



## **PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES** **United Nations Member States**

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### **Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) Statement on Promoting Equality including Social Equity, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

**by**

**Mrs. Helen Beck, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Solomon Islands  
to the United Nations**

**at the**

**Eighth Session of the Open Working Group (OWG) on  
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

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Thank you Co-Chair for giving me the floor. I am speaking on behalf the PSIDS represented at United Nations and Timor-Leste namely; Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Timor-Leste and my own country Solomon Islands, acknowledge both Co-Chairs commendable leadership of the inter-governmental process on SDGs that has now reached the end of its first phase of work and we wish you every success as you prepare to embark on the next intensive stage.

Let me begin by associating Pacific Small Islands Developing States (PSIDS) who are members of G77 with the statements delivered by Bolivia on behalf of G77 and China and Benin on behalf of LDCs. We thank the panelists for the rich presentations made on this thematic issue yesterday and for underscoring the need to address social equity, gender equality and women and girls empowerment as a priority issue in the new sustainable development framework.

On the issue of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls; Pacific SIDS and Timor-Leste would like to see this addressed in an integrated and balanced manner, as it cuts across the economic, social and environment dimensions of sustainable development.

It is therefore imperative to set clearly defined economic, social and environmental targets with measurable indicators that effectively addresses and entrenches gender equality.

Co-Chair,

We note with concern the business as usual mode of giving scant attention to economic and technological empowerment of women and girls, in particular their right to development which is an underlying factor for the poor, at global, regional and national progress in realizing gender equality and women's empowerment. For a real paradigm shift, we recommend that economic and technological empowerment of women and girls be considered as a priority target in a gender sustainable development goal.

Particular focus should be given to rural population, especially in LDCs and SIDS, where the bulk of women and girls are located. Providing affordable and easy access to life transforming technologies such as ICTs will help catalyse efforts to address poverty eradication and social inequality among rural women and girls.

Investing in the productive sector, building infrastructure, providing sustainable energy, and ensuring quality education are prerequisite for lifting women and girls out of poverty. This also requires connecting the informal sector with the mainstream economy in a meaningful way that provides real opportunity for women and girls to be empowered and to upscale their capacities to take ownership of their lives.

We believe that by doing so, we address the causes of social inequality that exists in and across all societies. As highlighted by the panelists yesterday, Member States will need comprehensive and integrated economic policies to deal with employment generation, support to small to medium enterprises, building resilience against crisis and foster wealth redistribution.

Co-Chair,

The second proposed target in a gender goal, in our view, is "freedom from violence for women and girls". The various UN reports on ending violence against women sadly show that 7 out of 10 women continue to suffer from gender-based violence. Despite the global efforts in addressing this serious concern under internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, CEDAW, and the Beijing Platform of Action, as well as under various national laws and regulations, violence against women and girls continue to abound, in particular in conflict and post conflict countries. This is grossly unacceptable and must no longer be tolerated by the international community and particularly member States.

The Post-2015 Development Agenda process provides the global community an ideal opportunity to address the existing gaps in curbing and eradicating violence against women and girls.

This also means we need to review and restructure global production and consumption patterns that often are drivers of social inequity, gender inequality and violence. Revising the existing inherent unequal power structures and systems will provide better socio-economic opportunities for women and girls to participate meaningfully and as equal partners in their national development.

Co-Chair,

PSIDS and Timor-Leste cannot talk about a sustainable and secure future for women and girls without addressing the adverse impact of climate change, which continues to increasingly threaten their wellbeing.

Sea-level rise is already disempowering women and their communities by denying them access to productive land swallowed up by the ocean. This is the third target on gender equality sustainable development goal “guaranteeing the survival of women and girls” and humanity.

Ocean acidification concentration is increasing and threatening the lives and livelihood of all our rural populations.

These contribute to increasing violence in the homes because of scarcity of food and fresh drinking and cooking water. It also poses security challenges to the communities and nations. When there is a lack of food and drinkable water, it is the mother and the women that children and family look to for their basic needs and their rights are sacrificed for the sake of the children and family.

The world is heading towards a 3-5 degrees Celsius global warming with the existing lack of action in reducing Green House Gas emissions. The future we want remains uncertain in the face of this growing threat. The failure of the implementation of the three Rio Conventions as well as the lack of political will and the absence of leadership by developed countries to agree to a more ambitious mitigation measures remains a serious concern that potentially could contribute in future to increase environmental degradation, food insecurity and violence against women and girls.

Co-Chair,

PSIDS and Timor-Leste remain convinced that gender equality and climate change remains cross cutting issues that must be addressed across all SDGs under the post-2015 sustainable development framework.

Thank you Co-Chair