



SOLOMON ISLANDS

STATEMENT

BY

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SOLOMON ISLANDS PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

BEFORE THE

**WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER REDUCTION
20TH JANUARY 2005, KOBE, HYOGO, JAPAN**

Mr President,

Solomon Islands associate itself with the paper presented by Chairman of AOSIS, Ambassador Jandish Koonjul, delivered yesterday afternoon.

The International Meeting in Mauritius last week, produced a Mauritius Strategy document outlining the special situation of SIDS. It is our fervent hope that this Conference will incorporate SIDS specific issues and concerns into the Hyogo outcome document, we believe this will strengthen the international framework and ensure no group of states are left behind in the process.

Mr President,

My delegation would also like add its voice and register its deep and sincere condolence to all countries who have lost loved ones following the aftermath of the 24th of December tsunami last year. Solomon Islands as a Small Island Developing States with LDC status share such pain and in a small way has committed assistance to the affected countries.

Mr President,

Solomon Islands values the importance of this gathering especially at a time when the world is experiencing changing weather pattern and an increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters as well as internal conflicts. Solomon Islands has not been spared of both having experienced cyclone Zoe in 2002 and 2003 and recommit itself to strengthen multilateral, regional and bilateral frameworks that addresses disaster preparedness and mitigation frameworks.

Mr President,

Small Islands Developing States are the most vulnerable, and the least equipped to deal with disasters. In a day centrally located economies of small island developing state could be put ten years back in terms of its developmental achievements. The challenge is to spread development throughout the country in an effort to spread risks.

Mr President,

The Yokohama Strategy paper is inter-linked with other development elements including the MDG. It is our hoped that the outcome paper will also take into consideration new and emerging threats of HIV/Aids, Malaria, diabetes, tuberculosis and other non communicable diseases.

It is equally important that response to disasters be national driven so as to ensure traditional resilience measures are preserved and national capacity and capabilities are supported to ensure assistance received are measured according to local environments.

Mr President

On the issue of early warning system, my delegation wish to add that there is at the moment no system in place within the Pacific region to detect locally generated tsunamis, which scientists suggests are of a greater threat. This remains a growing concern especially for countries including Solomon Islands with active volcanoes. Education and awareness programmes is the way forward under present circumstances, my delegation wish to acknowledge the initiative taken by UNESCO, IOC, ITSU and ADB in improving the Pacific early warning system.

Mr President,

85% of Solomon Islands population live in the rural areas scattered across some 1800 kilometers speaking more than eighty different languages, my delegation believe that people centered approach remains the corner stone of any international process. Such a process empowers them to take on the ownership of resilience building and be active participants in global frameworks. Economic development remains the means in sustaining resilience building at national level. In this regards international support in taking the economy to another level is essential with the transfer of appropriate technology, capacity building and human resources development.

As a country coming out of a conflict situation the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands commonly referred to as RAMSI led by Australia, supported by New Zealand and our Pacific neighbours have made significant progress. Having said this, much remains to be done, Solomon Islands continues to rely on the international community for its developmental needs.

Under the above environment, Solomon Islands National Disaster and Risk Management Arrangements is being reviewed under AusAID funding and the following will be enhanced, these include-

- Strengthening Disaster and Risks Management Systems
- National Disaster Management Office Capabilities
- Community resilience

Mr President,

At regional level the Pacific region recognize that sustainable development can not achieved without integration into the global economy. A Pacific Plan is being developed focusing on economic growth, sustainable development, security and good governance.

My delegation is equally pleased to report that the Pacific has produced a draft Pacific Regional Action Plan on Disaster Reduction 2005-2015 for the accelerated implementation of the Yokohama Strategy, JPOI and other emerging issues. Four theme key areas are targeted with measurable goals namely:

- Governance-institutional and policy frameworks for risks reduction,

- Hazard identification, assessment, monitoring and early warning systems,
- Knowledge Management and Education – enhancing the resilience of Pacific Communities
- Development of risks reduction tools

I would like to close by expressing my delegation's deep appreciation to the government and people of Japan for the warm and kind hospitality accorded to us since arriving in your beautiful country. To you Mr President my delegation join its voice with those that congratulating you on your assumption as chair and assure you of my delegation's support and cooperation.

My delegation is confident that the output paper will address SIDS issues and rejuvenate the Yokohama Strategy Paper making it more focused and action oriented. In partnership we are positive much will be achieved. The Mauritius Strategy paper recommits the international community to improve national mitigation, preparedness and early warning capacities of SIDS including SIDS to predict and respond to emergency situations.

Thank you