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UN Human Rights Council
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Item 6:
Consideration of UPR reports

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Madame President,

We welcome the focus in the review on violence against women.¹ A 2009 survey conducted by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the government revealed that 64% of women and girls in Solomon Islands between the ages of 15 and 49 had experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their partners or other family members. We call on the government to implement fully its Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy and the National Policy on Eliminating Violence against Women.² We welcome the statement by Solomon Islands that it is in the process of enacting legislation to criminalize all forms of violence against women, including spousal rape, and its commitment to facilitate the reporting, investigation and prosecution of domestic violence cases.³ However, we note that violence within the family continues to be seen as a private issue, and the police may be reluctant to intervene. Our investigations also revealed that some lawyers in the Public Solicitors Office refused to represent victims of domestic violence seeking a restraining order unless the victim had visible injuries to her body. We urge the government to ensure prompt and effective implementation of the related recommendations.

Madame President,

¹ A/HRC/18/8, recommendations 80.2 (Ecuador), 80.3 (United States), 80.4 (United States), 80.5 (Brazil), 80.6 (Norway), 80.7 (Canada), 80.8 (Slovenia), 80.9 (United Kingdom), 80.10 (Indonesia), 80.11 (New Zealand), 80.12 (Trinidad and Tobago), 80.24 (Maldives), 80.27 (Ecuador), 80.28 (Argentina), 80.29 (Norway), 80.30 (France), 80.35 (New Zealand), 81.25 (Australia), 81.26 (Chile), 81.52 (Morocco).

² *Ibid.*, recommendations 81.25 (Australia), 81.26 (Chile), 81.27 (UK).

³ See footnote 1.

Amnesty International's research reveals a dire human rights situation in informal settlements in Honiara, with few sources of clean water nearby.⁴ Women and girls must walk long distances to the nearest streams to collect water, and residents have to wash their clothes, dishes and themselves in dirty, contaminated water. According to a 2009 study only a quarter of residents had adequate toilet facilities.⁵ We [welcome/are disappointed that] Solomon Islands [accepted/rejected] recommendations to combat poverty and ensure a supply of good quality water to all informal settlements⁶ [and urge their prompt implementation.]

Women and girls in the settlements risk physical and sexual violence, when collecting water, bathing, or using toilets at night. In August 2010, a 37 year old woman who lives in Mamanawata settlement told Amnesty International that she had been severely beaten up and raped by two men after relieving herself in the sea. The men were very violent and she did not dare report them to the police. We urge Solomon Islands to guarantee the right of women to live free from violence and discrimination and guarantee their right to clean water and adequate sanitation.

Finally, Madame President,

We welcome the commitment by Solomon Islands to establish a National Human Rights Institution fully compliant with the Paris Principles.⁷

Thank you, Madame President.

⁴ *'Where is the dignity in that?' Women in Solomon Islands denied sanitation and safety* (Index: ASA 43/001/2011).

⁵ J. Maubuta and H. E. Maebuta, "Household Livelihoods in Solomon Islands Squatter Settlements and its Implications for Education and Development in Post-conflict Context" (paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education International Education Research Conference, Canberra, 29 November – 3 December 2009).

⁶ A/HRC/18/8, paragraphs 81.53 (Algeria), 81.54 (Spain).

⁷ *Ibid.*, paragraphs 79.1 (Canada), 79.2 (Ireland), 79.3 (Argentina), 79.4 (Spain), 79.5 (United Kingdom), 79.6 (Morocco), 79.7 (Indonesia).