

Country Gender Profile: Solomon Islands

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JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY

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Solomon Islands

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Summary

Summary of Country Gender Profile in Solomon Islands (2010)

Current Situation of Women in Solomon Islands

- Solomon Islands is an archipelago with a complex, diverse and dynamic culture and ethnicity, with over 80 languages being spoken; it has intricate gender relationships, in which women are generally regarded as having lower status than men.
- Violence against women is one of the most serious concerns in Solomon Islands. Domestic Violence (DV) by an intimate partner is the most common form of violence against women. The Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study in 2009 revealed that 64% of women aged 15-49 had experienced physical or sexual violence, or both from an intimate partner.
- There are no female members currently in Solomon Islands national parliament; for advancing women's status and achieving gender equality in the Solomon Islands, there is a great need for increased participation and representation of women in politics and other decision making bodies.

Gender Policy of Gender

- The government policy statement in early 2008 committed itself to achieving gender equality in education and employment, as one of the core principles and objectives for development in the country; also with the "Medium Term Development Strategy 2008-2010" recognising the importance of women's development in rural communities.
- "National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development" was developed by the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs and was officially approved by the cabinet in January 2010. A specific Policy on Eliminating Violence against Women has also been drafted by the government of Solomon Islands.
- Solomon Islands Law Reform Commission has been reviewing the penal code with a gender perspective, revising relevant sections of the code which relate to violence against women and child abuse cases.

National Machinery

- In 2010, under the decree of Solomon Islands government, the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs (MWYCA) became the National Machinery for the Advancement of Women in Solomon Islands. It is expected that MWYCA functioning as the National Machinery for Women will, in partnership with women's civil organizations, advance women's position in Solomon Islands.
- One of the major challenges to promote gender mainstreaming is lack of government officials' capacity and technical skills to produce planning, monitoring and coordination, which includes insufficient financial resources to carry out and monitor the mainstreaming of gender equality programs.

Situation of Women/Gender in Education

- Complementing the “National Strategic Framework 2007-2015”, the Ministry of Education has developed the “National Education Action Plan 2010-2012” which aim is to provide universal access to quality basic education for all. The plan also aims to reduce gender disparity in education in particular in rural areas. However there are no specific strategies or programs which target the special needs of female students.
- The net enrolment rate for primary education is 94% and approximately 48% of them were female in 2008. The net enrolment rate for secondary education decreased considerably from primary to 31%, female student net enrolment rate dropped to 17% in senior secondary. In 2009, only 30% of female students successfully received a government scholarship, compared to 70% of male students.

Situation of Women/Gender in Health

- The Ministry of Health with assistances from WHO and others is currently planning to develop a health policy on violence against women. A Gender Desk (a person in a position that is in charge of gender issue and coordinating actions to meet them accordingly) is also to be set up to mainstream gender equality into the ministry and health administrations.
- The total fertility rate is 4.6 and current maternal mortality rate is 130 in every 100,000 births. About 85% of births are at medical facilities and assisted by appropriate technicians, but the remaining 15% are not, the majority of the latter being in rural areas.

Situation of Women/Gender in Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock had no policy or program specifically targeted towards women’s empowerment.
- Some parts of this nation maintain a matriarchal society where the customary land is inherited by tribeswomen. However, many of these women inherit it in name only with the decision making regarding its management and utilization being predominately completed by males.
- Women living in coastal areas of Solomon Islands actively participate in subsistence fishing, mainly involved in collecting fish and shellfish for their own consumption. There is some small scale marketing of them as well.

Situation of Women/Gender in Economic Activities

- In 2002, only 9% of the female population was employed in the public sector while 65% were employed in the informal private sector, mostly in village based micro-enterprises. Estimates suggest that of the overall workforce in formal paid private sector employment only 14% of it comprises of women.
- There are currently no specific laws or legislation on equal opportunity and equal pay for women and men, or that address sexual discrimination, or that deal with sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Microfinance schemes or banking services for women are limited in Solomon Islands in particular for rural women. It is often the case that women have very little access to loan and

credit facilities.

Situation of Women/Gender in Disaster Management and Environment

- There is no sex disaggregated database developed on the victims of the natural disasters and the government has conducted no gender assessment for disaster and prevention.
- Although women play an important role in environment and forest conservation as well as managing natural resources, their roles are regarded as informal and thus they are not participating enough in planning and decision making in these matters.

List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
DV	Domestic Violence
F/P	Family Planning
GAD	Gender And Development
HIV/AIDS	Human-Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
MYYCA	Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NCW	National Council of Women
NZAID	New Zealand's International Aid and Development Agency
PHC	Primary Health Care
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
UNDP	United Nations Development Programs
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WDD	Women and Development Division
WHO	World Health Organization

Exchange Rate
1 Solomon Islands Dollar (SBD) 10.86 JPY
February 2010

This study was conducted between November 2009 and February 2010 by IMG Inc, based on a review of secondary data and a field survey in Solomon Islands. This report was produced as a reference material for JICA to implement its projects in the country. The views and recommendations presented here do not necessarily reflect the official views and opinions of JICA.

1. Basic profiles

1-1 Socio-Economic Profile

Socio-economic profile								Ref.	
Social indicators									
<u>International development indicators</u>		Human development index* (Value / Rank) *		Gender-related development index (Value / Rank)*		Gender empowerment measurement (Value)*		1)	
		0.61/ 135 (2007)		NA		NA			
		0.62/ 124 (2002)		NA		NA			
<u>Demographic indicators</u>		Total ¹ (millions)		% of urban population ²		Annual Population growth rate ¹ (%)	Total fertility rate* ³	¹ 2) ² 3) ³ 4) *21)	
		% of female population		% of female population					
		0.52 (2009)	48% (2009)	17.6% (2007)	NA	2.5% (2005-2010) 2.8% (2006-2008)*	4.0 (2006)		
		0.48 (2005)	48% (2005)	15.7% (2000)	NA	2.6% (2000-2005)	4.6 (2000)		
		Life expectancy ¹		Households number by head of households (HH) ²			¹ 1) ² 5)		
		Male	Female	Total	Male-headed	Female-headed			
		64.9 (2007)	66.7 (2007)	86,734 (2005/2006)	NA	NA			
		67.8 (2002)	70.5 (2002)	63,404 (1999)	NA	NA			
Economic indicators									
		GNP/Capita (current US\$)	Growth rate of real GDP	GDP implicit deflator*	Gini index*	Aid/GNP	6) 21)*		
2007		\$1,050	10.2% (6.4%/2008*)	6.0%	NA	47.7%			
2000		\$1,000	-14.3%	10.7%	NA	16.2%			
<u>Public sector expenditure on sectors</u>		Health	Education	Social welfare	Defence	Gender	Others	7)	
2006		13.2%	31.9%	0.4%	10.0%	NA	NA		
2004		13.4%	28.1%	0.4%	11.2%	NA	NA		
		/GDP	/GDP	/GDP	/GDP	/GDP	/GDP		
		3.8% (2004)	3.3% (2002-2005)	NA	NA	NA	4.7 % (2005)	1)	
		4.7% (2001)	NA	NA	NA	NA	2.4 % (2002)		
<u>Industry /GDP</u>		Agriculture	Industry	Service	Others	6)			
2007		33%	7%	60%	NA				
2000		35%	13%	53%	NA				
<u>Labour indicators</u>		Total No. ¹		Unemployment rate ¹		Minimum wage (US\$) ²		¹ 8) ² 9)	
		(thousands)	Female labour force / Total labour force (%)	Total unemployed / total labour force (%)	Female unemployed / total female labour force (%)	Male (per hour)	Female (per hour)		
		85.1 (1999)	32% (1999)	32.4% (1999)	35.2% (1999)	\$4.00 (2008)	\$4.00 (2008)		
		NA	NA	NA	NA	\$1.50 (1996)	\$1.50 (1996)		
<u>Employment rate</u>		Agriculture	Non-agriculture		10)				
			Industry	Service					
Total (%)		75% (2000)	5% (2000)	20% (2000)					
% of female population		NA	NA	NA					
Approaches to gender issues									
<u>Ratification and signature of international laws</u>							Year	11)	
Pacific Platform for Action							1994		
Beijing Platform for Action							1995		

Socio-economic profile						Ref.
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women					2002	
UN security Council Resolution 1325					2000	
Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality 2005-2015					2005	
<u>Women in decision-making (% of female population)</u>						
Government	Seats In parliament	0% (2009)	Private sector	Managers	NA	1)
	Ministerial Position	0% (2008)		Professional and technical workers	NA	
<u>Policy of gender</u>					Year	11)
National Women’s Policy					1998	
National Policy on Gender Equality and Women’s Development					2010	
<u>Laws of gender</u>					Year	11)
Islander’s Marriage Act					1978	
Ordinance for Separation and Maintenance					1971	
Evidence Act 2009					2009	
<u>Public organization of gender</u>						
Name of the national machinery		Ministry of Women, Youth and Children’s Affairs				

Note: Refer to the definitions for the words attached with *

1-2 Health Profile

Health Indicators								Ref.
Prevalence of health services		No. of Hospital beds per 1,000 persons ¹		No. of physicians per 1,000 persons ²				¹ 4) ² 1)
		1.5 (2005)		0.13 (2000-2004)				
		NA		0.13 (1990-2003)				
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000) *	2006	Total		54		Female	54	4)
	2000			64			64	
Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000) *	2006	Total		72		Female	74	4)
	2000			88			89	
Prevalence rate associated with tuberculosis (per 100,000)	2006	Total		194		Female	NA	4)
	2001			276			NA	
Prevalence and death rates associated with infectious diseases		Total		NA		Female	NA	
				NA			NA	
% of vaccinated (1 year old)		BCG	DPT1	Polio	Measles			12)
		84% (2007)	84% (2007)	77% (2007)	78% (2007)			
Reproductive health		Contraceptive prevalence rate* ¹		Rate of births attended by trained personnel* ¹		Anemia prevalence among pregnant women ²		¹ 13) ² 14)
		27% (2007)		86% (2007)		60.1% (2007)		
		11% (1990)		85% (1990)		NA		
		Maternal mortality ratio ¹		Total fertility rate ¹		Average age of first marriage ²		¹ 17) ² 14)
		130 per 100,000 live birth (2007)		4.6 (2007)*		19.9 (2007)		
		NA		4.6 (2000)		NA		
Nutrition		Children under weight for age (& aged under 5) *		Oral re-hydration therapy use rate*		Iodine deficiency		14)
		11.8% (2007)		77.6% (2007)		NA		
		NA		NA		NA		
Community health service		Access to safe water			Access to improved sanitation*			4)
		Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	
	2006	70%	94%	65%	32%	98%	18%	
	2000	70%	94%	65%	31%	98%	18%	

HIV/AIDS	HIV prevalence ¹				% of population aged with comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS ²		¹ 15) ² 14)	
	Total	Male	Female		Male	Female		
	(No. of persons)	(No. of persons)	(No. of persons)	Pregnant women				
		12 (2008)	4 (2008)	8 (2008)	NA	35.1% (2007)		29.3% (2007)
		NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		NA

1-3 Education Profile

Education Indicators								Ref.	
Education systems		Primary	6 years	Secondary	3 years 3 years 2 years	Tertiary	NA	16)	
Adult literacy rate*		Total	84.0% (2007)	Male	89.0% (2007)	Female	79.0% (2007)	17)	
Primary education									
Net enrolment rate*	2008	Total	94%	Male	95.0%	Female	94%	20) 18)	
	2003		63.2%		64.1%		62.2%		
Progression rate	NA	Total	NA	Male	NA	Female	NA		
	NA		NA		NA		NA		
Drop-out rate	2008	Total	13%	Male	13%	Female	13%		
	NA		NA		NA		NA		
Secondary education									
Net enrolment rate*	2008	Total	31%	Male	31%	Female	32%		19) 20)
	1999		23%		26%		10%		
Progression rate	NA	Total	NA	Male	NA	Female	NA		
	NA		NA		NA		NA		
Drop-out rate	2008	Total	26%	Male	26%	Female	27%		
	NA		NA		NA		NA		
Tertiary education									
Net enrolment rate*	2008	Total	19%	Male	21%	Female	17%	20)	
	NA		NA		NA		NA		
Progression rate	NA	Total	NA	Male	NA	Female	NA		
	NA		NA		NA		NA		
Drop-out rate	NA	Total	NA	Male	NA	Female	NA		
	NA		NA		NA		NA		
Tertiary level enrolment by field of study by gender		Education	Arts	Social science	Engineering and Technology	Medicine	Others		
	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		

Note: Refer to the definitions for the words attached with *

Reference:

- 1) Human Development Report, UNDP, 2004, 2007/2008, 2009
- 2) Statistics and Indicators of Women and Men, United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)
- 3) Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific, UNESCAP, 2008
- 4) WHO Statistical information System (WHOSIS), WHO
- 5) Household Income and Expenditure Survey, Solomon Islands National Statistical Office, 2005/2006
- 6) World Development Indicator Database, World Bank, 2009
- 7) Solomon Islands: Public Financial Management-Performance Report, European Commission, 2008
- 8) Census of Population and Housing, Solomon Island National Statistics Office, 1999
- 9) "Solomon Islands Increases Minimum Wage," Australian Broadcasting Cooperation, April 29, 2008
- 10) The World Fact book, (U.S.) Central Intelligence Agency
- 11) Solomon Islands Beijing + 15, Ministry of Women, Youth & Children, 2009
- 12) Info by Country: Solomon Islands, UNICEF
- 13) Pacific Island Countries at a Glance, UNFPA
- 14) Demographic and Health Survey, Solomon Island National Statistics Office, 2007
- 15) "No Laws to Deal with HIV and AIDS," Solomon Times Online, May 27 2009
- 16) National Education Sector Summary Statistics, Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2005
- 17) Demographic and Health Survey 2006-2007 Solomon Islands 2008
- 18) UN data, United Nations Statistical Division
- 19) UIS Statistics in Brief, UNESCO Institute for Statistics

- 20) Performance Assessment Framework 2006-2008 (2008)
- 21) ADB & Solomon Islands (2008) <http://www.adb.org/countries/solomon-islands/main>

2. General Situation of Women and Government Policy on Gender

2-1 General Situation of Women in Solomon Islands

General Situation of Women in Solomon Islands

- 1) Solomon Islands is an archipelago with complex, diverse and dynamic culture, language and ethnicity; with intricate gender relationships, in which women are generally regarded as having lower status than men.
- 2) Violence against women is one of the most serious concerns in Solomon Islands. Domestic Violence (DV) is the most common form of violence against women. The Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Survey Study in 2009 revealed that 64% of the women aged 15-49 have experienced physical or sexual violence, or both from an intimate partner.
- 3) There are no female members currently in Solomon Islands national parliament; for advancing women's status and achieve gender equality in the Solomon Islands. There is a great need for increased participation and representation of women in politics and other decision making bodies.

[General situation]

Solomon Islands is an archipelago which is made up of approximately 990 islands located east of Papua New Guinea in the South Pacific. It has a complex, diverse, and dynamic culture and ethnicity, with over 80 different languages being spoken. Solomon Islands became independent from the United Kingdom in 1978, when it became a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and still belongs to it now. Its capital city, Honiara, is located on Guadalcanal Island.

The economy of Solomon Islands has been steadily growing with a GDP growth rate of 6.4% in 2008¹. Its economy is characterized by dualism with a traditional subsistence rural economy and a cash economy based on primary product export. The latter being largely dependent upon Solomon Islands rich natural resources such as timber, fish, copra and cocoa, all of which are tied in with foreign business investment. The economy is now in the process of transformation with much more emphasis being placed on the cash economy.

The population of Solomon Islands was approximately 520,000 in 2008 with 84% of the population living in rural villages². It had an average population growth rate between 2006 and 2008³ of 2.5%. English is the official language but there are over 80 distinct languages spoken and Pidgin is the

¹ ADB & Solomon Islands (2008) www.adb.org/solomonislands

² The secretariat of the Pacific Community Solomon Islands Country Profile (2008)

³ ADB & Solomon Islands (2008) <http://www.adb.org/countries/solomon-islands/main>

functional national language (lingua franca). Polynesians make up 94.5% of the population, and Christianity is the dominant religion with 97.5% of the total population practicing it⁴.

The internal armed conflict between rival groups from Guadalcanal and Malaita broke out in late 1998. In response to this, in 2003 the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) was deployed to restore order, led by Australia. It included police officers, military personnel and civilians from the Pacific Islands Forum membership countries; now security has been restored and the situation remains fairly stable.

[General situation of women]

Despite the commitment of the Solomon Islands government to promote gender equality, the conditions surrounding women there remains difficult. The country's Gender Development Index (GDI), which comprises of average life expectancy, levels of education and livelihood has not been calculated yet. However, the country is ranked 129 out of 177⁵ countries on the Human Development Index (HDI), among the lowest in the Pacific Region.

According to a report released by Solomon Islands Ministry of Education in 2008⁶, the net enrolment rate to primary education for girls was 94% with their enrolment rate to secondary education decreasing to 32%. According to the UNDP report in 2009, the life expectancy of women was 66.7 years old and men 64.9 years old. Solomon Islands is one of the few countries in the Pacific region where life expectancy is low. The growth rate between 2006 and 2008 was 2.8%⁷ with a total fertility rate of 4.6⁸ and maternal mortality of 130 per 100,000 live births⁹. While women's labor participation in the informal sector has been increasing, it has been largely restricted to low-paid, low status unskilled job with average earnings close to half that of average male wages.

[Sexual harassment and violence against women]

Violence against women is one of the most serious concerns in Solomon Islands. Domestic Violence (DV), physical, sexual and emotional abuse by an intimate partner to family members, is the most common form of violence against women. The Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study in 2009 revealed that 64% of the women aged 15-49 had experienced physical or sexual violence, or both from an intimate partner¹⁰. It found that 37% of the respondents said they had experience violence before the age of 15 years, indicating sexual abuse in childhood is common. In addition, in the study many women reported gang rapes by youngsters and commercial sexual exploitation of girls by

⁴ Pollard (2000) Givers of Wisdom, Labourers without gain

⁵ UNDP Human development Report (2008)

⁶ Performance Assessment Framework 2006-2008, Ministry of Education

⁷ ADB & Solomon Islands (2008) <http://www.adb.org/countries/solomon-islands/main>

⁸ Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study (2009), Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs

⁹ Demographic and Health survey 2006-2007, The government of Solomon Islands

¹⁰ Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study (2009), Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs supported by SPC

foreign and local company workers engaged in the logging or fishery industries¹¹. Reporting that violence against women was exacerbated in the 5 years tribal armed conflict period that occurred in the nation between 1998 and 2003. A study (2004) conducted by Amnesty International reported that three-quarters of women suffered direct personal trauma including rape, threats of violence and intimidation¹². The study by AusAID (2009) also points out that, after the physical devastation and social destruction caused by a Tsunami in 2007, reports of various forms of sexual violence including rape were widely recorded¹³.

[Low representation in key decision making positions in the government]

There are currently no female members in Solomon Islands national parliament. In the 2006 general election no women were elected, even though out of a total of 452 candidates vying for the 50 positions in Parliament, 28 of the candidates nominated were women (at present, there are 6 female members represented in the provincial assemblies)¹⁴. An AusAID study (2007) supposed that the barrier to women's participation lies in the cultural norms, which define power and leadership in the politics as the preserve of men. It also pointed out the lack of capacity of many female candidates to plan campaign strategies, to use the media effectively and to elicit support from key constituents, combined with limited campaign financing, were important factors. While women hold 5 out of 25 (20%) of Permanent Secretary Positions, overall women only hold 6% of key decision making positions in public services¹⁵. There is a great need for increased participation and representation of women in decision making for advancing women's status and achieve gender equality in Solomon Islands.

There are currently 24 female lawyers in the country including 2 female lawyers in the magistrate courts who also play the role of judge in the lower court and 6 prosecutors in the public defendant's office¹⁶. In 2006, the Woman in Law Association was created by these female lawyers to establish a strong network amongst female lawyers as well as encourage more women to enter into law. They also provide legal support for the victims of Domestic Violence.

[Issues originated in religions and traditional customs]

In Solomon Islands, societies, power and leadership have been traditionally a male preserve. Men hold the power in decision making and this is seen as particularly so in rural areas. Although both matrilineal and patrilineal systems exist even in the societies based on a traditional matrilineal system, the strong patriarchal foundation throughout the country means that power and authority is often

¹¹ AusAID (2009) Violence against women in Melanesia and East Timor

¹² Solomon Islands: Women Confronting Violence (2004), Amnesty International

¹³ AusAID (2009) Violence against Women in Melanesia and East Timor

¹⁴ AusAID(2007) Strategy for Advancing the Position of Women in Government

¹⁵ An interview with the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs

¹⁶ An interview with Women in Law Association 5 posts are at Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Planning and Aid Coordination, Ministry of Land, Ministry of Reconciliation and Peace

actually assumed by the brothers and/or husband of a woman, and if she has daughters, the husband of the eldest (future inheritor) assumes control.

Women are traditionally "as wives and mothers" primarily responsible for domestic roles: a nurturer, caregiver and supporter. In Solomon Islands, the traditional culture "Kastom" dictates the role of women and men. "Kastom" is based on traditional beliefs and social norms, rooted partly in ancestor and partly in male worship. "Kastom" often requires women to be "decent" and restricts women's behaviors and their dress code. There has been a blurring of this traditional "Kastom" culture in urban areas, however, it is still extremely important and the culture is embedded deeply in it, particularly in rural societies.

Bride price, a practice in which a husband is expected to make a payment to his wife's family when he marries, is also widely observed in Solomon Islands, and the bride price is seen by many as giving a degree of ownership to a man over his wife, and this is often interpreted as a license to beat her and treat her as he wishes.

Traditionally, women were often valued and respected as having equivalence in intrinsic worth, under the belief that their body was a source of power and wealth to their families, and women thereby had their own spheres of influence and control within the household and greater community in Solomon Islands. However, due to Christianization, colonial hierarchies, and an introduction of large scale development under male authority, a strong patriarchal base has been created and women have been gradually forced into a position subordinate to men.

2-2 Government Policy on Gender

Government Policy on Gender

- 1) The government policy statement in early 2008 committed itself to achieving gender equality in education and employment, as one of the core principles and objectives for development in the country; with the “Medium Term Development Strategy 2008-2010” also recognizing the importance of women’s development in rural communities.
- 2) “National Policy on Gender Equality and Women’s Development” was developed by the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs with an official approval by the cabinet in January 2010. A specific Policy on Eliminating Violence against Women has also been drafted by the government of Solomon Islands.
- 3) Solomon Islands Law Reform Commission has been reviewing the penal code with gender perspective, revising relevant sections of the code which relate to violence against women and child abuse cases.

[Government Policy on Gender]

The Solomon Islands government ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2002. In addition, the government adopted a number of women specific international and regional agreements, including the UN Security Council Resolution "1325" (2000), the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality 2005-2015. At a national level, the national constitution of Solomon Islands enshrines the principles of non-discrimination, protection of fundamental rights, and freedoms for all its citizens regardless of sex. The constitution is currently under review and discussions to include a stronger equal rights component, reflecting the international commitment to which Solomon Islands Government is signatory, are taking place. The government's policy statement in early 2008 committed itself to achieve gender equality in education and employment, as one of the core principles and objectives for development in the country¹⁷. The country “Medium Term Development Strategy 2008-2010” also recognized the importance of achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment¹⁸.

¹⁷ AusAID (2008) Enhancing Capacity in Organisations that have the Potential to Foster Women’s Aspirations to public Office

¹⁸ MTDS sets 4 strategies for gender equality and women’s empowerment: 1) comprehensive framework of protection and recognition will be enshrined in the constitution; 2) women’s participation in development is enhanced; 3) women’s increased capacity representation and participation opportunities; and 4) develop capacity of the national women’s machineries and key social sector institutions

[Action Plan for Women and Development]

Reflecting national commitments to gender equality, the government of Solomon Islands developed a “National Policy on Gender Equality and Women’s Development”, which the cabinet officially approved in January 2010. The first Solomon Islands national policy for women was formulated in 1998; however, this policy has not actually been implemented due to several reasons: 1) it focused more on the importance of “development of women”, lacking both concrete strategies and attention to addressing gender inequalities within the national development strategies, priorities and programs; 2) the policy did not have a specific implementation plan; and 3) the civil unrest caused by the armed conflict in 1998-2003 made it difficult to execute the policy.

The new “National Policy on Gender Equality and Women’s Development” is an updated version of the National Women’s Policy, which followed several reviewing processes by the government and other stakeholders. The new policy recognizes that women and men are equal partners in the development of Solomon Islands, and places gender equality as an indispensable factor for economic and social progress. It also recognizes that in order to redress gender inequalities, it is necessary to mainstream gender perspectives into national development strategies and priorities, and to promote investment in women’s development programs and projects¹⁹.

National Policy on Gender Equality and Women’s Development (2010-2015)

Policy Goal:

To promote gender equality and enhance women’s development ensuring the active contribution and meaningful participation of both Solomon Islands women and men in all spheres, and at all levels of development and decision making.

Five Priority Outcomes:

- (a) Improved and equitable health and education for women, men, girls and boys.
- (b) Improved economic status of women
- (c) Equal participation of women and men in decision making and leadership
- (d) Elimination of violence against women
- (e) Increased capacity for gender mainstreaming

¹⁹ The National Policy on Gender Equality and Women’s Development also includes action plans for the next 5 years. The action includes policies on development for each key sector and issues, development of a database of sex disaggregated data, conducting of a gender training and assessment study, establishment of a gender desk in key ministries, etc...

The government of Solomon Islands has also drafted a specific Policy on Eliminating Violence against Women, which will be the basis for strengthening legislative protection and law enforcement; preventative approaches and provision of support services. The policy document as of January 2010 had been submitted to the cabinet and was awaiting approval.

Positive measures addressed in the policy on eliminating violence against women:

- 1) Address the social, political, legal and economic inequalities that cause and perpetuate violence against women
- 2) Address the triggers that result in violence against women
- 3) Strengthen prevention efforts that address discriminatory practices and social and cultural norms
- 4) Uphold and raise awareness about women's rights and the responsibility of Solomon Islands' citizens to respect the rights of others

[Gender related laws and regulations]

The Constitution of Solomon Islands states, under section 3/chapter 2, that citizens there are entitled to fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, irrespective of race, place of origin, political orientation, color, creed, or sex²⁰, although there are no laws for affirmative action, or laws prohibiting sexual discrimination or any minimum wage law²¹.

Currently, there is no domestic violence legislation, and marital rape is not a criminal offence with most domestic violence incidents settled by customary law. For example, it is common for a case to be reconciled by a village chief or community leader, through compensation paid to the wife's family if the husband is considered to be in the wrong²². A payment is also to be made to the husband's family if the wife is considered to be at fault. Solomon Islands' current penal code, defined in 1963, does not fully include provisions for cases of rape, incest, sexual assault, and child abuse. Due to the reason, prosecutors face difficulties to try these types of cases, thereby allowing impunity to frequent occur²³.

The Evidence Act 2009 made an important step towards the current penal code reform process. It removed the corroboration rule, which required a woman to submit other independent supporting

²⁰ Constitution of Solomon Islands 1978 http://www.paclii.org/sb/legis/consol_act/c1978167/

²¹ The Labour Act in the Solomon Islands states that women are entitled to up to 12 weeks' maternity leave and one hour per day to leave work to nurse their babies.
http://www.paclii.org/cgi-bin/sinodisp/sb/legis/consol_act/la84/la84.html?stem=&synonyms=&query=labour%20and%20act%20and%20solomon%20and%20islands%20and%20maternity%20and%20leave

²² Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study: A study on violence against women and children (2009) Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs supported by SPC

²³ AusAID (2009) Violence against Women in Melanesia and East Timor

“evidence” of the incident in question. The Act also requires judicial permission before a complainant can be questioned about her past sexual history (which does not directly relate to the issues in the case) with other men. In addition, the Act provides the court with the discretion to permit the complainant and other witnesses with the ability to testify without facing the defendant.

Currently, Solomon Islands Law Reform Commission is reviewing the penal code revising relevant sections of the code though clarifying the definitions of sexual offences including rape, incest, DV, indecent assault, and sexual abuse of children. This is in order to bring justice closer to the victims of sexual violence by reforming the code to clearly recognize that violence/sexual assault against women and children are criminal offences.²⁴ Yet, it is recognized that it will take several years for the reforms to be made and be put into action.

A Domestic Violence Unit (DVU) and Sexual Offences Unit (SOU) were established within the police department in 2005. This was a great step for promoting the elimination of violence against women and is highly acclaimed among stakeholders in the country. The DVU has developed a domestic violence policy which includes the establishment of “no-drop” procedures, including the mandatory arrest of offenders. The “No drop policy” assures that the investigation will be continued and that the case will be sent to court, once a complaint has been lodged, regardless of whether the woman who claimed to have been sexually assaulted (often suffering victimization) subsequently asks to have the charges dropped²⁵. “No-drop policy” was introduced reflecting many actual cases where women dropped the charges, suffered in silence while receiving different forms of threats and social pressures.

[GAD related laws and regulations]

Laws and regulations	Date	Content
The Evidence Act	2009	The Act removes the corroboration rule which require independent supporting evidence in addition to the victim’s claim of sexual assault.
Islander’s marriage Act	1978	The Act established the legal age for marriage as 15 years of age. Marriage under the age of 18 years requires the consent of the father, and if he is not alive or is of unsound of mind, the consent of the mother.
Ordinance for Separation and Maintenance	1971	It guarantees women’s rights for divorce.

Source: Women in Law association, interview from the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children, UNICEF (1993)²⁶

²⁴ AusAID (2009) Addressing Violence against Women in Melanesia and East Timor

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ UNICEF (1993) A situational Analysis of Women and Children in the Solomon Islands

2-3 National Machinery for the Advancement of Women

Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs

- 1) In 2010, under the decree of Solomon Islands government, the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs (MWYCA) took responsibility for and became the National Machinery for Women's Development in the Solomon Islands. It is expected that MWYCA functioning as the National Machinery for Women will, in partnership with women's civil organizations, advance women's position in the Solomon Islands.
- 2) One of the major challenges to promote gender mainstreaming is lack of government officials' capacity and technical skills to produce planning, monitoring and coordination, which includes insufficient financial resources to carry out and monitor the mainstreaming of gender equality programs.

[Background]

Women's Interest Section (WIS), which was later transformed into the National Women's Machinery, was first established in Solomon Islands as a governmental branch for women in 1964²⁷. This was a decade before the first United Nations World Conference on Women in 1975. However, the WIS operated by focusing on traditional family welfare and domestic spheres of women, in providing training for women such as cooking, baking, sewing, embroidery and health care.²⁸ WIS was later transformed into the Women's Development Division (WDD) which has been housed in several Ministries such as Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports or the Ministry of Home Affairs. Since 2007, WDD was placed under the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs. While the WDD has so far played the role of the National Women's Machinery in Solomon Islands, the government of Solomon Islands has now decided the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs should be responsible for gender perspective mainstreaming division of, and become the National Machinery for Women in Solomon Island. Keeping WDD as a direct implementation unit as well as adding a new separate division, the Research, Policy planning and Information Division, all under MWYCA. It is now expected that MWYCA functioning as the National Machinery for advancing women will also establishing a close partnership with the National Council of Women, which is an umbrella organization of women's associations, and other women's civil organizations.

[National Machinery for Women]

There are 36 technical posts for government officials within the MWYCA²⁹, though some of these posts still remain vacant, while the Ministry is understaffed. The WDD is responsible for the

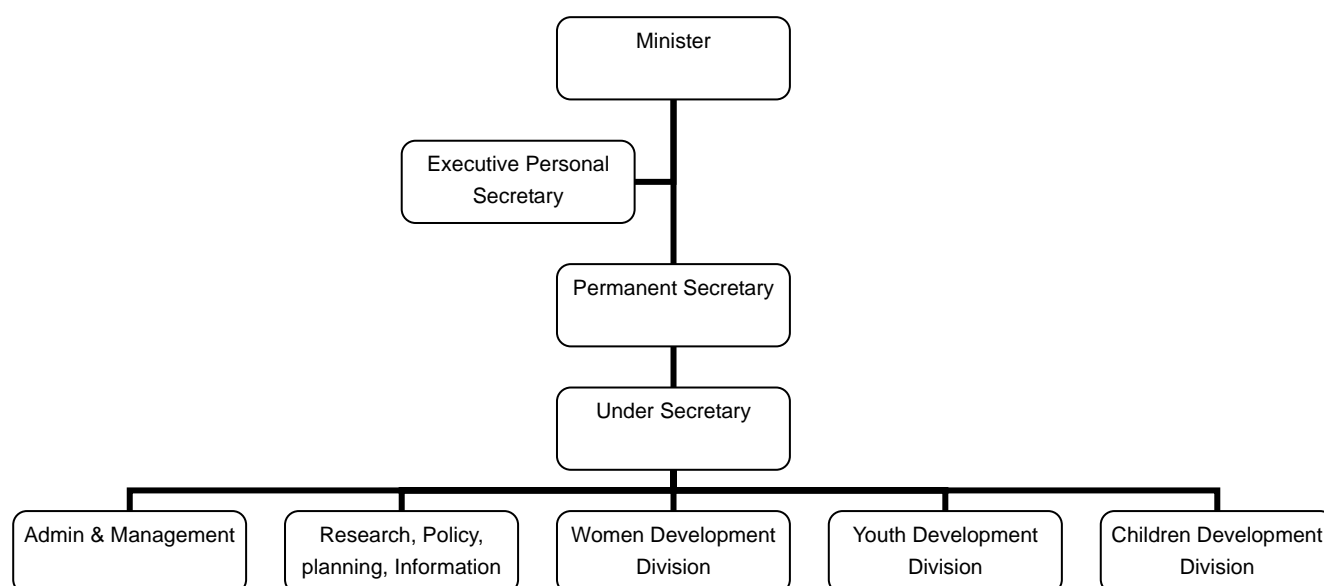
²⁷ Whittington, S., Ospina, S., Pollard, A (2006) "Women in Government in Solomon Islands A diagnostic Study"

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ministry of Women, Youth and Children's Affairs Corporate Plan of (2008-2010)

implementation of newly formulated “National Policy on Gender Equality and Women’s Development”. In its role as an implementation unit of the Ministry, the WDD is currently allocated 8 officer’s posts, 7 of which have filled³⁰. As the WDD only had two officers last year, there is enthusiasm among stakeholders that the increased number of staff clearly represents the government's commitment to the promotion of mainstreaming of gender equality in the country. The newly established division on Research, Policy Planning and Information is currently allocated 5 officers posts, 3 of which are filled; in close collaboration with the WDD, the division is also expected to work on gender mainstreaming by conducting gender related research, data collection and analysis, to promote gender mainstreaming toward women’s empowerment and advance gender equality.

Name of National Machinery	Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs
No. of personnel	36 posts (8 officers at WDD, 3 officers at Research Policy Planning and Information Division)
Budget	Approx. \$SD 1,460,000 (Solomon Dollars) (2010)
Objectives	To empower women to participate as equal partners at all levels of the development process in the country
Roles	To facilitate, coordinate and implement activities that lead to women’s empowerment and gender equality mainstreaming (Research, statistics, Policy, advocacy and advisory for other line ministries)



[Main Activities of the Ministry for Women Youth and Children Affairs]

The major role of MWYCA is to facilitate, coordinate, implement and monitor activities that increase women’s participation and capacity to achieve gender equality, as well as women’s empowerment. MWYCA is responsible for promoting the mainstreaming of gender equality, for women's

³⁰ Interview with the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs

advancement and the promotion of gender equality based on the national policy of Gender Equality and Women's Development along with other international commitments and obligations.

3 Main strategies:

- (1) Promote participation of women to decision making positions at local, provincial and national levels
- (2) Improve information on the situation of women in Solomon Islands to influence policy and programming
- (3) Increase women's skills and knowledge to improve their participation in national, community and individual development

MWYCA developed a Plan of Action for 2010 with three main strategies (see above)³¹. While making efforts to build their own capacities to promote the mainstreaming of gender equality, the MWYCA also plans to promote gender equality mainstreaming by reinforcing collaborations with other line ministries, donors and relevant stakeholders³².

Main Activities of MWYCA:

- Mainstreaming of Gender equality using constitutional reform to establish and advocacy to ensure the rights of women
- Review and formulate recommendations on Law Reform and advocacy
- Formulate a policy to eliminate violence against women
- Strengthen network links with women's civil organizations
- Undertake a review and gender analysis of policies, programs and activities in key line ministries, while providing and facilitating gender training
- Establish gender focal point in key line ministries through discussion and support
- Facilitate sex disaggregated data collection and coordinate training at all ministries
- Conduct research on specific areas of concerns on women

The MWYCA is facing several problems and challenges in advancing the mainstreaming of gender equality activities. Due to the lack of availability of office space, the WDD is currently located in two separate offices, making effective coordination between its staff members difficult. Despite the government commitment to gender equality at policy level, the MWYCA has insufficient financial resources to carry out and monitor the mainstreaming of gender equality programs, resulting in delivery delays and inconsistencies. Another concern is the MWYCA official's inadequate capacity,

³¹ Interview with the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children

³² Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs Corporate Plan 2008-2010

technical knowledge and skills to establish links with other ministries to mainstreaming of gender perspective. Collaboration and coordination with other line ministries is at the moment minimal and the MWYCA is not effectively collecting information on policies, programs of other line ministries.

Other major challenges for the MWYCA already identified by the stakeholders were deficiencies in technical skills and capacity for planning, monitoring and coordination. Most of the MWYCA current activities are limited to providing grants to NGOs or conducting small-scale workshops and skills training programs for women. Stakeholders state that there is no concrete strategy developed on how to integrate women's civil organizations such as the National Council of Women (NCW) which has been playing an important role in women's advancement in the Solomon Islands. Another important concern is the MWYCA unclear vision and strategies on how to reach and deliver the services of gender mainstreaming for women in the rural provinces.

[Other Ministries]

At present, the Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination has a gender focal point (designated officer) in place, who has been assigned to work towards achieving the mainstreaming of gender equality goals within the Ministry. However, there is no specific terms of reference developed yet and the post does not have sufficient authority within the agency to promote change. Along with lack of funding and authority, there has been insufficient technical support provided by the MWYCA for this gender focal point, and its endeavors have been totally depended upon the individual's own efforts.

There are no other line ministries which have been actively working on the mainstreaming of gender equality.³³ The Ministry of Health is currently with technical support from WHO and UNFPA preparing an independent policy on eliminating violence against women in order to promote women's health. This ministry has also conducted training for their own officials on gender analysis, gender planning and violence against women. It also plans to establish a "gender desk" (a person in a position that is in charge of gender issue and coordinating actions to meet them accordingly) within the Ministry in order to promote the mainstreaming of gender equality within the Ministry and the health administration.

³³ Interview with the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs and other donors

3. Current Situation of Women by Sector

3-1 Education

Education

- 1) Complementing the “National Strategic Framework 2007-2015”, the Ministry of Education has developed the “National Education Action Plan 2010-2012” which aim is to provide universal access to quality basic education for all. The plan also aims to reduce gender disparity in education, in particular in rural areas; however there are no specific strategies or programs which target the special needs of female students.
- 2) The net enrolment rate for primary education is 94% and approximately 48% of them were female in 2008. The net enrolment rate for secondary education decreased considerably from primary to 31%, female student net enrolment rate dropped to 17% in senior secondary. In 2009, only 30% of female students successfully received a government scholarship, compared to 70% of male students.

[Government Policy]

The “National Education Action Plan 2010-2012” states that the government should strengthen its educational system by improving educational infrastructure such as providing an adequate number of schools, class rooms, desks and dormitories in order to achieve equitable access to education for all regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, location or disability. The plan also promotes strengthening the educational system though delivering a quality education, by providing an adequate number of qualified teachers, reviewing the national school curriculum and amending relevant teaching methodologies. The plan aims to reducing gender disparity in education, particularly in rural areas³⁴.

[Gender perspectives in educational development plan]

The Ministry of Education conducted an assessment study³⁵ between 2006-2008 which indicates the progress and challenges, including the issues relating to gender and regional disparities in primary, secondary, technical and vocational education sector. There is among the stakeholders a degree of recognition and understanding about the current gender disparities in the education sector, and there is a combined effort to at least collect gender disaggregated data and statistics to measure enrollment and dropout rates. There are no major specific programs or actions developed which target the special needs of female students and the Ministry does not show clear strategies and action plans to promote the mainstreaming of gender equality in education.

³⁴ National Education Action Plan 2010-2012, Ministry of Education

³⁵ Performance Assessment framework (2006-2008), Ministry of Education

[Primary education]

The formal education system in Solomon Islands consists of 6 years in primary, starting from 6 years old, and another 7 years in secondary (3 years in junior secondary, 4 years in senior secondary (including 2 years in preparatory course for college))³⁶. According to the Ministry of Education study in 2008³⁷, the net enrolment rate for primary education is 94% and approximately 48% of them are females. And with a 94% net enrolment for girls and 95% for boys in primary education, there is no significant gender gap; dropout rates are similarly equal at 13% for both girls and boys. Primary education is basically free for citizens but it is not compulsory. Therefore the average participation rate is estimated as low as 60%, although the government statistics show a higher net enrolment rate³⁸.

[Secondary education]

The net enrolment rate for secondary education decreases considerably (from primary) to 31%, female student net enrolment rate dropped to 17% in senior secondary³⁹. The overall dropout rate from secondary education is significant, 63% in 2008, with 59% of female students dropping out from secondary education, according to the report from the Ministry of Education.⁴⁰ There is also a gap between the urban and rural areas in net enrolment in secondary education, 26% in rural areas compared to 47% in urban areas. There is no recent gender disaggregated data to figure out an education participation rate for females in rural area. Although, girls are particularly disadvantaged and participation rate were lowest at senior secondary in Rennel and Bellona region in 2008⁴¹. The low participation rate of female students in rural sector is attributable not only as a reflection of the isolation of many rural communities but also as a reflection of cultural influences there that disempower young women⁴².

[Tertiary education]

There are only two tertiary institutions including Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE) and a Honiara branch campus of University of the South Pacific Centre which headquarter are based in Fiji. Those who intend to enter the University in Solomon Islands have to apply either to the government scholarship program or an individual scholarship funded by donors⁴³. According to

³⁶ Interview with the Ministry of Education

³⁷ Performance Assessment Framework 2006-2008

³⁸ Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety study (2009) Ministry of Women, Youth and Children supported by SPC

³⁹ Performance Assessment Framework 2006-2008

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Lawrence, D. and Allen, M (2006) Report of the Community Sector Program Snapshot. Honiara: Community Sector Program

⁴³ NZAID has an internal policy for 50/50 balance between male and female

the Ministry of Education in 2009, only 30% of female students successfully received the government scholarship, compared to 70% of male students⁴⁴.

[Literacy education]

In Solomon Islands, there is some concern about the accuracy of some of the literacy data, and the Ministry of Education does not have a clear literacy rates figure. Some NGOs estimate the actual adult (aged 15-49) literacy rate in rural areas to be around 21% for men and 11% for women⁴⁵. On the other hand, A demographic and Health survey (2007) conducted by the government statistic office, reported that in the age group 15-49, only 21% of women and 11% of men can not read and write; and reported the percentage of literate men to be 95% in an urban area compared to 87% in rural areas. The figures show a similar trend for women 86% in urban area are literate compared with 77% in rural areas. NGOs and women activists point out that there are still strong demands and needs for literacy education in rural areas; however, there is no firm scheme or specific program provided by the government at the moment to alleviate this problem. Local NGOs or church affiliated women's groups that are widely spread throughout the country play an important role in improving female literacy education in rural areas⁴⁶.

[Vocational and Technical education]

There are 30 vocational and technical training insinuations called "Vocational Rural Training Centres" in the country. The total attendance number in 2008 was 2, 667 including 604 female students, this low female representation at 23%⁴⁷ which indicates overall poor representation. There is a tendency reflecting traditional gender role in the society for female students to study home economics or nursing (while females represent only 30% of students on finance and management courses, whereas in nursing 64% of students are female⁴⁸). Women have and do play important roles in fisheries, industrial development, agriculture and natural resource management in Solomon Islands, although women's contribution to these sectors are always regarded as "informal" society, and women only represent approximately 2.5% of those receiving formal skills training or educations in these sectors⁴⁹.

⁴⁴ Database of the Ministry of Education

⁴⁵ Education Watch, World Vision Report (2007)

⁴⁶ Scheyvens (2003) "Church Women's Groups and the Empowerment of Women in Solomon Islands" and Interview with the Ministry of Education

⁴⁷ Database of the Ministry of Education department of planning (2010)

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

3-2 Health

Health

- 1) The Ministry of Health with assistances from WHO and others is currently planning to develop a health policy on violence against women. A Gender Desk is also to be set up to mainstream gender equality into the ministry and health administrations.
- 2) The total fertility rate is 4.6 and current maternal mortality rate is 130 in every 100,000 births. About 85% of births are at medical facilities and assisted by appropriate technicians, but the remaining 15% are not, the majority of the latter being in rural areas.

[Government Policy]

The government of Solomon Islands developed a National Health Strategic Plan (2006-2010) under the slogan “all the citizens shall enjoy the benefit of health”. The prioritized areas of the plan were: countermeasures against malaria⁵⁰; women’s reproductive health in addition to the promotion of family planning; and countermeasures against HIV/AIDS and STDs. The ministry plans to ensure access to reproductive health services for every woman by 2015, in accordance with its commitment made in the Beijing Platform Action Plan and International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo.

[Medical Health]

The Ministry of Health is planning to improve the quality of healthcare and health services in order to give Solomon Islanders appropriate healthcare access to services regardless of their race, gender, religion, political orientation, or socioeconomic status. The reality is that the current healthcare service is far from meeting demands in terms of quantity and quality. This is an island nation and its population is spread out widely. It makes the installation of healthcare facilities to cater for all extremely hard and therefore contributes to them being far from satisfactory. Combined this with poor transport system and overall poverty, healthcare becomes very difficult to access, especially for those living in remote islands and rural areas. This issue is compounded by hard daily physical labor, which makes pregnant women in agricultural areas particularly vulnerable to illnesses, and yet their access to maternity medical services is a huge challenge. What is required for these women is better access to high quality medical services.

⁵⁰ Malaria remains a serious health problem in Solomon Islands with an infection rate of 15%. Malaria is one of the major causes of death among children less than 5 years old and babies less than 1 year old. (Ministry of Health)

Current maternal mortality rate in Solomon Islands is 130 in every 100,000 births⁵¹. About 85% of births are at medical facilities and assisted by appropriate technicians, but the remaining 15% are not, the majority of the latter being in rural areas⁵². Because access to medical facility is limited due to poverty, lack of appropriate transportation, infection to malaria and insufficient knowledge about pregnancy (especially by those close to the mother) the task to rectify all this is large.

[Nutrition Conditions]

In Solomon Islands, 3% of women are undernourished while 38% of women (in urban areas) are overweight. Women tend to suffer from nutritional imbalance, with only 25% of women having balanced meals⁵³. This unbalanced diet lowers women's and children's immunity. According to Solomon Islands Demographic and Health Survey (2007), 44% of girls and women aged 15 - 49 and 60% of pregnant women suffered from anemia. As women's nutritional deficiency and their lack of knowledge about nutrition is having a great affect on their children, educating women on nutrition is widely recognized by stakeholders to be vital⁵⁴.

[Family Planning]

The total fertility rate which indicates the number of children one woman gives birth to in her lifetime is 4.6 across the entire country. It is actually 3.4 in urban areas and 4.8 in rural areas, with a large margin dividing the two⁵⁵. Both men and women are educated about family planning; according to the Demographic and Health Survey (2007), 93% of women and 99% of men have heard about contraception, with only 58% of women who have actually used contraceptive methods. In Solomon Islands, women are culturally discouraged from talking about contraception, and because men who are the main decision makers are not keen to use contraceptive methods, this utilization of contraception has not been adopted into social practices. There is a high teenage pregnancy rate, with 12% of girls aged between 15 and 19 years old experiencing pregnancy and childbirth⁵⁶.

[HIV/AIDS]

The number of those infected with HIV/AIDS and STDs has increased in urban areas since 2002. In Honiara, the capital of Solomon Islands, 12.45 out of every 1000 people were infected with STDs⁵⁷. As of January 2010, the official number of HIV infected persons was 12 (8 of them are women), but the potential number of infections is estimated to be more than ten times above this amount⁵⁸. The

⁵¹ Demographic and Health Survey 2006-2007, The government of Solomon Islands

⁵² Solomon Islands Family Health and safety Study (2009), Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs supported by SPC

⁵³ Demographic and Health Survey 2006-2007, The government of Solomon Islands

⁵⁴ Interview at the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, National Council of Women, UNICEF

⁵⁵ Demographic and Health Survey 2006-2007, The government of Solomon Islands

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ "No Laws to Deal with HIV and AIDS" Solomon Times Online, May 2007

⁵⁸ Ministry of Education

Ministry of Health is predicting that the number of HIV patients will reach at least 350 by the end of 2010. Many organizations are warning that frequent violence against women in the country will put women directly and indirectly in danger of contracting a HIV infection. Some Research shows that women who are subjected to sexual violence are forced to have unprotected sex, possibly with multiple assailants. Some women engage in sexual intercourse for money or drugs⁵⁹. In Solomon Islands, many women who have violent husbands cannot discuss the use of condoms, and women who are raped cannot tell their husbands that they have been infected with HIV⁶⁰. Many infected women and/or their family members reject HIV tests and treatment in fear of discrimination, prejudice, and/or disgrace once found to be positive. The Ministry's policy for prevention is to promote abstinence, faithfulness, or sex with one partner, as well as encouraging the use of condoms⁶¹.

⁵⁹ Women's Asia 21 (2004) HIV/AIDS Gender, Human rights and HIV/AIDS, Asia Japan Women's Resource Center

⁶⁰ Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study (2009), World Vision Report (2007)

⁶¹ Solomon Islands National Health Strategic Plan 2006-2010

3-3 Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

- 1) The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock had no policy or program specifically targeted towards women's empowerment.
- 2) Some parts of this nation maintain a matrilineal society where the customary land is inherited by tribeswomen. However many of these women inherit it in name only, with the decision making regarding its management and utilization being predominately completed by males.
- 3) Women living in coastal areas of Solomon Islands actively participate in subsistence fishing, mainly involved in collecting fish and shellfish for their own consumption. There is some small scale marketing of them as well.

[Government Policy and Gender]

Solomon Islands government has developed the National Agriculture and Livestock Sector Policy (2009-2014) which aims to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods and food security, as well as create employment. The ministry has set the following priority actions and strategies for the period of 2007 to 2010:

- Development of Oil Palm Production
- Establishing of Commercial Rice Production Projects
- Rehabilitation and Development of Coconut and Cocoa Plantations
- Set-up small Livestock Project
- Revival of the cattle industry
- Pursue Development of Exotic and Indigenous Fruits

As of January 2010, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock had no policy or program developed yet on gender mainstreaming. As an ad-hoc measure short-term projects are planned, such as workshops on: women's role in agriculture; educating women about nutrition; or promoting marketing by women agriculturists. But these are all additional activities based on the availability of funding from donors and are not a part of any of the ministry's main strategies. The ministry has indicated that they will hire more female staff and provide equal opportunities for promotions to women (60% of the new staff in 2008 were women⁶²). Still, this is not yet officially institutionalized. As of now, the ministry's policies, budget and programs towards introducing a gender perspective are not

⁶² Interview with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock

mainstreamed, and projects which aim specifically to reflect the needs of women in agriculture sector are not yet included⁶³.

[Ownership of farming land and agrarian reform]

In Solomon Islands, 88% of the land is what is called “customary land” which is traditionally an important part of shared commodity vested in clans and tribes⁶⁴. Some parts of this nation maintain a matrilineal society where the customary land is inherited by tribeswomen, however many of these women inherit it in name only, with the decision making regarding its management and utilization being predominately completed by males. It is strong example that in the plantation business the foreign capital and commercial logging companies tend to negotiate and form contracts with males whom they consider to be the land owner⁶⁵. In this way, the position of women who have been traditionally a landowner has been gradually weakened. The government has begun to implement policies regarding land usage and ownership in order to clarify the women’s right to own the land. Currently, there are three domestic laws regarding land ownership and registration which are: “Land and Titles Act (1969)”, “Forestry Act (1969)” and “Customary Land Records Act (1992)”⁶⁶. The Customary Land Records Act is currently under review, as was the constitution too and there is a movement to include an article in the constitution which would guarantee women’s land ownership rights⁶⁷.

[Rural life and gender]

Division of labor by gender is particularly prominent in rural areas. Men engage in growing commercial products on a large scale, while women engage in additionally to household chores growing food products, which are consumed by family members. According to a 2007 survey by the Statistic Bureau, 71% of women engaged in substance agriculture while 51% of men did.⁶⁸ Research conducted by Pollard (2000) found women spend a longer duration than men everyday on agricultural work, and the work they did amounted to three times that of men. Still, women’s work is often considered as informal labor to be supplemented to men’s labor, thus their economic contribution is not fully acknowledged by the society and government. As a result, women’s needs and contribution are not fully reflected in development plans, preventing women from receiving necessary tools or equipment for agriculture and extension services, including technical training and financial loans.

⁶³ In the past, the Ministry implemented “women in Agriculture program” supported by NZAID. However, after the completion of the project implementation, there is no specific program for women in the Ministry. While the Ministry of Agriculture and livestock recognize the importance of women’s development in agriculture sector and states that the trainings and extension services are provided regardless of gender of participants, there is no gender mainstreaming strategies which also look at the specific needs of women in agriculture at the moment.

⁶⁴ Live & Learn (2009) “ Research of Aspirations and Perceptions”

⁶⁵ Scheyvens, R. (2003) Church Women’s groups and the Empowerment of Women in Solomon Islands

⁶⁶ Maetala, R (2007) Matrilineal Land Tenure System in Solomon Islands: The case of Guadalcanal, Makira and Isabel Province

⁶⁷ Interview with Women in law Association

⁶⁸ National Demographic and Health Survey 2006-2007

Women in rural areas are particularly barred from access to various information and knowledge and this is what is eroding women's power in rural areas⁶⁹.

[Extension Activities and Training for Women]

The Ministry of agriculture currently has 153 agricultural extension workers who provide training and services on agriculture, 54 of which are women who like their male colleagues go out into the community and provide technical support⁷⁰. There is no particular program or specific training with particular gender perspective i.e. programs that looks at the special needs of women in agriculture and the issues for improving their livelihoods. With the help of NGOs and/or donors, training courses on growing vegetables and education on nutrition have been conducted for women but the number of such activities is minor in comparison to those for males⁷¹.

[Forestry]

Logging has been regarded as one of the country's major revenue sources since the 1990s accounting for about 70% of total exports and about 18% of the country's annual revenue⁷². Many foreign companies are engaged in the logging industry which, almost exclusively, provides males with employment opportunities. According to research done by Fukuhara (2003), Eagon Pacific Plantation Ltd in its operation in western "tetemara" village in 2001, it employed 10 foreign workers and 170 local workers. Out of which (local) only two were female showing it to be an overwhelmingly male dominated industry. This means for local women that while they benefit through their husbands and other male family members cash income, at the same time their work burden greatly increases due to the impact of deforestation (See "Environment and Gender"). Pollard (2000) points out that the increase in child marriages, teen age pregnancy, prostitution and violence against local women by the timber related workers are widely observed.

[Fisheries]

According to the research carried out by Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) in 2006⁷³, women living in coastal areas in Solomon Islands actively participate in subsistence fishing, mainly involved in collecting fish and shellfish for their own consumption, there is some small scale marketing of them as well. According to research conducted by NZAID⁷⁴ out of 500 workers at a fish canning factory in Noro area, 80% were women, and in the processing section 100% of the workers were women. Women are given work clothes and protective gear, and some receive compensation in

⁶⁹ Pollard (2000) *Givers of Wisdom, Labourers without gain*

⁷⁰ Interview with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock

⁷¹ Interview with Ministry of Agriculture, National Council of Women, Ministry of Women, Youth and Children

⁷² Hutchens.A with contribution from Sonali Bishop. IFC (2008) "Women in Business in Solomon Islands"

⁷³ Tuara-Demke, Patricia 2006, Gender issues in the Pacific Islands Tuna industry, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and South Pacific Committees

⁷⁴ Gender issues in Fisheries, A report prepared for the NZAID Fisheries review 2009 (Draft)

the event of accidents and injuries, although it is hard work and hours are long, and thus many develop health problems. Also, the NZAID research indicates that, just like in forestry, women and girls are subject to commercial sexual exploitation by men related to the industry.

3-4 Economic Activities

Economic Activities

- 1) In 2002, only 9% of the female population was employed in the public sector while 65% were employed in the informal private sector, mostly in village based micro-enterprises. Estimates suggest that of the overall workforce in formal paid private sector employment only 14% of it comprises of women.
- 2) There are currently no specific laws or legislation on equal opportunity and equal pay for women and men, or that address sexual discrimination, or that deal with sexual harassment in the workplace.
- 3) Microfinance schemes or banking services for women are limited in Solomon Islands, in particular for rural women. It is often the case that women have very little access to loan and credit facilities.

[Employment opportunities]

In Solomon Islands Logging and Fishing industries, dependent on rich natural resources, have been generally regarded as important industries, seen to be contributing to providing many employment opportunities for the Solomon Islands citizens⁷⁵. In reality, however, within the total adult population seeking employment, the actual numbers who are employed in the industry remain low. An AusAID study (2008) reports that two thirds of the adult population and three-quarters of women do not engage in any formal paid work in the country⁷⁶.

While women's employment (including self-employment) is increasing, there is still in Solomon Islands significant gender disparity in the employment sector. The Solomon Islands Demographic Health Survey in 2007 found that 42% of currently married women aged 15-49 were employed during the last 12 months. On the other hand, 87% of currently married men in the same age group had had employment in the last 12 months. However it is noteworthy that the definition of "employment" is not clear and the study reported that of the people assessed in it, 56% of the women and 24% of the men in were not paid for their work.

[Women workers in public and private sector]

There is no recent data about women's employment in the Solomon Islands. According to a Study by the UNDP in 2002, only 9% of the female population was employed in the public sector and 65% were employed in the private sector mostly in village based micro-enterprises. Estimates predict that

⁷⁵ Hutchens.A with contribution from Sonali Bishop. IFC (2008) "Women in Business in Solomon Islands

⁷⁶ AusAID (2008) Pacific Economic survey 2008

women comprise only 14% of the total formally paid employment workforce in the private sector⁷⁷. Hutchens' study (2008) showed that although 54.3% of women over 15 years old are estimated to be economically active, a lack of government statistics on women's private sector participation or informal economic activity makes it hard to ascertain a true representation of women in business.

Women' employment in the formal non agriculture sector is estimated to be increasing, although Pollard (2000) points out that most of women are engaged in low status, low-paid jobs with average earnings close to half the average male wage. In the public sector, in 2008 women represented 30% of the workforce but held only 6% of senior positions⁷⁸. Women's overriding domestic role associated with child bearing and caring for the family (reinforced by the relative high fertility rate) and limited access to higher education are the major barriers restricting women's access to formal employment.

[Support system for female workers]

In Solomon Islands, there are currently no specific laws or legislation on equal opportunity and equal pay for women and men, or that address sexual discrimination, or that deal with sexual harassment in the workplace. Although women are legally permitted under the current labor Act⁷⁹ to take maternity leave, 12 weeks before and after delivery and have two hours per day to leave work to nurse their baby.

[Informal Sector]

Women's economic activities such as domestic food and handicraft marketing in informal sector are the major source of income for rural households. According to a study by AusAID on the rural livelihoods of 300 communities⁸⁰, 91% of the total population cited dependence on selling food at market as source of income, while handicrafts and baskets produced by women accounted for 70% of household income.

Women's small-scale economic activities in the market are more socially and culturally accepted as the ones which do not contradict gender norms in the society, and family members tend to regard these women's economic activities as an important livelihood strategy for the household. However, women's economic activities in the informal sector are predominantly small scale with small profit and are increasingly becoming vulnerable to political interference often subject to gender based violence and frequently have a working environment with poor sanitary conditions. According to the field study conducted by Hutchens, A. in 2008, there is an increasing number of discussions for some

⁷⁷ Solomon Islands Women in Business 2003

⁷⁸ AusAID (2008) Enhancing Capacity in organizations that have the Potential to Foster Women's Aspirations to Public Office

⁷⁹ UNICEF (1993) Situation of Women and Children in Solomon Islands
http://www.paclii.org/cgi-bin/sinodisp/sb/legis/consol_act/la84/la84.html?stem=&synonyms=&query=labour%20and%20act%20and%20solomon%20and%20islands%20and%20maternity%20and%20leave

⁸⁰ AusAID (2006) Community Sector Program

market places in Honiara city to join with foreign business developers or large scale operators. NGOs and community organizations have expressed deep concern that this process will restrict rural women's market access, opportunities and business stimulation⁸¹.

UNIFEM study on markets (2009) points out that, due to the limited options for market place, overcrowded and the inadequate infrastructures which lack refrigeration and storage facilities women's business growth are constrained. In addition, women often experience harassment at the marketplace by drunken men who steal and damage their goods. The lack of regulation has also encouraged a number of middlemen to operate, who buy women's goods at very low prices, repackage them and sell them on at higher prices. Also, there are many cases observed that women are often pushed out from the market and forced to sell their goods on the street due to the favoritism towards male stallholders. Because unlicensed and unregistered operation is illegal, those women on the streets are experiencing extreme difficulties to continue the operation of their economic activities⁸².

[Support for micro enterprises]

Banking services and microfinance schemes for women are limited in Solomon Islands, in particular for rural women. Often women have very little access to loans and credit facilities as women usually do not have land to mortgage or other properties to access to such services to borrow against, with women's capacity to make repayment often being underestimated⁸³. Also, microfinance schemes or banking service products themselves are very scarce in rural areas⁸⁴.

Most of the women's businesses are small-scale such as running catering business, marketing processed foods or handicrafts. Women usually do not have technical skills to produce better quality products or other business skills including saving, financial management and investment, which hampers women's effective business development⁸⁵. Women's incomes are often controlled by their husband or male family members, and due to the pervasive traditional informal social safety network based on the "Wantok"⁸⁶ system in the Solomon Islands, women entrepreneurs are seldom saving as they fear being seen as "greedy" or "selfish"⁸⁷.

There is no specific government initiative undertaken to support women entrepreneurs in Solomon Islands, some international agencies and donors such as UNIFEM, ADB and EU are planning to provide some microfinance support program for these women⁸⁸.

⁸¹ Hutchens.A with contribution from Sonali Bishop. IFC (2008) "Women in Business in Solomon Islands

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ UNICEF (2003) A situational analysis on women and Children in Solomon Islands

⁸⁴ Hutchens.A with contribution from Sonali Bishop. IFC (2008) "Women in Business in Solomon Islands

⁸⁵ Pollard (2000) Givers of Wisdom, Labourers without gain

⁸⁶ Wantok - people from the same language group who are blood relatives, being part of the extended family, who support and assist each other.

⁸⁷ Hutchens.A with contribution from Sonali Bishop. IFC (2008) "Women in Business in Solomon Islands

⁸⁸ UNIFEM and ADB are both still in the process of program development. The EU 's microfinance program offers

There are few women's organizations which are supporting women entrepreneurs such as "Women in Business Association". Their activities are limited to urban areas such as in Honiara, and there is no support provided for rural women⁸⁹.

Solomon Islands women are eager to engage in the economic activities in the private sector and have significant potential to do so, yet they lack the capital, skills and training as well as political recognition and support. In addition to promoting women's access to microfinance schemes, technical training is required such as saving methods and book keeping. Also a gender sensitive strategy and policy development to support women's economic empowerment needs to be devised and implemented.

[Migration]

Migration has been an important strategy for survival for many families in Solomon Islands, and there has been a vast amount of movement, often in the form of short-term economic migration from rural villages to plantations to work on cash crops or to towns to seek paid employment, this is especially so among males in rural areas. There is no specific recent gender analysis study or data which shows migration trends, it is widely observed that women and children are greatly affected by male migration as it adds significantly to their workload. Amnesty International (2004) reported that there also has been an increasing number of women and girls being sexual harassed while male family members are absent from the village. While female migration has also been increasing in the country⁹⁰, the majority of women's work is low-paid and low-status, with poor women who have no education and technical skills tending to be extremely vulnerable to various forms of abuse and exploitation⁹¹.

The Solomon Islands armed conflict (1998 and 2003) erupted between Guadalcanal people and settlers from Malaita Island. Indigenous armed groups of Guadalcanal men in late 1998 attacked settlers from Malaita and other islands in Guadalcanal Islands, and this localized violence escalated into armed conflict. Approximately 35,000 people have been reported to have been displaced by being forced to leave their homes became temporary refuge⁹², losing their land and other livelihood resources. While the majority suffered from the impact of displacement including inadequate access to water, food, health service and education, it is reported that women and girls in particular suffered a high rate of sexual violence not only by the militant group or gangsters but also by the intimate partners. A large number of women and girls mostly Malaitan were reported to have been raped in the attacks, meant to serve as a humiliation of the enemy. Reports say that many women were forced to prostitute themselves to the militia and that there were increases in domestic violence, separation and divorce due to the tension in the conflict, with post conflict stigmatization of raped wives.

opportunities for women's groups at a community level to apply for income generating activities

⁸⁹ Interview with Women in Business Association

⁹⁰ Pollard (1993) mentions that the number of migrant worker increased from 37% in 1976 to 42% in 1986.

⁹¹ Pollard (2000) *Givers of Wisdom, Labourers without gain*

⁹² Amnesty International (2004) *Solomon Islands: Women confronting Violence*

3-5 Disaster Management and Environment

Disaster Management and Environment

- 1) There is no sex disaggregated database developed on the victims of the natural disasters and the government has conducted no gender assessment for disaster and prevention.
- 2) Although women play an important role in environment and forest conservation as well as managing natural resources, their roles are regarded as informal and thus they are not participating enough in planning and decision making in these matters

[Government Policy]

Solomon Islands have periodically suffered from natural disasters such as floods, typhoons, volcano eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunami. People in the country are vulnerable to sea level rise and climate change effects. The earthquake and tsunami in 2007 resulted in the deaths of 52 people and 36,500 suffered some kind of damage⁹³.

The Solomon Islands government set up the National Disaster Management Office and developed the National Disaster Risk Management Plan in 2009, which was positioned as the total disaster management plan to reduce the direct consequences after a disaster, and to prevent further damages in the recovery process. An item was added to secure women's participation in decision making process at all levels of disaster prevention policy, although in it actual action women's participation is not clear, for example, in a main basic standing strategies, disaster management and recovery process, women's roles are undefined. There is no sex disaggregated database developed on the victims of the natural disasters and the government has conducted no gender assessment for disaster and prevention.

[Gender Situation in Disaster]

Women are considered as "vulnerable in disaster", as women are affected more than men by the impact of natural disasters, and it is usually the case that women in developing countries experience the impact more seriously⁹⁴. Due to the socially rooted gender division of labor, many women engage in housework and at the time of a disaster, in the absence of male family members, women take the responsibility for the rescue and taking care of children and the elderly. It's been found that women tend to wait for their husbands or fathers to come home, resulting in the women themselves not being able to escape to safety fast enough⁹⁵.

After a disaster, many are forced to stay in a shelter for an extended period of time, and because of their gender, women face problems there too. After a disaster, many women find their labour burden

⁹³ Live & Learn (2009) Research of Aspirations and Perceptions

⁹⁴ Women's Asia 21 (2005) Natural Disaster and Gender

⁹⁵ Tsunozaki, E (2007) Gender and natural disaster

and family responsibilities increased, violence against women and children is prevalent too. There is in Solomon Islands currently no gender disaggregated data about the damages in natural disasters, including for the tsunami in 2007. There also has been no research or assessment with gender analysis on women's situation at the time of this disaster or in the recovery support process after.

[Extension activities and training for women]

The means of getting information about disaster is limited for women and due to illiteracy many women have no information about disasters or how to deal with them. It has been pointed out that women should be given training and education on what to do at the time of disasters. Still, the government of Solomon Islands has not promoted a strategic approach on this matter. Although some local NGO's such as Solomon Development Trust are attempting to starting some activities such as advocacy and raising awareness training. These have only just started, and such programs with gender perspective are still scarce in the country. In order to further reduce the disaster risk, women's participation in the decision making process regarding disaster management (e.g. setting rules of managing shelters and temporary housing, and planning recovery process) should be promoted.

[Environment and Gender]

The Solomon Islands is also facing danger from environmental destruction such as deforestation and soil erosion. Forests here provide the people with timber to build houses, and other resources such as logs, animal feed, medicine, fruit and vegetables. Commercial loggings and turning forests into agricultural land (to supply the increasing population) have contributed to rapid deforestation. Women usually engage more than men in household chores, fetching water, gathering wood as well as other labors which relates to women's reproductive role. If deforestation progresses, women will have to travel further seeking the wood and water sources at a greater distance, which makes them work longer hours, leaving less time for farming and other productive labor, resulting in lower living standard⁹⁶, deteriorating into a vicious circle of increasing work and reducing standard of living. Research by a local NGO⁹⁷ reports that although women play an important role in environmental and forest conservation as well as in managing natural resources, their roles are regarded as informal and thus they are not participating enough in planning and decision making in these matters.

⁹⁶ UNICEF(1993) A situational analysis of Women and Children in the Solomon Islands

⁹⁷ Live& Learn(2009) Research of Aspiration and Perceptions

4. Gender issues and the importance of their consideration when planning future intervention in the country

(1) Enhancement of gender analysis and women's participation

Women in Solomon Islands play an important and large role on many levels, both in the household and in the community, present in areas like agriculture, natural resource management, environmental conservation, health and income generation. Although this is the case, women have generally been denied active and equal participation in planning, meeting, and training opportunities; resulting not only in women's needs being overlooked but also a limitation of the effectiveness of many different development initiatives in Solomon Islands. It is clear that ensuring women's participation at every level of the development process is vital, which is to be achieved by promoting more activities which highly recognize, respect and bring out women's initiative.

The Solomon Islands government has made it clear at policy level that they are committed to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, by ensuring women's participation at all levels in the development process. Conversely though, at program and project implementation level, many government officials have an attitude of "We are not particularly excluding women" which they interpret as having gender perspective. Women's current situation is largely due to their low socio-economic status in Solomon Islands society. Unless there is a focused gender equality action generated including initiatives promoting women's economic and educational empowerment, establishing women's rights for informed self-determination about their health and ensuring women's participation in political and social areas, women's retardation will continue and little can be expected from the development results in the country. More effort and support is needed in particular for empowering women and mainstreaming gender perspectives into government policies, programs and projects in Solomon Islands.

When providing support, before the implementation of the programs and projects, a full analysis of women's roles and needs in the community is needed. The transformation of JICA program and projects to have greater gender sensitivity can be achieved by conducting more sector or community specific studies to assess women's status and the project's potential impact. The studies should and can be completed by cooperating, collaborating and harmonizing with those who work around women's empowerment and gender equality within the country⁹⁸; Those to be worked with would include local groups, NGO's, church organizations⁹⁹ and other donors.

⁹⁸ It would be important to learn from the organizational initiatives of AusAID and NZAID which ensures gender mainstreaming into all their programs and projects by having gender advisor who checks all the project documents and provide technical support when necessary.

⁹⁹ Church organizations and their women's union are playing a vital role in terms of literacy and skill training for rural women in the community. Thus, it is important to conduct hearing and consult with these organizations when planning and implementing program and projects.

Women's involvement in ongoing JICA support program and projects should also be stipulated as a necessity, to make sure that women's participation is at least half in decision making and training. To compliment and reinforce this, strategies and policies within each on-going JICA projects to ensure women's participation in the project activities and trainings should be introduced.

In the process of promoting such initiatives, it is of paramount importance to consider the variations in women's position and situation in regards to where they inhabit and where they originate, as Solomon Islands cultural aspects have a vast diversity with over 80 different languages, all with different traditions and customs. Solomon Islands women are not homogeneous, having a different sense of values depending on their age, race, educational standard and whether they own property. Young women's voices are hardly reflected in Solomon Islands, as was often indicated during this field study¹⁰⁰, thus when reflecting women's status and needs it is vital that it also be considered according to their age groups. All these complex attributes must be considered along with gender analysis (including social, economic, political and cultural elements) in planning and promoting women's participation into the programs and projects.

(2) Women's Empowerment in economic development, agriculture, fisheries, environment and disaster prevention

There are several donors and development partners playing a catalytic role in certain specific program and projects aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Solomon Islands. Most of the current interventions are focused on the issue of violence against women and women's participation in politics and governance. Not much attention and support programs have yet been provided, in particular in rural settings, for other areas, such as promoting women's economic empowerment and livelihood improvements in agriculture, fisheries, education and health.

It is important for JICA to start making a contribution towards women's livelihood improvement and empowerment in areas such as agriculture, fisheries, disaster prevention and environment, where little support has been provided until now. This can be achieved by introducing skill training, extension services and other empowerment activities for women, along with meeting women's specific needs in health and education, which will directly benefit the improvement of livelihood for women in the community.

It would also be an exciting challenge for a JICA program to cooperate and link up with other stakeholders, like ones which are already making interventions: 1) in eliminating violence against women, and 2) in women's leadership development. This link up could be incorporated within JICA interventions for economic empowerment, agriculture and natural disaster management by conducting joint trainings, workshops and other cooperative assistances. Eliminating violence against women and women's leadership development are the key cross-cutting issues, in terms of promoting women's

¹⁰⁰ "Kastom" culture in Solomon Islands often expects young women to be "decent" by respecting men and other elders.

empowerment and gender equality in Solomon Islands. Therefore, a coordinated action between the stakeholders involved in these two areas and JICA would be expected to increase the existing efforts to eliminating violence against women and promote women's leadership development; thereby contributing altogether to greater general women's empowerment and gender equality in the country.

(3) Support for making gender perspective mainstream in disaster prevention area

Efforts towards mainstreaming gender perspectives in disaster prevention in particular seem to be important for future intervention. As of 2010, there has been no donor working on this disaster prevention connected with a gender perspective¹⁰¹. As mentioned previously, Solomon Islands has experienced many natural disasters. It is widely observed that women experience disaster differently from men. After a disaster, women's work and responsibilities increase because they need more time and labour to complete their duties, such as securing water and fuel, and cooking. After a disaster men often go to far away places as migrant workers, thus family responsibility has to be shouldered solely by the women who are left behind; also after a disaster, violence against women and children tends to increase, and a higher percentage of girls do not return to school after a disaster as they are expected to help their mother.

At the moment, there is no sex disaggregated data collected on victims of disasters, with no research and assessment on women's conditions at the point of a disaster or during the recovery process being completed, women's exact situation in the event of disasters remains unclear.

It is important to consider providing support to mainstream gender perspective into the area of natural disaster management and prevention. Support interventions can be generated such as: 1) conduct gender analysis and studies to assess the impact of disasters on women in Solomon Islands. Then clarify and compile the lesson's learnt for necessary interventions from past experience in Solomon Islands; getting this from what necessary interventions should have been implemented in previous disasters; 2) develop gender sensitive disaster prevention policies, manuals and guidelines such as installation of rules about managing shelters, distribution of aid supplies during the recovery process; including all gender perspectives (e.g. installation of separate toilets and bathrooms for men and women and consideration of health and safety issues particular to women). These support activities should be conducted by strengthening the coordination and networking linkages between the officials in charge of disaster prevention and those in the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs. Enhancing of Technical support is required to strengthen the officials' gender analysis and planning, and information sharing, is required.

In addition, women in the community generally do not have enough access to disaster related information, as to how to act (react) at the time of disaster. Thus, it is important to make sure that

¹⁰¹ Although there are several organizations which are developing support program on natural disaster management, there are no programs and projects currently developed which are particularly gender sensitive.

people who are vulnerable to disaster such as women should be given an opportunity to receive training and education about disasters.

(4) Capacity Building on Gender Mainstreaming

As Solomon Islands now has a new national policy on gender equality and women's development, it is a crucial moment to consolidate all efforts toward gender equality and women's empowerment. The Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs which is the national machinery for advancing women's status has expressed its commitment to promote mainstreaming gender perspectives into all policies, programs and project in order to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in close cooperation with each line ministries, donor agencies and other development partners. However, the ministry is viewed by many as being isolated and lacking the following: 1) the technical expertise on producing gender analysis, planning, information sharing and research (which are the basis of its policy making and advocacy role, for facilitating gender equality and women's empowerment) and 2) influencing and instigating mainstreaming gender perspectives across the different sectors of government. No consultants or advisors who engage in the technical capacity building have been sent to the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs and support with long term technical assistance is urgently needed to build the capacity of the Ministry.

Other line ministries currently do not have the technical capacity to fulfill gender mainstreaming, and no specific interventions and program for gender mainstreaming have been launched yet, except for the Ministry of Health, which is supported by WHO at the moment. Presently, under the new gender equality policy, each ministry and agency is supposed to promote mainstreaming gender perspectives into their own policies and programs. The need and importance to provide technical support to at least key line ministries is widely acknowledged among the stakeholders. The key line ministries include Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Ministry of Fisheries, and ministries and agencies in charge of disaster prevention and environment. In planning and implementing assistance, it is important to have a close discussion and coordinate with relevant international organizations which are emphasizing women's empowerment and mainstreaming gender perspectives such as AusAID, NZAID, UNIFEM, UNFPA, UNDP, WHO UNICEF, ADB, new and old NGOs as well as other local and international NGOs in the country.

5. On-going Gender Projects

Project/Program	Implementing Organization	Donor Organization	Duration	Budget (US\$)	Area/Content
Women/General					
UN Joint Action on VAW		UNDP, UNFPA, WHO, UNCEF	2010-	N.A.	Elimination of Violence against Women
Enhancing Women's Economic Security and rights (Market project)	UNIFEM /Ministry of Women and Youth and Children Affairs, Honiara City Council, relevant NGOs	UNIFEM	2010-2012 Phase II	N.A.	Women's economic empowerment and Livelihood improvement
Reducing prevalence of VAW and HIV/AIDS (EVAW program)	UNIFEM /Ministry of Women and Youth and Children Affairs, relevant NGOs	UNIFEM	2010 - ongoing	N.A.	Elimination of Violence against Women, HIV/AIDS
Advancing gender Equality in political governance	UNIFEM /Ministry of Women and Youth and Children Affairs, Women in Shared Decision Making Working Group, relevant government ministries and NGOs	AusAID	2008-2012	Approx AUD \$7 million	Women in Governance and Leadership development
The mainstreaming of gender equality and Gender Based Violence	Ministry of Health, Women, Social Affairs, WHO	AusAID	2010-2011	Approx. USD 250,000	The mainstreaming of gender equality, Violence against Women
Supporting & Building Resilience of the Vulnerable in the Pacific	Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs	ADB/Japan Poverty Reduction Fund	2010-2013	USD 3 Million	Support for women in Business, Microfinance, Capacity building for the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs
Education					
Development Scholarship	Ministry of Education	AusAID	On-going	N.A.	Scholarships
Development Scholarship	Ministry of Education	NZAID	On-going	N.A.	Scholarships
Health					
Capacity building of medical staff to effectively deal with VAW victims	Ministry of Health,	WHO, UNFPA	On-going		Violence against Women
Economic Activities					
Micro projects program	N.A.	E.U.	On-going	N.A.	Provide Microfinance for Women Entrepreneur

6. Gender Information Sources

6-1 List of Organizations related to Gender

Name of Organization	Areas of Specialization	Activity	Contact
Organizations related to Gender in Solomon Islands			
Government Organizations			
Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs	The mainstreaming of gender equality	Policy Planning, implementation, Advocacy, Coordination	4F Anthony Saru Building Ph #:23541
National Disaster Management Office	Natural Disaster Management	Policy Planning, implementation, Advocacy, Coordination	National Emergency Operation Centre, National Disaster Management Office Ph#:27936
Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock	Agriculture and livestock	Policy Planning, implementation, Advocacy, Coordination	POBOX 013 Tel: + 677 747710 Fax: + 677 23865
Ministry of Education	Education	Policy Planning, implementation, Advocacy, Program Coordination and implementation	
Ministry of Health	Health	Policy Planning, implementation, Advocacy, Program Coordination and implementation	
Ministry of Aid and Coordination Planning	Planning and Program Coordination	Policy Planning and Program Coordination	PO.Box 26 Honiara, Solomon Islands
International Organizations			
UNIFEM	Women's Human rights, Gender, Women's economic empowerment, Women's leadership	Training, Technical Assistance for policy development, program implementation for the mainstreaming of gender equality	2 nd Floor Center Building, Mendana Avenue PO Box 1954 Ph: +677 22453 Fax: +677 22463
UNICEF	Human rights on women and Children	Policy Advocacy Planning and Evaluation on Child protection, education, health, HIV/AIDS	City Center Building, Mendana Avenue PO Box 1786 Ph: + 677 22453 Fax: + 677 22463
UNDP	Economic Reform, Governance, Environment, Reconciliation	Aid coordination, Policy Advocacy Planning and Evaluation	City Center Building, Mendana Avenue PO Box 1954 Ph:+677 22747 Fax: +677 27815
NZAID	Improving Livelihoods and Broad Based Economic Growth, Education and Skill Development	Funding, Technical Assistance on Policy Advocacy Planning and Evaluation	City Center Building, Mendana Avenue Ph: + 677 21502
WHO	Health, Violence against Women	Technical assistance on Policy Advocacy Planning and Evaluation,	Ministry of Health Building, PO Box 22 Chinatown Honiara

Name of Organization	Areas of Specialization	Activity	Contact
		training	Ph:+677 23406
AusAID	Women in governance, leadership training, Violence against Women	Technical Cooperation on women in governance, Research, Training	RAMSI office PO Box 1931 Honiara Ph: + 677 25141 Fax : + 677 25502
ADB	Support for women in Business, Microfinance, Capacity building for the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs	Funding, training and technical assistance	ADB Development Coordination office, Mud Alley, Honiara, Ph: + 677 21333 Fax: + 677 21448
NGOs			
Live & Learn	Environmental Education	Research, Advocacy, training	Lombi Crescent Street New China Town, PO Box 1454 Ph: + 677 23697 Fax: + 677 24454
World Vision	HIV/AIDS, family Planning, Education, Health, Rural development,	Research, Advocacy, Training, Project implementation	Highway Plaza Kukum highway Honiara PO Box 1359 Ph: +677 23092 Fax: + 677 21941
Women in Business	Support women Entrepreneur	Training, networking	
Others			
SPC-Secretariat of the Pacific Community	Development in general	Research on violence against Women	POBox 1468, Honiara Ph: + 677 25543 Fax + 677 97998
Dr. Alice Pollard	Consultant	Women in development, Women's human rights	President, Rokotanikeni Association Pacifici Services 20453 (P)

As of January 2010

6-2 List of reports and references related Gender

Title	Author	Publisher/Source	Year
Education and Training			
Performance Assessment Framework 2006-2008	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	2009
Education Watch Report Solomon Islands Educational Experience Survey: Education, language & Literacy Experience Summary Report	Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education, Coalition on Education Solomon Islands	NZAID	2007
National Education Action Plan 2010-2012	Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development	Ministry of Education	2009
Policy Statement and Guidelines for Grants to Schools in Solomon Islands	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	2008
Health			
Solomon Islands National Health Strategic Plan 2006-2010	Ministry of Health	Ministry of Health	2006
Reducing Maternal and Child deaths: experiences from Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands	World Vision The University of Melbourne	World Vision, Solomon Office	2009
Addressing HIV/AIDS in East Asia and the Pacific	The World Bank	The World Bank Solomon Office	2003
HIV and AIDS in Solomon Islands – Let's talk about it	World Vision	World Vision, Solomon Office	2008
Demographic and Health Survey 2006-2007 Final Report	National Statistic Office	National Statistic Office	2009
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries			
Gender in Fisheries – A report prepared for the NZAID fisheries review 2009	Ruth Maetala	NZAID	2009
National Agriculture and Livestock Sector Policy 2009-2014	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock	2009
Ministry of Agriculture & Livestock Corporate Plan 2009-2010	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock	2009
National Rural Development Programme Annual Report 2008	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock	2008
Land and Women: The Matrilineal Factor The case of Solomon Islands	Ruth Maetala	Ministry of Women, Youth, and Children Affairs	
Economic Activities			
Solomon Island Markets	UNIFEM	UNIFEM	2009
Report on the Rural Women's Skill Development Project 1993 - 1999	Alice Aruheeta Pollard	Dr Alice Aruheeta Pollard	1999
Social/Gender Analysis			
Solomon Islands National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's	Ministry of Women, Youth,	Ministry of Women, Youth, and Children Affairs	2010

Development	and Children Affairs		
National Policy on Eliminating Violence against Women – Final Draft	Ministry of Women, youth and Children Affairs	Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs	2009
Ministry of Women, Youth & Children Affairs Cooperate Plan 2008-2010	Ministry of Women, Youth, and Children	Ministry of Women, Youth, and Children Affairs	2008
A Situational Analysis of Women and Children in the Solomon Islands	UNICEF	UNICEF	1993
Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study: A study on violence against Women and Children	Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs	Secretariat of the Pacific Community	2009
Addressing Violence against Women in Melanesia and East Timor	Australian Government, AusAID	Ministry of Women, Youth and Children	2009
The Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination and Violence Against the Girl Child	UNICEF, Fiji Women's Crisis Center	UNICEF Solomon Office	
Women in Government in Solomon Islands A diagnostic Study	Sherrill Whittington, Sofi Ospina and Alice Aruheeta Pollard	AusAID/RAMSI	2006
Strategy for Advancing the Position of Women in Government	AusAID/RAMSI	AusAID/RAMSI	2007
Enhancing Capacity in Organizations that have the Potential to Foster Women's Aspirations to Public office	RAMSI Machinery of Government program	AusAID/RAMSI	2008
Others			
National Disaster Management Plan	National Disaster Council	National Disaster Council, Solomon Islands Government	2009
Research of Aspirations and Perceptions – toward inclusive and sustainable natural resource management in the Solomon Islands	Live and Learn & International Women's Development Agency, inc	Live and Learn	2009
Protecting Pacific Island Children and Women during economic and food crisis	UNICEF	UNICEF Solomon Office	2009
Solomon Islands- A situational Analysis of Children, Women and Youth (1946- 2006)	UNICEF	UNICEF Solomon office	2005
The State of pacific Youth 2005	UNICEF	UNICEF Solomon Office	2005
Medium Term Development Strategy 2008 - 2010	Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination	JICA Solomon office	2008
Solomon Islands Small Project Fund Matrix	Aid coordination unit of the Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination	JICA Solomon Office	2008

7. Definitions

<Technical Terms>

Terms	Definition
Informal sector	Part of economy consisting of small competitive individual or family firms listed in the labor indicators. According to the definition of ILO, those engaged in this sector have simple technology, insufficient amount of capital, unidentified business location, minimum number of employees (or none of them), lack of legality and registration, and no capability of bookkeeping.
Reproductive health/rights	Health/Rights concerning sex and reproduction. To be able to live safe and satisfied sex life, and to have freedom to decide whether, when and how many children to deliver.
National machinery	Administrative organization to promote equal participation between men and women, and to implement and strengthen policies related to women, and to supplement organization for women.
Affirmative action	Prioritized positive measure to promptly correct the difference, in the case that discriminated groups are placed in extremely unequal conditions to other groups, due to the discrimination accumulated in the past.

<Indicators>

Indicator	Explanation
Human development Index (HDI)	The Human Development Index (HDI) is measure of a country's achievement in three basic dimensions of human development: (a) longevity, as measured by life expectancy at birth, (b) educational and combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment and (c) standard of living, as measured by real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (in purchasing power parity). It is used in annual Human Development Reports, published by UNDP.
Gender-related development index (GDI)	The Gender-related Development Index (GDI) is a measure of a country's achievement in the three basic dimensions captured in the human development index, life expectancy, educational attainment and income, adjusted to account for inequalities between men and women. It is used in annual Human Development Reports, published by UNDP.
Gender empowerment measurement (GEM)	The Gender empowerment measure (GEM) is a measure of gender inequality in three basic dimensions of empowerment, (a) economic participation and decision-making, (b) political participation, and (c) decision making and power over economic resources. It is used in annual Human Development Reports, published by UNDP.
Total fertility rate	The number of children that would be born to each women if she were to live to the end of her child-bearing years and bear children at each age in accordance with prevailing age-specific fertility rates in a given year / period, for a given country, territory or geographical area.
GDP implicit deflator	It is an indicator of inflation. Ratio of current-dollar GDP to constant-dollar GDP.
Gini index	Aggregate numerical measures of income inequality ranging from 0 to 100. A Gini index of zero represents absolute equality, while an index of 100 implies absolute inequality.
Infant mortality rate	Infant mortality rate is the probability of a child born in a specific year or period dying before reaching the age of one, if subject to age-specific mortality rates of that period. It is a probability of death expressed as rate per 1000 live births.
Under-five mortality rate	Under-five mortality rate is the probability of a child born in a specific year or period dying before reaching the age of five. It is a probability of death expressed as rate per 1000 live births.
DPT1	The percentage of 1 year old children immunized against diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus at least once.
Contraceptive prevalence rate	The percentage of women between 15-49 years who are practising, or whose sexual partners are practising, any form of contraception.

Rate of births attended by trained personnel	The percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel. A skilled birth attendant is an accredited health professional, such as a midwife, doctor or nurse, who has been educated and trained to proficiency in the skills needed to manage normal (uncomplicated) pregnancies, childbirth and the immediate postnatal period, and in the identification, management and referral of complications in women and newborns. Traditional birth attendants, trained or not, are excluded from the category of skilled attendant at delivery
Maternal mortality ratio	Number of maternal deaths per 100 000 live births in one year.
Children under weight for age	The rate of newborn children of which the birth weight is less than 2,500 grams
Oral re-hydration therapy use rate	The rate of using oral rehydration salt or substitute solution for infants having diarrhea.
Access to improved sanitation	Access to improved sanitation is the percentage of population with access to improved sanitation in a given year. Improved sanitation includes connection to public sewers, connection to septic systems, pour-flush latrines, simple pit latrines and ventilated improved pit latrines.
Adult literacy rate	The percentage of males and females age 15 and above who can, with understanding, both read and writes a short, simple statement related to their everyday life.
Net enrolment rate	The percentage of students in a theoretical age group who are enrolled expressed as a percentage of the same population.

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