

Key Message for the Solomon Islands 2nd VNR

Solomon Islands is located in the Pacific region, spread over an exclusive economic zone of 1,340,000km², and comprising 997 islands with around 720,900 people.

The National Development Strategy (NDS) 2016-2035 remains the overarching development blueprint to implement relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this context, this VNR process has involved various stakeholders, building on the recent NDS review which provided a benchmark to report on progress, challenges and way forward.

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda

Solomon Islands has made progress in implementing the NDS and the SDGs. Sections below provide a snapshot of the progress against each of the five NDS objectives since the first VNR in 2020.

Solomon Islands is committed to diversifying its economy and promoting investment. The 2023 Pacific Games significantly supported private sector growth including in transport, hospitality, wholesale and retail trade. Progress made include: completion of strategic infrastructure, such as the Kukum Highway, sporting facilities and the Munda international airport; more inclusive access to financial services through mobile money; strengthened facilities for exporting commodities from remote areas; and legislative reforms to improve revenue collection and compliance.

Ensuring basic needs are met, as well as, alleviating poverty remains a commitment for the government, including through more equal distribution of benefits of development to the most vulnerable, such as persons with disabilities, youth, women, elderly and children. The current focus has resulted in development of policies to support the empowerment of women and youth, gender equality, rights of children, social and emotional wellbeing. The government recognizes the need for targeted social protection measures which remains in progress.

Improving health outcomes remains a priority for Solomon Islands and some progress has been made in improving the standards and quality of health care services in the provincial and rural areas. The National Health Strategic Plan 2022 – 2032 also enables the delivery of more integrated health services. To tackle the rising cases of non-communicable diseases, specialized clinics have been established across the country to provide early screening and tailored care plans.

Enhancing access to quality education, vocational training, and entrepreneurship opportunities remains a significant commitment for Solomon Islands. Noting the unequal learning outcomes for male and female students, *inter alia*, the Education Act 2023 will enhance the provision of

education services to every child. The established Solomon Islands Tertiary Education and Skills Authority will support improved the human resources planning and capacity building.

Solomon Islands remains vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including sea-level rise, increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, and ocean acidification. A number of recent measures aim to mitigate the impacts, include the introduction of regulations which ban single use plastic, a national ocean policy, a national renewable energy roadmap and low emission strategy. Risk and resilience assessment have been integrated into the design and implementation of infrastructure projects.

National stability, security, peace building and effective governance remain important in the Solomon Islands. Progress in this regard includes the development and implementation of the National Security Strategy, the draft Traditional Governance and Customs Facilitation Bill which would enforce the legitimacy of village chiefs and elders to deal with community disputes and enhance peace, a national policy on reintegration of those involved in past conflicts, a policy on conflict prevention and victims' rights, and a strategic partnership framework with churches to support peacebuilding.

Moving Ahead

A major challenge in achieving the SDG's lies in institutional capacity and governance to manage the rapidly changing development context, including population growth, security, cost of living, socio-cultural and environmental change. Solomon Islands recognizes the need for evidence-based decision making, building capacities across government to support improved service delivery, targeted investments and private sector development, and continuously strengthening national processes and systems, *inter alia*, to manage these challenges.

Building on our achievements to-date and addressing the challenges that lie ahead, Solomon Islands remains committed to accelerating progress in the implementation of NDS priorities and the SDGs. With a focus on inclusivity, resilience, genuine partnerships, financing and innovation, we are forging a path towards a prosperous and sustainable future for all Solomon Islanders.