

## **Summary of UPR of Solomon Islands**

On Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2011, Solomon Islands' Human Rights record was examined by the United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. FMSI had submitted a report for this review, focusing on issues of education for children in the Solomon Islands. Of the nine civil society organizations that submitted a report for the UPR of SI, FMSI was the only group that raised issues concerning education.

Prior to the Review, FMSI had met with several permanent state delegations to the UN, including the Philippines, Mexico, Australia, Slovenia and France, to represent our recommendations at the UPR.

The 6-member delegation from SI was headed by H.E. Mr. Peter Shanel Agovaka, Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade. The dialogue between SI and the participating states was open and frank, with 28 state delegations participating in the interactive dialogue. Key human rights issues raised during the review were governance and corruption, women and gender issues, violence against women and children as well as concerns regarding education.

FMSI's UPR submission on the right to education and related issues was raised by 16 states during the session, many of whom were the countries we had met a few days earlier regarding our report. During the 3-hour session, on matters of education, the SI delegation acknowledged that there were issues of discrimination against girls in schools and that the Government has set as a priority to achieve equal access and a gender balance in schools as well as working towards equal access for children with disabilities. It thanked New Zealand for its support in assisting its efforts towards universal education for Solomon Island children.

At the end of the session, Br Jim met with the SI delegation to congratulate them on their report and to assure them of support from the FMSI network in the Solomon Islands in the follow-up phase of the UPR.

Recommendations made at the UPR of the Solomon Islands relating to the FMSI submission were to:

- ratify and implement the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- include human rights education in school curricula;
- take the necessary measures to ensure a supply of water of good quality to all informal settlements including the provision of water tanks;
- take measures so as to ensure that all children can enjoy their right to free and compulsory basic education, and establish a school programme on human rights education and training;
- provide for free, compulsory education, accessible to all, with particular care paid to disabled children by allocating sufficient financial and human resources to the education system;
- end all forms of corporal punishment of children in all settings, including in the home and in schools, by enforcing its prohibition.

In summary, six of the nine recommendations made in our submission were raised by participating states in the UPR of Solomon Islands. We hope that these will help improve the situation of education for all children in the Solomon Islands in the coming years.