law in areas such as adoption, marriage, divorce, burial, devolution of property upon death, and tenure, resumption and acquisition of land.<sup>21</sup> The Committee recommended that Solomon Islands accelerate the process of adopting the new federal constitution and include in it provisions on equality between women and men, the prohibition of direct and indirect discrimination against women and multiple and intersecting discrimination in both the public and private spheres, and sanctions, in line with articles 1 and 2 of CEDAW.<sup>22</sup>

5. That same Committee noted with concern the discriminatory provisions in the Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, the Islanders' Divorce Act, the Affiliation, Separation and Maintenance Act, the Labour Act and the Citizenship Act.<sup>23</sup> It recommended that Solomon Islands include a clause in the draft federal constitution to repeal all legislation that was incompatible with the principle of equality and non-discrimination, as enshrined in CEDAW, including provisions of customary law.<sup>24</sup>

6. While noting the Law Reform Commission's mandate to review and amend national legislation, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was concerned at the long delay in the adoption of necessary reforms.<sup>25</sup> Observing that the completion of work by the Law Reform Unit was constrained by human resources issues, capacity issues, change of government and priorities, political will and financial factors, the country team recommended that the Government provide the Unit with adequate resources and repeal without delay all discriminatory provisions in the Penal Code.<sup>26</sup>

7. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children visited Solomon Islands in May 2015, and noted the Government's renewed commitment to passing the child and welfare bill, which had been in draft form since 2013. The country team encouraged lobbying and advocacy on the bill, its ownership by key partner agencies and its passing in Parliament.<sup>27</sup>

### **C. Institutional and human rights infrastructure and policy measures**

8. The country team reported that in 2011, Solomon Islands had accepted seven recommendations to establish a national human rights institution;<sup>28</sup> the following year, a scoping mission to assess the feasibility of an independent institution had been conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions. The establishment of such an institution was provided for in a clause in the 2014 draft federal constitution. The country team continued to encourage Solomon Islands to establish an independent national human rights institution to coordinate, provide capacity development for and assist with strengthening human rights implementation throughout the country, and to seek support from the United Nations and the Asia Pacific Forum in that regard.<sup>29</sup>

9. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Solomon Islands take measures to ensure that the Office of the Ombudsman or another entity has a mandate to receive and address complaints by women about discrimination.<sup>30</sup>

10. In 2011, the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights, recommended that the Government adopt a national human rights action plan. Noting that Solomon Islands lacked an adequate human rights framework underpinning its development strategy and ensuring public accountability, he urged the Government to adopt a rights-based approach to the design and implementation of its national development strategy.<sup>31</sup>

## **II. Cooperation with human rights mechanisms**

11. The country team reported that the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations in 2014 noted with concern the failure of Solomon Islands to respect certain reporting obligations.<sup>32</sup>

### **A. Cooperation with treaty bodies**

12. The country team reported on the Solomon Islands National Advisory Committee on CEDAW, which the Government had established to perform an oversight and advisory role in the implementation of CEDAW and which had faced significant organizational and resource challenges. The National Advisory and Action Committee on Children, established in 1992, had faced coordination challenges, for which the United Nations Children's Fund had provided support. The country team encouraged the Government to

further support and allocate adequate resources to those committees to ensure implementation of the respective human rights treaties.<sup>33</sup>

## 1. Reporting status

| Treaty body  | Concluding observations included in previous review | Latest report submitted since previous review | Latest concluding observations | Reporting status                                     |
|--|---|---|--------------------------------|--|
| Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination        | July 1983   | -   | -                              | Second to twelfth reports overdue since 1985         |
| Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights            | November 2002                                       | -   | -                              | Second report overdue since 2005                     |
| Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women | -   | 2013  | October 2014                   | Fourth report due in 2018                            |
| Committee on the Rights of the Child                         | June 2003   | -   | -                              | Combined second and third reports overdue since 2007 |

## 2. Responses to specific follow-up requests by treaty bodies

### Concluding observations

| Treaty body  | Due in | Subject matter   | Submitted in |
|--|--------|--|--------------|
| Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women | 2016   | Legislation on discrimination against women; violence against women; retaining pregnant girls in school; education on sexual and reproductive health <sup>34</sup> | -            |

## B. Cooperation with special procedures<sup>35</sup>

|  | Status during previous cycle                                 | Current status         |
|--|--|------------------------|
| <i>Standing invitation</i>                                   | No   | Yes                    |
| <i>Visits undertaken</i>                                     | Foreign debt   | Violence against Women |
| <i>Visits agreed to in principle</i>                         | -  | -                      |
| <i>Visits requested</i>                                      | -  | -                      |
| <i>Responses to letters of allegation and urgent appeals</i> | During the period under review, no communications were sent. |                        |

### **C. Cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

13. The country team reported that the OHCHR Regional Office for the Pacific had provided Solomon Islands with technical assistance for its universal periodic review reports. That assistance included training on the universal periodic review, jointly conducted by OHCHR, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's Regional Rights Resource Team in 2014, and the deployment of a United Nations Volunteer in June 2015.<sup>36</sup>

## **III. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law**

### **A. Equality and non-discrimination**

14. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences reported that women generally had a lower social status than men and faced inequality and discrimination in many aspects of life, including in politics, education and access to economic resources. Women were mainly valued in their traditional roles as mothers and homemakers, and were expected to be submissive and obedient in the family, with men commonly resorting to physical violence to "discipline" women who did not conform to their expected roles.<sup>37</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed alarm at the high levels of social acceptance of violence against women and women's reluctance to report violence.<sup>38</sup> The Special Rapporteur reported on the practice of bride price as a factor fuelling situations of violence against women and limiting avenues for women to escape abusive relationships, in that families who received such payment were reluctant to provide support or receive back abused women in the family home, as that would entail paying compensation or returning the goods or money received for the marriage.<sup>39</sup>

15. The Special Rapporteur recommended that the Government: provide for temporary special measures, including quotas and preferential treatment, to advance women's integration into education and the economy, and provide incentives to increase the employment of women in both the public and the private sectors,<sup>40</sup> design and launch targeted awareness-raising campaigns to educate and change social attitudes, particularly those that attribute women with a lower social status to that of men; and support, strengthen and replicate awareness-raising and sensitization programmes on women's human rights and violence against women for local community authorities.<sup>41</sup>

16. The country team reported that while both the National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development and the National Policy on Ending Violence against Women were mainstreamed through the establishment of gender focal points in key line ministries, there remained ambiguity around responsibilities, issues relating to limited resources and a lack of clear monitoring objectives for the implementation of those policies. The country team encouraged the effective implementation of both national policies through coordination, advocacy, awareness-raising and resource allocation.<sup>42</sup>

17. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women welcomed the intention of Solomon Islands to revise the National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development with a view to incorporating the Committee's concluding observations.<sup>43</sup> The country team reported that, at the request of the Government, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women would

continue to support and provide technical assistance for the formulation of a strategy to implement the recommendations contained in the Committee's concluding observations.<sup>44</sup>

18. UNHCR noted that discriminatory provisions in the Citizenship Act of 1978 might create a risk of statelessness for women who opted for the nationality of their foreign husband and for foreign women married to a Solomon Islands national.<sup>45</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women urged Solomon Islands to repeal without delay all the discriminatory provisions of the Act concerning the acquisition, transmission, retention and loss of nationality, and ensure that both mothers and fathers are able to transmit their nationality to their children.<sup>46</sup>

19. While noting that Solomon Islands had no explicit anti-discrimination laws or regulations to protect the rights of people living with HIV, the country team reported that in September 2015 the country had lifted travel restrictions for entry and stay by people living with HIV/AIDS.<sup>47</sup>

20. While noting that Solomon Islands had accepted a universal periodic review recommendation to repeal all provisions that criminalized sexual activity between consenting adults,<sup>48</sup> the country team urged the Government to bring its legislation into conformity with its commitment to equality and non-discrimination and its international human rights obligations by repealing all provisions which may be applied to criminalize same-sex activity between consenting adults.<sup>49</sup>

## **B. Right to life, liberty and security of person**

21. The country team referred to the enactment of the Corrective Services Regulations in 2014, aimed at improving the social rehabilitation of detainees and to the importance of the continued implementation of those regulations. The country team encouraged the Government to ratify CAT in order to substantively protect and guarantee the rights of detained persons.<sup>50</sup>

22. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women reported that in 2009 the ministry responsible for women, young people, children and family affairs had published a study on violence against women and children in Solomon Islands. According to the study, women were much more likely to experience such severe violence as punching, kicking or having a weapon used against them than "moderate violence".<sup>51</sup>

23. The same Special Rapporteur recommended that the Government consider as a matter of priority the enactment of a specific law on violence against women and complete, as a matter of urgency, the reform of the Penal Code to ensure, *inter alia*, the criminalization of any form of sexual violence and abuse, including the crime of marital rape; the inclusion of a broad and comprehensive definition of rape; and the elimination of any classification of sexual violence or abuse as an "offence against morality".<sup>52</sup>

24. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women welcomed the adoption of the Family Protection Act of 2014, which criminalized domestic violence.<sup>53</sup> The country team reported that sentences for violence under the Family Protection Act were lower than those under the Penal Code and that the implementation of protection orders had been problematic. It encouraged the Government to institute appropriate policies to take account of and remedy any gaps in the implementation of the Act.<sup>54</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the Government, *inter alia*, take measures to ensure that the police respond to and investigate complaints regarding violence against women and that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished, and collect data on the number of prosecutions and convictions, including at the provincial level.<sup>55</sup>

25. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women regretted that girls were subjected to child marriages and bride-selling under customary laws and that corporal punishment of children was a continuing practice affecting girls.<sup>56</sup> The Committee recommended that Solomon Islands urgently repeal customary laws that provided for child marriages and the payment of bride prices, carry out campaigns involving community leaders on those practices as harmful practices contrary to CEDAW,<sup>57</sup> and protect girls and boys from corporal punishment at home and in the community.<sup>58</sup>

26. The country team noted that the Government had launched Safenet in 2013, which comprised both government and non-governmental organizations and agencies, to provide coordinated, front-line services and support to survivors and victims of gender-based violence. Challenges included the fact that the majority of services were located in Honiara, leaving rural women without access; a lack of resources and capacity; and a lack of leadership to oversee the network.<sup>59</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the Government strengthen the Safenet referral system for women who are victims of violence, establish shelters for women in all provinces and ensure that they are accessible to all women, including women with disabilities.<sup>60</sup>

27. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Solomon Islands investigate allegations of sexual abuse and rape of schoolgirls and prosecute offenders.<sup>61</sup>

28. Concerned about the sexual exploitation of girls through pornography and the use of the bride-price system to allow temporary marriages of girls to foreign workers, the same Committee recommended that Solomon Islands ensure that the revision of the Penal Code includes amendments to criminalize sex tourism and other forms of sexual exploitation of women and girls, including the use of girls in pornography.<sup>62</sup>

29. Concerned about the sexual exploitation of girls in logging areas, the same Committee recommended that Solomon Islands prevent the exploitation of prostitution of women and girls, giving particular attention to the exploitation of prostitution in logging areas and in areas where large-scale projects were being developed, and ensure the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators.<sup>63</sup>

30. Concerned about the criminalization of women in prostitution, the same Committee recommended, *inter alia*, that Solomon Islands provide alternative income-generating activities.<sup>64</sup>

31. The country team noted the adoption in 2012 of the Immigration Act, which criminalized trafficking in persons and related crimes and provided further protection for victims of trafficking.<sup>65</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Solomon Islands strengthen the mandate and work of the Trafficking in Persons Advisory Committee.<sup>66</sup>

32. Despite women's contribution to peace-building at the community level, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted that women were not formally involved in the peace negotiations and agreements to end the ethnic tensions that occurred from 1998 to 2003.<sup>67</sup> It called upon Solomon Islands to adopt the national action plan for women and peace and security.<sup>68</sup> The country team noted that the national peacebuilding policy was still pending endorsement by the Cabinet in June 2015.<sup>69</sup>

## C. Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law

33. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women noted that the practice of customary reconciliation and compensation was of special concern in cases involving women victims of violence, particularly in the light of the patriarchal nature of traditional

systems, which rarely provided real justice to women victims. The system allowed for perpetrators to remain unaccountable for the harm they inflicted, given that cases did not reach the magistrates court.<sup>70</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the Government actively discourage the use of mediation in cases of domestic violence, monitor compensation and settlements under customary mechanisms and ensure that they do not violate CEDAW,<sup>71</sup> and develop a strategy with clear time frames to ensure that traditional justice mechanisms comply with the human rights standards set forth in CEDAW when addressing complaints by women. The strategy should include capacity-building and training programmes on CEDAW and on women's human rights for traditional justice authorities.<sup>72</sup>

34. The country team reported that services were concentrated in Honiara, including the majority of courts, magistrates, prosecutors, public solicitors and police. That created difficulties for the mostly rural population, leaving them with limited or no access to the formal justice system. While that affected all justice users, gender discrimination exacerbated the challenges for women and girls.<sup>73</sup> On women's access to justice, the country team reported that the ministries responsible for justice and legal affairs and for women, young people, children and family affairs had agreed to establish a coordination team to establish the priority activities under the Family Protection Act and develop an implementation plan. It encouraged the Government to ensure the coordination of and adequate resources for implementing agencies under the Act.<sup>74</sup>

35. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women recommended that the Government establish as one of the country's development priorities, and as a matter of urgency, the reactivation of circuit courts, in order to facilitate access to judicial services for women victims of violence living outside the capital. That should include the provision of infrastructure, human and financial resources, including an adequate number of judges, magistrates and lawyers in the provinces.<sup>75</sup> She also recommended that the Government strengthen the role of the Family Violence Support Unit of the Police.<sup>76</sup>

36. The country team reported that the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which contained the full account of the ethnic tensions and recommendations, had been submitted to the Government of Solomon Islands in February 2012.<sup>77</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women urged Solomon Islands to formally adopt and publish the findings of the Commission and adopt a framework for the implementation of its recommendations.<sup>78</sup>

37. Welcoming the Government's announcement to establish an independent anti-corruption institution, the country team committed to providing technical support in that area.<sup>79</sup>

#### **D. Right to marriage and family life**

38. Noting with concern the delay, since 1995, in the adoption of the proposals of the Law Reform Commission, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women urged Solomon Islands to prohibit any customary practices that discriminate against women in family relations,<sup>80</sup> expedite the adoption of the proposal of the Law Reform Commission to amend the Islanders' Marriage Act, the Affiliation, Separation and Maintenance Act and the Islanders' Divorce Act and adopt a unified family law guaranteeing equal rights to women and men in family relations and during and upon dissolution of a marriage.<sup>81</sup>

39. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women recommended that the Government make the necessary amendments to the Islanders' Marriages Act to establish 18 as the legal minimum age for marriage for both men and women; make the necessary

amendments to the Islanders' Divorce Act to ensure that women victims of domestic violence do not need to produce evidence as a condition prior to filing for divorce; and eliminate any discriminatory provision with regard to the payment of damages for adultery, women's entitlements to matrimonial property and the allocation of maintenance payments.<sup>82</sup>

#### **E. Freedom of expression, and the right to participate in public and political life**

40. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) encouraged Solomon Islands to introduce freedom of information legislation that accorded with international standards.<sup>83</sup>

41. The country team stated that during the general election in Solomon Islands, held in 2014, biometric voter registration had been used with great success. The country team encouraged the continuous development of capacity within the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission and relevant organizations,<sup>84</sup> and encouraged the Government to carry out programmes to raise awareness of the provisions of the Political Parties Integrity Act, 2014.<sup>85</sup>

42. The country team reported that only one woman had been elected to Parliament in the 2014 general election. However, 26 women candidates had run in the election, the highest number ever.<sup>86</sup> The Special Rapporteur on violence against women recommended that the Government take affirmative action measures;<sup>87</sup> the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended the reservation of at least 30 per cent of parliamentary seats for women.<sup>88</sup>

#### **F. Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work**

43. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Solomon Islands strengthen its collaboration with and seek technical assistance from ILO in order to improve women's access to employment opportunities.<sup>89</sup>

#### **G. Right to social security and to an adequate standard of living**

44. The Independent Expert on foreign debt noted that social indicators in the country remained among the worst in the region, with high poverty rates, high levels of urban unemployment and gender imbalances.<sup>90</sup>

45. The Independent Expert also noted that in 1998 ethnic tensions erupted over the distribution of resources and led to the breakdown of law and order. The situation continued to be precarious until the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands intervened in July 2003. Since then, peace had been restored and considerable progress had been made in reconstruction and reform. Nevertheless, Solomon Islands remained vulnerable to conflict because many of the issues underlying the conflict remained unresolved.<sup>91</sup> Notable among those were land tenure, poor access to basic services and public resources, a narrow economic base and inequitable distribution of economic resources.<sup>92</sup>

46. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women raised many concerns regarding the situation of rural women, who accounted for 81 per cent of all women in the country.<sup>93</sup> It recommended, inter alia, that Solomon Islands raise awareness to promote the participation of rural women in decision-making processes relating to rural policies at the provincial level and ensure that training and grants for income-generating

projects implemented by the ministry responsible for agriculture and livestock reach rural women, including young women, in all provinces; facilitate rural women's access to land ownership and strengthen community-based associations representing rural women's economic interests; and ensure gender equality in the distribution of income and profit generated from land appropriated or leased for the purpose of large-scale commercial projects.<sup>94</sup>

47. The country team reported that, owing to limited land availability and lack of city planning, the provision of decent housing in Honiara remained a challenge. Approximately 35 per cent of Honiara residents (about 3,000 households or 22,000 people) lived in informal settlements. An assessment on climate change vulnerability and adaptation in 2013 had highlighted that those settlements were vulnerable to climate change impacts because the settlements were unplanned and often lacked adequate facilities and services, such as footpaths, power, sanitation and water, and garbage collection.<sup>95</sup>

48. The country team observed that two thirds of rural Solomon Islanders still defecated in the open, the highest number in the Pacific subregion, while only 15 per cent of rural households used improved sanitation facilities. Beyond the health impacts of open defecation, the practice exposed women and children to increased risk of abuse and indignity. Women in Honiara's poorest communities faced particularly high risks of physical and sexual violence, especially when collecting water, bathing or using toilets at night.<sup>96</sup> The country team noted that the Government had endorsed a national policy, in 2014, and a national implementation strategy, for the period 2015-2019, for rural water, sanitation and hygiene. National standards for rural water supply and sanitation design and construction were also being developed.<sup>97</sup>

## **H. Right to health**

49. The country team observed that increasing access to health services was challenging in Solomon Islands, given the country's largely subsistence population, dispersed across many islands, and the minimal infrastructure and transport links. There was limited access to immunization and other health services, a weak outreach system, poor health infrastructure management and accountability and unclear reporting lines. The attitudes of the health workers and the status of the health facilities also limited use of health services.<sup>98</sup> Infant and child mortality rates in Solomon Islands remained among the highest in the Pacific region.<sup>99</sup>

50. The country team reported that Solomon Islands was reviewing and updating its National Population Policy, a process that aimed to, inter alia, incorporate into the Policy perspectives from the provinces.<sup>100</sup> The country team encouraged the Government to improve the quality of family planning services, commodities and information.<sup>101</sup> It also encouraged Solomon Islands to continue to support the strengthening of the health system, including in respect of responding to gender-based violence.<sup>102</sup>

51. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Solomon Islands amend its legislation to decriminalize abortion in cases of rape, incest, risk to the health of the mother or severe foetal impairment.<sup>103</sup>

## **I. Right to education**

52. UNESCO reported that Solomon Islands had adopted an Education Strategic Framework (2007-2015) and was reviewing its Education Act.<sup>104</sup> It recommended that Solomon Islands be encouraged to: further provide education for all, particularly by implementing inclusive education programmes for women, children and persons with

disabilities; raise awareness of the negative aspects of corporal punishment; and further promote human rights education and training.<sup>105</sup>

53. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted with concern: the inadequate education infrastructure affecting girls in particular, including the lack of basic sanitary facilities, separate latrines for girls and the long distances that girls walked to school, thereby exposing them to increased risks of violence; the lack of dormitories for girls in rural areas and the fact that those that did exist were run without adequate security; the absence of compulsory primary education and the indirect costs of primary and secondary schooling, such as costs of transport, books, stationery and school-imposed charges, which affected girls disproportionately, given that parents with limited means often gave priority to the schooling of boys; and the high number of early pregnancies among adolescent girls, the dismissal of pregnant girls from school and the absence of re-entry policies for them after giving birth.<sup>106</sup>

54. The same Committee recommended that Solomon Islands: consider increasing the percentage of the budget allocated to education and improve sanitation facilities at schools by providing separate latrines for girls; ensure security for girls on school premises; strengthen efforts to retain girls in school, including pregnant girls, facilitate the return to school of young mothers after giving birth by adopting the policy on second-chance education under consideration and by providing adequate childcare facilities, and ensure that girls are not expelled from school because they are pregnant and impose appropriate sanctions on those responsible for such dismissals; and continue to develop and promote age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health to address early pregnancies.<sup>107</sup>

55. Reporting on the low access of girls to higher secondary schooling and solutions to reduce dropout, the country team noted the lack of plans to construct additional secondary schools and that financial support from development partners was required to address the problem.<sup>108</sup>

## **J. Persons with disabilities**

56. Concerned about the lack of public policies and measures to protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities,<sup>109</sup> the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women called upon Solomon Islands to adopt comprehensive policies and programmes to protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities, and to develop partnerships with civil society and community-based organizations and international stakeholders to identify women and girls with disabilities who were facing discrimination, as well as isolation, confinement and different forms of physical and psychological violence.<sup>110</sup>

## **K. Internally displaced persons**

57. The country team reported that in 2014 flash floods in Solomon Islands had affected about 52,000 people; about 11,000 people had been displaced to formal evacuation centres.<sup>111</sup> The floods highlighted a number of protection issues, including with regard to the design and operation of formal evacuation centres, gender representation on governance committees, delivery of health care and nutrition assistance and distribution of resources, the need for private spaces for women to change clothes or breastfeed, the physical security measures in place, instances of gender-based violence and the need for mechanisms to monitor the needs of affected populations outside of formal evacuation centres or displaced within *wantok* networks.<sup>112</sup>

58. The country team stated that Honiara-based internally displaced persons had been removed from formal evacuation centres to their province of origin — the province where they had ancestral land rights. That policy had not been implemented in a manner that supported genuinely voluntary relocations, and disproportionately affected those of Malaitan ethnic background, who had previously resided in informal settlements in Honiara. Many of those relocated under that policy had never been to Malaita, or had not resided there for 20 to 30 years. The policy had the effect of creating a number of female-headed households, as male primary income earners returned to Honiara to seek work or await the distribution of assistance packages.<sup>113</sup> The country team encouraged the Government to ensure a coordinated approach to managing evacuation centres for future disasters that incorporates a strong focus on protection issues and the situation of vulnerable and marginalized groups. The country team remained committed to providing technical assistance in mainstreaming human rights standards in humanitarian situations.<sup>114</sup>

## **L. Right to development, and environmental issues**

59. The Independent Expert on foreign debt acknowledged the numerous challenges faced by Solomon Islands in its attempts to achieve economic growth, self-sustaining development and freedom from the burden of unsustainable debt. The limitations imposed by unfavourable terms of trade, a difficult geography, a small economy heavily reliant on imports and unsustainable logging, insufficient Government revenues, an underdeveloped productive sector, and high dependency on foreign aid made the country highly vulnerable to external shocks. He also acknowledged the efforts made by the Government to address those challenges, and the support provided by development partners in that regard.<sup>115</sup>

60. The same Independent Expert noted with concern the insufficient coordination of development strategies between the Government and the donor community, as well as the lack of a regulatory environment that guaranteed a transparent, accountable and people-centred delivery of aid.<sup>116</sup> He stated that the unsatisfactory monitoring of public affairs underscored the need for the Government to urgently establish an independent mechanism to monitor the use and management of public funds and the performance of Government agencies and privatized companies, as well as aid programmes. Such a mechanism should be financially and institutionally independent and ensure effective Parliamentary oversight.<sup>117</sup>

61. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women called for the integration of a gender perspective, in accordance with the provisions of CEDAW, into all efforts aimed at the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and into the post-2015 development framework.<sup>118</sup>

62. The country team encouraged the Government of Solomon Islands to endorse the road map on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD-plus process).<sup>119</sup>

63. With reference to an accepted recommendation on adopting measures to mitigate climate change risks,<sup>120</sup> UNHCR reported that since Solomon Islands was categorized as a high-risk country for natural disasters, it would benefit from having a permanent national protection cluster in place to address displacement caused by climate change and/or natural disasters.<sup>121</sup> The country team encouraged the Government to increase understanding among key decision makers of the implications of further environmental degradation.<sup>122</sup>

*Notes*

<sup>1</sup> Unless indicated otherwise, the status of ratification of instruments listed in the table may be found on the official website of the United Nations Treaty Collection database, Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, <http://treaties.un.org/>. Please also refer to the United Nations compilation on Solomon Islands from the previous cycle (A/HRC/WG.6/11/SLB/2).

<sup>2</sup> The following abbreviations have been used in the present document:

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| ICERD      | International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination                             |
| ICESCR     | International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights  |
| OP-ICESCR  | Optional Protocol to ICESCR   |
| ICCPR      | International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights  |
| ICCPR-OP 1 | Optional Protocol to ICCPR  |
| ICCPR-OP 2 | Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty                               |
| CEDAW      | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women                                    |
| OP-CEDAW   | Optional Protocol to CEDAW  |
| CAT        | Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment                      |
| OP-CAT     | Optional Protocol to CAT  |
| CRC        | Convention on the Rights of the Child   |
| OP-CRC-AC  | Optional Protocol to CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict                                     |
| OP-CRC-SC  | Optional Protocol to CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography                    |
| OP-CRC-IC  | Optional Protocol to CRC on a communications procedure  |
| ICRMW      | International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families |
| CRPD       | Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities   |
| OP-CRPD    | Optional Protocol to CRPD   |
| ICPPED     | International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance                        |

<sup>3</sup> Individual complaints: ICCPR-OP 1, art. 1; OP-CEDAW, art. 1; OP-CRPD, art. 1; OP-ICESCR, art. 1; OP-CRC-IC, art. 5; ICERD, art. 14; CAT, art. 22; ICRMW, art. 77; and ICPPED, art. 31. Inquiry procedure: OP-CEDAW, art. 8; CAT, art. 20; ICPPED, art. 33; OP-CRPD, art. 6; OP-ICESCR, art. 11; and OP-CRC-IC, art. 13. Inter-State complaints: ICCPR, art. 41; ICRMW, art. 76; ICPPED, art. 32; CAT, art. 21; OP-ICESCR, art. 10; and OP-CRC-IC, art. 12. Urgent action: ICPPED, art. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

<sup>5</sup> 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.

<sup>6</sup> 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, and 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

<sup>7</sup> Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field (First Convention); Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea (Second Convention); Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (Third Convention); Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Convention); Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I); Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II). For the official status of ratifications, see International Committee of the Red Cross, [www.icrc.org/IHL](http://www.icrc.org/IHL).

<sup>8</sup> Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Adoption of an Additional Distinctive Emblem (Protocol III). For the official status of ratifications, see International

- Committee of the Red Cross, [www.icrc.org/IHL](http://www.icrc.org/IHL).
- <sup>9</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO) Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29).
- <sup>10</sup> ILO Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105); Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87); Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98); Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100); Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111); Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138); Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).
- <sup>11</sup> ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169); and Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).
- <sup>12</sup> Country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, p. 2.
- <sup>13</sup> For the full text of the recommendations, see A/HRC/18/8 and Corr.1, paras. 81.1 (Morocco), 81.2 (Chile), 81.3 (Argentina), 81.4 (Spain), 81.5 (Ecuador), 81.6 (Brazil), 81.7 (France), 81.8 (Maldives), 81.9 (Costa Rica), 81.10 (New Zealand), 81.11 (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), 81.12 (New Zealand), 81.13 (Slovakia), 81.14 (Canada), 81.15 (Slovenia), 81.16 (Slovakia), 81.17 (Slovakia), 81.18 (Indonesia), 81.19 (United States of America).
- <sup>14</sup> Country team submission for the review of Solomon Islands, p. 2.
- <sup>15</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 53.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., para. 27 (a).
- <sup>17</sup> For the full text of the recommendations, see A/HRC/18/8 and Corr.1, paras. 81.5 (Ecuador) and 81.16 (Slovakia).
- <sup>18</sup> UNHCR submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, p. 3.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 4.
- <sup>20</sup> Country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, p. 2.
- <sup>21</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 9.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., para. 11 (b). See also A/HRC/23/49/Add.1, para. 85 (a).
- <sup>23</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 10 (c).
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., para. 11 (c). See also A/HRC/23/49/Add.1, para. 85.
- <sup>25</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 10.
- <sup>26</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 6.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., para. 7.
- <sup>28</sup> For the full text of the recommendations, see A/HRC/18/8 and Corr.1, paras. 79.1 (Canada), 79.2 (Ireland), 79.3 (Argentina), 79.4 (Spain), 79.5 (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), 79.6 (Morocco), 79.7 (Indonesia).
- <sup>29</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 10.
- <sup>30</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 13 (f).
- <sup>31</sup> See A/HRC/17/37/Add.1, para. 101.
- <sup>32</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 13.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid., para. 11.
- <sup>34</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 54.
- <sup>35</sup> For the titles of special procedure mandate holders, see [www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Welcomepage.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Welcomepage.aspx).
- <sup>36</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 15.
- <sup>37</sup> See A/HRC/23/49/Add.1, para. 6.
- <sup>38</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 24.
- <sup>39</sup> See A/HRC/23/49/Add.1, para. 22.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid., para. 85 (c). See also CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 21.
- <sup>41</sup> See A/HRC/23/49/Add.1, para. 87 (a).
- <sup>42</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 16. See also A/HRC/23/49/Add.1, para. 85 (h).
- <sup>43</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 7.
- <sup>44</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 12.
- <sup>45</sup> See UNHCR submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, pp. 3-4 and CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 30 (a). See also country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 29.
- <sup>46</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 31.
- <sup>47</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, paras. 17-18.

- <sup>48</sup> Ibid., para. 19. For the full text of the recommendations, see A/HRC/18/8 and Corr.1, para. 80.38 (Norway).
- <sup>49</sup> Country team submission for the review of Solomon Islands, para. 19.
- <sup>50</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 20.
- <sup>51</sup> See A/HRC/23/49/Add.1, para. 15.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid., para. 85 (d) and (e).
- <sup>53</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 4 (a).
- <sup>54</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 4.
- <sup>55</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 25 (b).
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid., para. 22.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid., para. 23 (b).
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid., para. 23 (d).
- <sup>59</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 22.
- <sup>60</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 25 (d).
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid., para. 33 (b).
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid., paras. 26 and 27 (c).
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid., paras. 26 and 27 (e).
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid., paras. 26 and 27 (f).
- <sup>65</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 3.
- <sup>66</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 27 (b).
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid., para. 14.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid., para. 15.
- <sup>69</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 24.
- <sup>70</sup> See A/HRC/23/49/Add.1, para. 68.
- <sup>71</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 25 (c).
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid., para. 13 (b).
- <sup>73</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 27.
- <sup>74</sup> Ibid., para. 21.
- <sup>75</sup> See A/HRC/23/49/Add.1, para. 85 (i).
- <sup>76</sup> Ibid., para. 85 (k).
- <sup>77</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 25.
- <sup>78</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 17.
- <sup>79</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 23.
- <sup>80</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, paras. 44 (h) and 45.
- <sup>81</sup> Ibid., para. 45 (f).
- <sup>82</sup> See A/HRC/23/49/Add.1, paras. 85 (f) and (g).
- <sup>83</sup> See UNESCO submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 38.
- <sup>84</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 30.
- <sup>85</sup> Ibid., para. 8.
- <sup>86</sup> Ibid., para. 31.
- <sup>87</sup> See A/HRC/23/49/Add.1, para. 85 (b).
- <sup>88</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 29 (b).
- <sup>89</sup> Ibid., para. 35 (a).
- <sup>90</sup> See A/HRC/17/37/Add.1, para. 38.
- <sup>91</sup> Ibid., para. 37.
- <sup>92</sup> Ibid., para. 78.
- <sup>93</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 38.
- <sup>94</sup> Ibid., para. 39.
- <sup>95</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 52.
- <sup>96</sup> Ibid., para. 34.
- <sup>97</sup> Ibid., para. 32.
- <sup>98</sup> Ibid., para. 35.
- <sup>99</sup> Ibid., para. 40.
- <sup>100</sup> Ibid., para. 37.
- <sup>101</sup> Ibid., para. 38.
- <sup>102</sup> Ibid., para. 41.

- <sup>103</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 37 (e).
- <sup>104</sup> See UNESCO submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 33.
- <sup>105</sup> Ibid., para. 34, recommendations 2-4.
- <sup>106</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 32.
- <sup>107</sup> Ibid., para. 33.
- <sup>108</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 45.
- <sup>109</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 42.
- <sup>110</sup> Ibid., para. 43.
- <sup>111</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 53.
- <sup>112</sup> Ibid., para. 54.
- <sup>113</sup> Ibid., para. 55.
- <sup>114</sup> Ibid., para. 57.
- <sup>115</sup> See A/HRC/17/37/Add.1, para. 89.
- <sup>116</sup> Ibid., para. 102.
- <sup>117</sup> Ibid., para. 103.
- <sup>118</sup> See CEDAW/C/SLB/CO/1-3, para. 50.
- <sup>119</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 50.
- <sup>120</sup> For the full text of the recommendation, see A/HRC/18/8 and Corr.1, para. 81.34 (Ecuador).
- <sup>121</sup> See UNHCR submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, pp. 4-5.
- <sup>122</sup> See country team submission for the universal periodic review of Solomon Islands, para. 51.