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Human Rights in Solomon Islands

Submitted by:

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The report highlights key concerns related to **children's rights** in Solomon Islands, particularly **natural resources**,¹ **infrastructure**,² **health care**,³ **job opportunities**⁴, and **general welfare**.⁵ Each section conveys recommendations to the Solomon Islands Government.

2. **Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI)** is an international organization promoted by the Marist Brothers, present in 80 countries. FMSI has more than 15 years of experience working in the field of international solidarity, advocating for children's rights especially in the field of education. It works at the international level, participating in the UN human rights mechanisms in collaboration with other organizations with similar interests. It has been accredited by ECOSOC since 2011.

3. The data and information obtained for this submission came from various sources and includes information from youth, teachers, educators, and other civil society actors living and working in Solomon Islands. All information concerned the period from June 2021 to August 2025.

II. GENERAL REMARKS AND COOPERATION WITH THE UPR MECHANISM

4. Solomon Islands was reviewed in May 2021 at the 38th Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review. This NGO coalition welcomes the constructive participation of Solomon Islands in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). On this occasion, Solomon Islands received 160 recommendations and supported 106 recommendations while noting 54 recommendations⁶. The present joint submission represents the follow-up to the UPR recommendations accepted by the State in 2021.

5. We also welcome the adoption of many recommendations that are connected to the Sustainable Development Goals.⁷

¹ Natural resources: despite several adjustments occurred in the past few years, several gaps persist: uneven enforcement, limited transparency of EIAs/licences, and community-reported harms to livelihoods, water quality, and schooling. For this reason, youth call for reef conservation, an end to dynamite/prohibited nets, and curbing over-harvest and harmful logging/mining.

² Infrastructure: this report highlights several problems regarding this topic. Progress exists, but rural access and affordability still hinder reaching schools and clinics, and road-safety design is not systematic. In this regard, youth called for better roads/bridges, safer wharves/airstrips, and cheaper transport.

³ Health care: significant investment gaps remain to ensure services that directly improve people's well-being. Youth priorities are clear: reliable, affordable essential medicines/equipment; closer services (more rural clinics/hospitals with trained staff); and prevention/early support in schools and communities, including youth-friendly outreach and rehabilitation.

⁴ Job opportunities: youth school-to-work transitions remain weak, especially in rural areas. Young people ask for more jobs and apprenticeships, short, practical training close to home, and on-time wage payments.

⁵ General welfare. Our coalition also proposes several other important aspects for the development of the country and for safeguarding the rights of people, especially children, young people and the most vulnerable. These include promoting the talents and skills of each person, improving road infrastructure, and prompt payment of salaries.

⁶ OHCHR – Report of the Working Group on the UPR: Solomon Islands, A/HRC/48/13 (28 Jun 2021). <https://upr-info-database.uwazi.io/entity/1nyym2oulx7?file=1744908121678a435fxmi2e.pdf>

⁷ 3: Good Health and Well Being: 5% recommendations; 5: Gender Equality – 14% recommendations; 8: Decent work and economic growth – 6% recommendations; 10: Reduced inequalities – 12% recommendations; 16: Peace,

6. This NGO thanks the Government of Solomon Islands for its efforts to adopt measures to safeguard Human Rights, as evidenced by the adoption of multiple recommendations. However, the full implementation of these recommendations is essential to ensure real progress. We therefore urge the government to allocate sufficient funding to the institutions responsible for implementing them and to adopt consistent policy and practice that guarantee compliance with and improvement of the rights of the entire population, particularly the most vulnerable.

7. We thank the government of Solomon Islands for the opportunity to submit this report, as well as for its adherence to the measures proposed by the United Nations for the participation of civil society.

III. METHODOLOGY FOR DATA COLLECTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE TOPIC

Methodology:

8. An important part of this report has been carried out by listening to the direct voices of children, adolescents and young people, as well as adults directly involved in the lives of children and young people, involving several groups of students, aged between 13 and 15, from educational establishments. The total number of students involved was 135.

9. Their contributions are included in this report, marked *"in quotation marks"* and *in italics* throughout the text. It is a result of interactions with and attentive listening to adolescents and young people during the data collection process. These voices serve to both inspire and reaffirm the theoretical work that has been carried out by the organizations presenting the report.

10. In many of the themes, we highlight the coincidence in the opinions expressed by the children and the adults who accompanied them in the consultation and listening process. The main issues highlighted in this fieldwork are reflected in this report, although there were other concerns that directly affect them and their families beyond those mentioned here.

11. Solomon Islands protects with laws and public policies the human rights. We are aware that some of the challenges facing the government are not easy to work on, so we appreciate the efforts to improve them, now and in the future.

IV. NATURAL RESOURCES:

12. The National Fisheries Policy 2019–2029⁸ and Fisheries Management Regulations (2017)⁹ regulate licensing, gear and enforcement. The Environment Act (1998)¹⁰ requires environmental impact assessment and development consent for projects with significant impact. Licencing for logging and mining is subject to environmental management and consent requirements.

justice and strong institutions – 40% recommendations. Cf. Infographic <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/SOLOMON-ISLANDS.pdf>

⁸ MFMR/FAOLEX – National Fisheries Policy 2019–2029. <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/sol188935.pdf>

⁹ FFA – Fisheries Management Act 2015 & Regulations 2017 (downloads). <https://www.ffa.int/download/solomon-islands-fisheries-management-act/>

¹⁰ FAOLEX – Environment Act 1998 (No. 8 of 1998). <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/sol65422.pdf>

13. Community-based resource management has expanded through provincial programmes. Authorities have indicated intentions to increase marine managed or protected areas. Environmental impact assessment procedures continue to apply to major projects.

14. Enforcement against destructive and illegal fishing is uneven. Transparency of environmental impact assessment and licences is limited. Communities report adverse impacts from logging/mining on livelihoods, water quality and children’s schooling.

15. The young people participating in the data collection for this report are aware of these challenges. The following needs were expressed by them:

- *“Conservation, to produce more fish in our reefs.”*
- *“Stop strowing nets and dynamites in our sea.”*
- *“Avoid explosion of dynamite.”*
- *“Stop overharvesting marine resources.”*
- *“Stop logging companies.”*
- *“Reduce over harvesting of natural resources.”*
- *“Stop logging and mining activities”.*

16. **To face these challenges, we propose the following recommendations:**

- a. Adopt and fund a joint Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources and Royal Solomon Islands Police Force inshore enforcement plan to eliminate illegal/destructive fishing (including explosives and prohibited nets), with quarterly public statistics disaggregated by province.**
- b. Scale Community-Based Resource Management nationwide so that all coastal wards have an approved plan by 2028, ensuring meaningful participation and leadership of women and youth and recognition of traditional knowledge.**
- c. Publish online all the environmental impact assessments, licenses and monitoring reports; suspend approvals that lack completed environmental impact assessments and documented community consultation; ensure accessible grievance and remedy for affected communities.**

V. INFRASTRUCTURE:

17. The National Development Strategy 2016–2035 (NDS), the National Infrastructure Priority Pipeline (2023, updated 2024)¹¹ and the National Transport Plan 2017–2036¹² guide road, wharf and airstrip investments and maintenance. The Government has published a national pipeline and continued partner supported projects to improve transport assets; however, there are remaining gaps and human rights impacts. Rural access and affordability remain a barrier to reaching schools and clinics; road safety design is not systematically integrated.

18. This significant issue was addressed on multiple occasions by young people participating in the preparation of this report. Below, we voice some of their direct expressions:

¹¹ MNPDC – National Infrastructure Priority Pipeline 2023 (Feb 2024 PDF). https://solomons.gov.sb/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/SI-National-Infrastructure-Pipeline-8-Feb-2024_Final-Version.pdf

¹² National Transport Plan 2017–2036 (PDF). https://sirap.sb/images/Docs/SI_National_Transport_Plan_2017-36_v03e.pdf

- *“Road improvement”*
- *“Need to build more wharves.”*
- *“Need to Access better roads.”*
- *“Need to access better bridges in urban and rural areas.”*
- *“Need to access better wharfs in urban and rural areas.”*
- *“Building better health centres.”*
- *“Easy access to roads”*
- *“Reduce bus fares.”*
- *“Construct new roads in the town and rural areas.”*
- *“Build good wharfs in provinces”*
- *“Build more access roads around the country.”*
- *“Build more wharves and airships around the country for accessibility.”*
- *“Provide cheaper transportation throughout the country.”*
- *“Provide easy accessibility of transportation across the whole country.”*

19. To face these challenges, this NGO recommends:

- a. Publish an annual province disaggregated infrastructure delivery report (roads, wharves, airstrips) that includes social safeguards and evidence of community consultation for each project.**
- b. Establish a Rural Transport Affordability Scheme targeted at students and patients and monitor impacts on school attendance and access to health services.**
- c. Integrate independent road safety audits, footpaths and safe crossing measures into all new and rehabilitated road projects and publish crash data to guide interventions.**

VI. HEALTH CARE:

20. In presenting the issue of health for all Solomon Islands, we would like to thank the Solomon Islands government for adopting several recommendations made during the last UPR cycle. We welcome the adoption of recommendations such as 104.100¹³ and 104.101¹⁴ which aim to increase and strengthen the health system. We also understand that it is still necessary to increase investment in health services that will have a direct impact on the well-being of the country's inhabitants.

21. The testimonies collected show that this is a major concern for children and young people, for themselves, for their families and for the rest of the country's population. They consider health as an essential element for the integral development of their lives.

22. Young people consistently point to three urgent needs in the health system. First, essential medicines and basic equipment must be affordable and reliably available, so that treatment doesn't depend on a family's income or a facility's luck. Second, services need to be closer to where people live, building and equipping more clinics and hospitals in rural areas—while

¹³ 104.100 Continue to strengthen the public health system to better protect the people's right to health (China)

¹⁴ 104.101 Continue to promote the Government, through the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, and the national health strategy policy that focuses on improving health, universal coverage and access to basic care, especially with the strengthening of rural medical centres (Cuba)

strengthening staffing with well-trained nurses and doctors—would reduce long travel times and improve timely care. Third, prevention and early support should start where youth are: schools should have first aid and basic medical supplies, and communities should offer youth-friendly rehabilitation and outreach services for those affected by drug use. Together, these measures would make the system more accessible, fair, and responsive to the realities young people face.

23. We offer here some of their own opinions about the state of the health care system:

- *“We need more currency to import more medicine from other countries to our country.”*
- *“To provide more medicine for our population system, specifically for elders and children in rural areas.”*
- *“We need more development of clinics in our rural area. To support those who live far from town, so that they can have easy access to the clinics.”*
- *“In Solomons Islands we are experiencing illnesses and now we have a shortage of medicines, and they are getting expensive. In order to improve it we should plant natural medicines so that it can be easier for our country.”*
- *“Need more facilities (clinic building, medicine...)”*
- *“Need more help employees (nurses, doctors...)”*
- *“Distribute more hospitals or clinics to rural areas to ensure people have a better access to medications”*
- *“Access to cheaper treatment by not spending too much money on transportation to urban centers.”*
- *“Build hospitals and clinics in rural areas.”*
- *“Provide medical facilities (e.g. medicines and medical equipment).”*
- *“Better and accessible health facilities.”*
- *“Cheaper medication for people in rural areas to afford.”*
- *“Establish more clinics and hospitals throughout the whole country not only in urban centers but also in rural areas.”*
- *“Improvement of medical facilities in clinics and hospitals, for example, provide more medicine and other medical equipment.”*

24. **To improve the health status of people in Solomon Islands, we make the following recommendations:**

- a. **Adopt a multi-year Essential Medicines Availability Plan aligned to the essential medicines list with quarterly provincial stock-out dashboards and emergency buffers at provincial hospitals.**
- b. **Expand rural primary care for the National Health Strategic Plan, constructing and staffing nurse-aide posts and area health centers; use telehealth where feasible.**
- c. **Implement a national “Health in Schools” guideline (first-aid kits, referral protocols) and establish at least one youth-friendly rehabilitation/outreach service per province.**

VII. JOB OPPORTUNITIES:

25. In the previous UPR cycle, the Solomon Islands government accepted several recommendations, with a commitment to improve infrastructure and economic growth. We welcome this effort by the government. This aspect also connects with the recommendation we

will make later. This effort to improve the conditions for economic growth will undoubtedly have a direct impact on decent work. In the same vein, recommendations could be considered.

26. Young people are calling for tangible pathways into decent work. That means creating jobs for recent school-leavers and expanding practical preparation for employment—short, job-oriented skills courses, structured apprenticeships with employers, and quality internships that build real workplace experience. It also means making the labour market fair and reliable by ensuring that wages are paid on time and equitably across sectors

27. These priorities echo the 2021 recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review to expand access to decent work, tackle youth unemployment, and strengthen the bridge from education to employment. Since then, there has been some movement: the Education Act 2023 entered into force in 2024 and the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development has begun implementing reforms. The Solomon Islands Tertiary Education and Skills Authority is upgrading accreditation and qualifications, and reviews are underway of both the Technical and Vocational Education and Training policy and the Solomon Islands Tertiary Education and Skills Authority Act. To meet youth expectations, these reforms should translate quickly into more entry-level jobs, expanded apprenticeships and internships, and consistent, on-time wage payments.

28. Education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) reforms are currently underway, with the Solomon Islands Tertiary Education and Skills Authority (SITESA) working alongside the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) and other partners to strengthen accreditation systems and qualifications. Since 2021, progress has been made through ongoing efforts to regulate school fees, develop a clearer grant policy, and improve TVET accreditation, while national dialogue on youth employment pathways has gained momentum. Nevertheless, important challenges remain. Transitions from school to work continue to be weak, particularly in rural areas where access to short, practical training courses is still limited. Furthermore, delays in the payment of public sector wages have negative consequences for household welfare. Community feedback highlights the urgency of creating more jobs and apprenticeships for school-leavers, expanding opportunities for skills training, and ensuring that wages are paid on time.

29. This significant issue was addressed on multiple occasions by young people participating in the preparation of this report. Below, we voice some of their direct expressions:

- *“Need to provide more job opportunities for those who didn’t complete their education.”*
- *“Provide more skills for uneducated students.”*
- *“Medical facilities in some clinics are in shortage of facilities, so we need more of them.”*
- *“Easy access to job opportunities.”*
- *“Provide more job opportunities.”*

30. To address better job opportunities, we recommend the Government of Solomon Islands to:

- a. Launch a national Youth Apprenticeship and Internship Scheme (at least 1,000 placements annually) in partnership with the private sector and provinces and publish completion and employment outcomes.**

- b. Update TVET/SITESA instruments to expand accredited short courses in construction, fisheries, renewable energy and care services and provide fee waivers for low-income youth.**
- c. Mandate prompt-payment clauses and digital payrolls in all public contracts and publish compliance data.**

VIII. GENERAL WELFARE.

31. In this last section of our report, we would like to highlight three main ideas that will help to improve the daily lives of Solomon Islands. These are themes that come up repeatedly when listening to children and young people, as well as adults.

32. Care for the environment is also a concern for children and young people, because of the consequences that this change can have, and is already having, for the lives of many people in the country. Our coalition is aware of the difficulty of implementing measures to help reduce climate change and prevent potential natural disasters. Nevertheless, we invite the government to continue to take measures in this direction.

33. A range of concerns have been expressed by young people regarding their current situation and apprehensions for the future if poverty, mistreatment, neglect, and social degradation persist in society:

- *“We need more water tanks in our schools and community.”*
- *“We need more water palms in our community.”*
- *“We need more pipes.”*
- *“Clinics, educations, infrastructures, homeless centers, more businesses, more employment, improve standard of living”*
- *“To distribute proper services to our rural areas: such as education services and health services.”*
- *“To provide proper medical facilities to both urban and rural areas.”*
- *“Be responsible. Think globally, act locally.”*
- *“Reduce / Recycle / Reproduce / Reuse.”*
- *“No logging and mining.”*
- *“Better road infrastructure for our rural areas.”*
- *“We need better and clean water supplies.”*

34. In order to improve the general welfare of the country, we would like to recommend the following points to the Solomon Islands government:

- a. Launch a national Youth Apprenticeship & Internship Scheme (≥1,000 placements annually) in partnership with private sector and provinces and publish completion/employment outcomes.**
- b. Update the SITESA/TVET legal framework to expand accredited short courses in construction, fisheries, renewable energy and care services; offer fee waivers for low-income youth.**
- c. Enforce prompt payment in the public sector and require prompt-payment clauses for contractors on public works; expand digital payroll systems.**

IX. CONCLUSION

35. We thank the Government of Solomon Islands for accepting many recommendations from the previous UPR cycle, demonstrating a clear commitment to human rights and institutional reform.

36. We welcome the measures outlined in the May 2021 National Report and recognize the challenges faced in recent years. We commend efforts to implement the “supported” recommendations and urge their consolidation and scale-up, with clear timelines and indicators, so that education, health, and inclusive economic opportunities continue to strengthen.

37. We appreciate the Government’s openness to civil society’s input and its consideration of our concerns. Continued, structured dialogue with communities and NGOs will help sustain reforms and ensure accountability.

38. We are especially grateful for the attention given to the voices of children and young people. They are both the present and the future of the nation; their safe, meaningful participation and leadership are essential to shaping a secure and prosperous Solomon Islands.

39. Finally, we thank the United Nations for enabling our engagement through the UPR mechanism and for the opportunity to convey the direct testimonies of the children and young people who informed this report.