



SOLOMON ISLANDS

STATEMENT BY

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PRIME MINISTER

**BEFORE THE PLENARY MEETING OF THE UNITED
NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMEENT (RIO+20)**

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RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

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Your Excellency, Madam President, Hon. Dilma Rousseff

Presidents,

Prime Ministers,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I bring you greetings from the Government and People of Solomon Islands. Let me congratulate Brazil for being such a wonderful host and for its leadership in facilitating negotiations that would lead to the adoption of the Rio Declaration.

I come to this conference with a sense of urgency and trepidation as we have reached the planetary boundary that now threatens the health and survival of the human race. We have entered an era of overfished world and excess resource extraction that is non-sustainable.

Given the intensity and frequency of a number of natural and global crises, today, the global system has placed SIDS and LDCs with an uncertain future. We still continue to face challenges from climate change impact to growing global inequalities and unsustainable consumption by a broken international economic system.

Since the Earth Summit in 1992, what has been so apparent is a clear lack of political will to honor commitments that would have translated into actions. As a result of such gross inaction, we have not achieved much by the time Rio+20 comes.

Mr. President:

Here in Rio, we renew our collective commitment to the Rio Principles with a focused and concise set of agreed actions that should guarantee the future of our planet, for the present, and for generations to come. We have agreed to change the way we do business! This calls for better distribution of wealth and efficient use of resources that respect social values. After all, Quality of Life is measured in Fairness, Equality, Decent jobs that seek inclusive, balance, and an equitable approach to eradicate poverty. We can even support a quality of life that is measured by our Gross National Happiness Index.

Here, in Rio, we recognize some of the key deliverables. We will be launching three process decisions: First, the establishment of the Sustainable Development Goals. These goals will safe-guard, life-giving resources needed for humanity's survival. Second, an institutional framework for sustainable development, to better coordinate the implementation of decisions emanating from the

conference. Third, the means of implementation that would translate decisions into action with relevant Technology Transfer, and a Financial Mechanism to ensure resources are available for implementation.

Mr. President:

The unique and special situation of SIDS was recognized twenty years ago. Today, the urgency of the situation remains! It is, therefore, critical to ensure that SIDS are represented in processes including the SDG Steering Committee.

Mr. President:

Solomon Islands welcomes the decision of the Conference to convene the Third Sustainable Development Conference for SIDS in the Pacific region in 2014. The government welcomes recognition by all leaders that climate change does undermine sustainable development. Current emission pledges on the table will see global temperature increased by 3 to 5 degrees Celsius in the next 100 years. Ocean acidification is on the increase and is threatening the health of both corals and fish stocks.

Solomon Islands is a member of the Coral Triangle Initiative. CTI hosts 76% of the world's known coral species, 37% of the world's reef fish, more than half of the world's coral reefs, and a large

extent of mangroves and spawning grounds for pelagic life such as tuna.

At the regional level, Solomon Islands had hosted the First Pacific Species Forum. This was a conservation strategy to index the taxonomy of our Pacific fauna and flora in order to move from scientific knowledge to conservation actions.

The loss of marine biodiversity due to climate change is certain, unless agreement is reached under the UNFCCC negotiations to keep global temperature below 1.5 degree Celsius. Small Islands Developing States must not be seen as expendable because of their smallness. Nor should they be regarded as collateral damage because of global inaction. We support the call by SIDS to build on the political momentum generated in Rio for a ministerial summit on the margins of UNGA 67 session. This is to garner political support generated here in Rio and to take concrete ambitious mitigation targets.

Mr. President:

All countries need to have science-based driven policies. This is to ensure that development related activities are sustainable and promote inter-generational equity. This is because our populations depend on the environment for subsistence and

livelihood. At this juncture, I am, indeed, pleased to note that this is reflected in the document we will adopt.

For SIDS and LDCs, as growing democracies, it is important that international partnerships are managed through state institutions. Confidence in and legitimacy of state institutions is a must! After all the state is the primary actor: nationally, regionally, and internationally.

Despite challenges, Solomon Islands have embarked on a number of policy initiatives to meet its commitments for Sustainable Development vis-à-vis Biodiversity Initiatives, Land Degradation Programs and Reforestation, Climate Change Policy: Mitigation and Adaptation.

On fisheries, Solomon Islands had taken ground-breaking decision in conserving global fish stocks, acting in concert with seven other Pacific SIDS. The Pacific Ocean, as you are aware, provides a quarter of the world's tuna. Two years ago, eight Pacific Small Islands developing States, referred to as the Parties to the Nauru Agreement, closed 4.5 million square kilometers of high seas from *purse seine* fishing. The conservation measures have leveraged economic and enhanced value-added opportunities for the PNA member states. An example is the “Vessel Day Scheme” (VDS).

The present Solomon Island government has also embarked on an on-shore processing initiative. Negotiations have been carried out with a number of fishing investors. This would add-value in terms of job creation, income generation, and fishery management in the country.

Mr. President:

Solomon Islands is addressing depletion of forest in the country. It has made a deliberate decision to scale-down logging and replace it with ecotourism, sustainable farming, fishing and responsible mining. Also, Solomon Islands sought EITI membership to ensure international standards are observed by all stakeholders. Investment in renewable energy, smallholder and subsistence farmers will be game changing support for transformation of our economy.

To abate land degradation, Solomon Island government has embarked on Land Recording and Registration. This is important because 80% of the land is customarily owned. This policy will enable people's participation in sustainable development.

Yesterday, Solomon Islands was an awardee for the UN Equator Initiative. This was received by the Tetepare Descendant

Association. Tetepare is the largest uninhabited island in the Pacific and unlogged island in the world, with rich biodiversity and rain forest. The communal ecotourism enterprise provides jobs and education for its members. This is an example of sustainable cooperation that acts locally and contributes globally.

Mr. President:

The Document we will adopt, "The Future We Want" sets a path that would allow us to work together to create a better future for the present and future generations.

In closing, I wish to register Solomon Islands' unreserved support for the Rio Outcome Document!

Mr. President, I Thank You