

Statement by Solomon Islands

At the 2nd World Summit for Social Development
4th–6th November 2025, Doha

**Delivered by Hon. Trevor Manemahaga, Minister of National Planning and
Development Coordination**

Madam President,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

It is a profound honour to address this 2nd World Summit for Social Development on behalf of the Government and people of Solomon Islands.

At the outset, allow me to *express our deepest gratitude to His Highness the Amir*, the Government, and the gracious people of the State of Qatar for hosting this important gathering and for the warmth and generosity extended to our delegation.

Solomon Islands deeply appreciates Qatar's humanitarian leadership—its compassion for vulnerable nations and its consistent global support for Least Developed Countries. Through your generosity, many small island states have found not only resources but renewed hope.

Thirty years ago, the world gathered in Copenhagen to pledge that poverty and inequality would no longer define our humanity. That vision still guides us today.

Madam President,

Solomon Islands remains among the world's smallest and most dispersed nations. Our population of about **721,000 people**, spread across **nearly 1,000 islands**, continues to grow at **2.6 per cent per year**. Delivering education, health, and essential services across such distances makes development costly and complex.

Despite these challenges, our economy continues to show resilience. In 2024, real **GDP grew by 2.8 per cent**. Inflation stood at **5.2 per cent at the end of 2024**, moderating from previous years. Public debt remained at approximately **25 per cent of GDP**, well below the 35 per cent policy threshold.

Total foreign reserves stood at SBD 6.4 billion, covering over eight months of imports, while our **national budget in 2025 is around SBD 5.2 billion**—a modest sum to serve a nation spread over such a wide geography.

Our life expectancy has increased from 66 to 73 years, and over **90 per cent of births** are now attended by skilled health workers. Maternal and child mortality have fallen significantly since 2000. These achievements show that strong policy, committed partners, and community spirit can deliver impact even with limited means.

Madam President,

To strengthen gender equality, Cabinet has endorsed Temporary Special Measures across all nine provinces and established a task force to prepare enabling provincial bills. The SAFENET referral network now operates in eight provinces, offering survivors of gender-based violence access to legal, health, and counselling services. **Female literacy has reached around 85 per cent**, rising from 67 per cent in 2009.

Still, progress has only touched the surface of what Solomon Islanders can achieve. Poverty reduction has been gradual, with the **Household Income and Expenditure Survey 12.7 per cent** of Solomon Islanders living below the national poverty line. **Youth account for about 70 per cent of our population**, yet fewer than **60,000 formal jobs** exist in the country. These realities underscore why our nation requires both patience and partnership.

Madam President,

Solomon Islands is preparing to graduate from its Least Developed Country status—a transition that we approach with both pride and caution. Graduation will mean reduced access to concessional finance and trade preferences, even as our vulnerability to climate shocks remains severe.

Natural disasters continue to impose losses equivalent to several per cent of GDP each year. These recurrent shocks erode development gains and stretch the limited fiscal space available. We therefore seek targeted international support to make graduation sustainable and inclusive.

Madam President,

Our young people are the heart of our future.

Their creativity and determination can drive a new era of inclusive growth, but they need the tools to succeed. Solomon Islands is expanding education and small-enterprise financing, yet these efforts remain limited by our fiscal capacity. What we need now is partnership—to match our national vision with international support.

Madam President,

Solomon Islands reaffirms its full commitment to the Doha Political Declaration and the Sustainable Development Goals.

With your continued generosity, let Solomon Islands and our people not wait any longer to act. With deep gratitude to the State of Qatar for its humanitarian leadership, compassion, and friendship, Solomon Islands humbly calls for your continued partnership to fast-track the commitments we share—to help our nation graduate from least developed to

self-reliant, and to ensure that prosperity reaches even the most remote islands.

Together, through your compassion and our shared determination, we can build a world that is inclusive, resilient, peaceful, and just—a world where no one, and no nation, is left behind.

Thank you, Madam President.