

# THE HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACTS OF LOGGING AND MINING IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

Franciscans International

UPR Info Pre-sessions

# FPIC & the Legal Framework

- **Outdated laws & Lack of FPIC:** Spain and Slovenia recommended adopting legislative measures to ensure that logging does not adversely affect economic, social and cultural rights and that **free, prior and informed consent is guaranteed** at all stages of extractive projects.
- **Forestry Bill adoption delayed:** Despite being identified as a priority by the Ministry of Forestry and Research since 2023, the Bill has not been tabled, and logging continues to be governed by the 1969 Act. As a result, **proposed reforms to benefit-sharing and landowner representation** remain unimplemented, and the current system continues to operate, exacerbating intra-community inequalities and undermining equitable distribution of royalties.
- **Mineral Resources Bill raises concerns:** The Bill was introduced without adequate consultation, **weakens landowner participation**, and remains under parliamentary review while mining activities continue.

# Recommendations – Issue 1

- Adopt the latest iteration of the Forestry bill currently pending before the Attorney General's office and the Mineral Resources Bill 2025 currently pending before Parliament.
- Ensure both pieces of legislation safeguard the land rights of local communities through equitable benefit-sharing arrangements, inclusive and participatory landowner representation in negotiations, and Free, Prior and Informed consent provisions.
- Build and strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology so that it can conduct robust and effective environmental impact assessments, including through site visits by independent experts and consistent monitoring throughout the lifespan of logging and mining operations.

# R2HE & Climate Change

- **R2HE under pressure:** Canada and Slovenia raised concerns about **human rights abuses and environmental degradation** by logging companies and impacts on R2HE. Several States<sup>1</sup>, placed particular emphasis on climate change, calling for **strengthened adaptation and resilience policies.**
- **Community impacted by environmental degradation:** Extractive activities are causing polluted water, loss of healthy and sustainable food sources, exposure to air and toxic pollution, degradation of ecosystems and biodiversity, and weakened climate resilience, directly undermining community health, livelihoods and food security. **Logging and mining exacerbate climate impacts** by damaging natural protective systems and increasing exposure to flooding and sea-level rise.

(1) Fiji, Dominican Republic, Barbados, Vanuatu, Pakistan, Nepal, Marshall Islands and the Philippines

# Recommendations – Issue 2

- Ensure that communities on the frontlines are provided with solutions to mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts, including by improving infrastructure to reduce flooding, enhancing early warning systems and restoring coral reefs, mangroves and forests through reforestation and sustainable forest management programmes.
- Ensure businesses engaged in logging and mining operations respect human rights, including by instituting mandatory human rights due diligence to ensure that adverse human rights impacts, including abuses related to the right to food and the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, are prevented, and that effective remedies are available when abuses occur.

# Rights of women & children

- **Women and children at heightened risk:** Mining and logging activities have increased risks of early and forced marriage, sexual exploitation and violence, and domestic abuse. **1 in 5 girls are married before the age of 18.** Bahamas, Morocco and Botswana raised **concerns regarding sexual and labour exploitation of children in the logging sector** and recommended investigations and concrete preventive measures.
- **Children's safety, health and education impacted:** Children face increased risks linked to polluted rivers, flooding and unsafe environments, resulting in reported deaths, skin diseases and disrupted access to education and transport.
- **Structural Gaps to be addressed:** While the ratification of the CRC Optional Protocol in 2022 signalled progress, the **legal framework remains insufficient to protect the rights of women and children.** The minimum legal age of marriage remains 15. There are no logging and mining sector-specific safeguards addressing child labour, sexual exploitation or gender-based violence. Support services for victims continue to rely largely on church-run shelters with limited government support.

# Recommendations – Issue 3

- Amend the Islanders' Marriage Act 1945 to increase the minimum age of marriage to 18 years.
- Establish a complaint mechanism at the provincial level for victims of gender-based violence, child sexual exploitation and human trafficking in the logging and mining industries.
- Strengthen institutional capacity to support victims of gender-based violence, child sexual exploitation and human trafficking by increasing human, technical and financial resources, in particular through the provision of safe shelters, psychosocial support, counselling, medical care and rehabilitation services.

# Thank you!



Joint Stakeholders' Report submitted in collaboration with Dominicans for Justice and Peace.