

Annex I. Recommendations

Cluster 5: Violence Against Children

Abuse and neglect, including physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration

Recommendations related to Government

- In accordance with past commitments, dedicate the necessary human, financial and technical resources to meet the child-related SDGs directed towards eliminating all forms of violence against children, in particular SDG 16.2, and work in partnership with relevant external actors to prioritise and implement all child-related SDGs;
- in accordance with the 2003 Concluding Observations related to violence against children issued following Solomon Islands' initial CRC State Report, as well as SDG 16.2, repeal the provisions of the *Penal Code* related to the "reasonable punishment" of children;
- with external assistance, undertake a new national survey on violence against children drawing upon the methodology and questions contained in the 'Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study' (2009) and the 'Protect Me with Love and Care' Baseline Report (2009) to enable an assessment of longitudinal trends. Any new data collection measures should seek to capture baseline information related to image-based abuse and online grooming, bullying and harassment;
- develop a comprehensive child protection policy which includes achievable goals in line with the recommendations contained in this report, working with external actors to ensure its implementation;
- undertake further training and awareness activities amongst police officers to ensure they are aware of, and follow, the Commissioner of Police's 'Directive' of 26 January 2016 instituting a zero-tolerance approach (a 'no-drop' policy) to family violence matters. Also reminding them that this Directive applies to children and that they must always proceed with charges where an assault has occurred, even in instances where the complainant requests they do not, and even in instances where a form of reconciliation has taken place;
- following consultations, develop policies and laws related to the image-based abuse of children and on-line grooming seeking technical assistance from relevant external partners if necessary. New laws or policies should not punish child victims who take part in consensual acts of producing intimate images which are then disseminated without their consent.

Recommendations related to Children and Families

- In accordance with the requirements of the *Child and Family Welfare Act 2017*, support existing, and develop new, services for child victims of abuse and neglect, particularly health, legal and social services, including psychological support, and ensure that the referral systems contemplated under the Act are instituted;

- through community awareness, school teachings and all other appropriate measures, ensure that children are made aware of their rights regarding abuse and neglect, including relevant provisions of the CRC, and in responding to instances of abuse and neglect are provided with an opportunity to voice their concerns and share their views;
- create resources for children who are the subject of image-based abuse, or threatened image-based abuse, and/or subjected to online grooming, and ensure that messages around such abuse, and online/social media bullying and harassment, are widely disseminated amongst children and families, not being limited to school students.

Recommendations related to Communities

- Revisit the recommendations contained in ‘The Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study’ (2009) and strengthen efforts directed towards promoting the primary prevention of abuse and neglect, including through nation-wide advocacy to counter violence against children within the family. This must include state and non-state partners and adopt a cross-sectoral approach. It should build on past work undertaken around positive parenting practices, including non-violent disciplinary measures; teach parents and community leaders about the long-term negative impacts of child abuse; and focus on rural families;
- ensure that efforts directed towards promoting the primary prevention of abuse and neglect take into account the correlation between violence perpetrated against children and violence perpetrated against women and ensure that in responding to this situation there are referral protocols established between relevant service-providers as envisaged by the yet to be implemented *Child and Family Welfare Act 2017*;
- further to the above recommendation, work with community leaders, including church leaders, to undertake awareness activities and community-based prevention programs (particularly targeting ethnic minority communities in Western Province, Choiseul Province and Honiara) around the long-term effects of violence against children and, where evidence exists, counsel and/or prosecute those community leaders or others who inflict violence against children.

Right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including corporal punishment

Recommendations Related to Government

- In accordance with past commitments and recommendations, including the 2003 Concluding Observations related to violence against children following Solomon Islands’ initial CRC State Report, as well as SDG 16.2, immediately repeal the provisions of the *Penal Code* related to the “reasonable punishment” of children;
- in accordance with SDG 4.a to “provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments” expressly prohibit all forms of corporal punishment, including in schools, by introducing legislative amendments which prohibit the practice;

- in undertaking a new national survey on violence against children (see recommendation under ‘abuse and neglect’ above), capture updated information which measures the extent of corporal punishment across all levels of schooling in Solomon Islands.

Recommendation Related to Communities

- Continue positive steps towards reinforcing the prohibition on the use of corporal punishment as contained in the ‘Teaching Service Handbook’ by using every opportunity available to communicate this position with teachers and parents, including through teacher training, incorporating this message into relevant policy documents, and through the mainstream media.

Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse

Recommendations related to Government

- In accordance with past commitments, as well as past recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, ratify OP2, take steps to introduce the legislative changes required to comply with OP2, and implement activities in accordance with OP2;
- In furtherance of SDG 5.2, ensure that a cross-sectorial approach to addressing CSEC is adopted, including through the incorporation of provisions relevant to CSEC in ministerial workplans and policies in the areas of, *inter alia*, forestry, fisheries, minerals, immigration, agriculture and education;
- increase the budget of the Immigration Division of the MCILI so that it has sufficient staffing and resources to fulfil its mandate around CSEC, including being able to raise public awareness on the issue, sufficiently monitor the natural resource sector, and implement the objectives of the ‘National Action Plan Against Human Trafficking and People Smuggling 2015-2020’;
- in accordance with the Commissioner of Police’s ‘Directive’ of 26 January 2016, ensure there is a zero-tolerance approach to the sexual exploitation and abuse of children, with police being aware of their obligation to investigate and, where there is sufficient evidence, commence criminal proceedings;
- in accordance with the recent findings of the IOM (2017), ensure that those working on the enforcement of CSEC-related laws, including immigration officials and police, have sufficient training, particularly on identifying child trafficking and how to deal with child victims of such crimes;
- take steps to implement the 2017 IOM’s recommendations around data collection related to CSEC, including child trafficking;
- take steps towards ratifying the ‘Convention against Transnational Organised Crime’ together with the ‘Palermo Protocol’ to ‘Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children’ and, following ratification, introduce the legislative changes and activities required to comply with these two instruments;

- in conformity with relevant legislation already in place, ensure that any new legislation related to mines and minerals contains provisions criminalising the commercial sexual exploitation of children in the mining sector, including trafficking.

Recommendation related to Children and Families

- As part of the development of a child protection policy (as detailed under the ‘abuse and neglect’ recommendations above), ensure that children affected by CSEC in Solomon Islands’ natural resource sector are afforded the necessary services to support their physical, social and psychological recovery.

Recommendation related to Communities

- Ensure that public awareness activities amongst those communities at risk of CSEC, including those carried out by the Immigration Division of the MCIL and the police, incorporate messages on how such communities can proactively take steps to prevent instances of CSEC, stressing that it is not appropriate to resolve such matters through the exclusive use of non-state systems and that such matters must always be referred to police.

Recommendation related to Industry

- In furtherance of the ‘National Action Plan Against Human Trafficking and People Smuggling 2015-2020’ and the 2017 recommendations of the IOM, work with industries in the natural resource sector to develop binding codes of conduct or “best labour management practises” which prohibit CSEC, and sanction those companies whose employees are found guilty of engaging in CSEC through potentially revoking applicable licenses and/or business registration/permits.

Cluster 6: Family Environment and Alternative Care

Parents’ common responsibilities, assistance to parents and the provision of childcare services

Recommendations Related to Government

- continue working with UNICEF and other relevant external partners around the implementation of the *Child and Family Welfare Act 2017*, ensuring that any cost analysis incorporates: costs related to nationwide publicity and awareness around the Act once it is gazetted; the substantial increase in staffing of the SWD which will be needed to meet the requirements of the Act, including filling presently vacant positions; the increase in the operational costs of the SWD that will be necessary to implement the Act, including transport costs; the costs of establishing, maintaining and staffing the referral systems that the Act contemplates; and the costs associated with new programs and services expected under the Act;

- following the costing of the *Child and Family Welfare Act 2017* and the completion of the human resource plan, increase the budget of the SWD, and other relevant agencies or Ministries which have prescribed obligations under the Act;
- gazette, implement and monitor the *Child and Family Welfare Act 2017*.

Cluster 7: Disability, Basic Health and Welfare

Measures taken to ensure dignity, self-reliance and active participation in the community for children with disabilities

Recommendations Related to Government

- In accordance with past commitments, take steps to ratify the ‘Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities’ and its Optional Protocol;
- recommence the process of finalising the draft *Persons’ with Disability (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Bill*, ensuring that consultations around the draft Bill are conducted with relevant domestic, regional and international organisations and that the Bill meets the requirements of international and regional disability-related agreements that Solomon Islands has agreed to, including SDG 10.2 and General Comment No. 9 (2006) on the rights of children with disabilities;
- take action to endorse the ‘National Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2016-2018’ and commence policy implementation activities;
- in furtherance of SDG 4.5, ensure cabinet endorsement of the ‘National Disability Inclusive Education Policy 2016-2020’ and undertake steps to meet the policy outcomes contained in the document;
- pursue the ‘outcome statement’ of ‘The National Health Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020’ related to disability, as well as SDGs 11.2 and 11.7, by improving access for people with disabilities to health facilities, schools, public buildings, public spaces and public and private transport services, paying particular attention to rural communities;
- review all laws, policies and official documents to ensure that they use appropriate, non-discriminatory language when describing people with disabilities;
- in accordance with SDG 4.a, include minimum infrastructure requirements related to disability in the draft *Education Bill*;

- increase the budget of CBR so that it has adequate levels of trained staff and sufficient logistical capacity to ensure it can provide services to all children with disabilities in Solomon Islands and their families;
- in furtherance of SDG 17.18, work with relevant internal and external partners to strengthen data collection related to children with disabilities, particularly at the provincial level, including by instituting the Washington Group Dataset in the 2019 census together with the two child datasets related to child functioning;
- work with donor partners to undertake a further nationwide survey on disability incorporating lessons learnt from the 2005 exercise.

Recommendations Related to Children and Families

- Undertake efforts to make available the necessary professional specialists to assist children with disabilities, particularly in rural areas, including speech therapists, occupational therapists and sign language teachers;
- following SDG 4.5, undertake all efforts to increase the enrolment of children with disabilities across all levels of education, including: ensuring that in-country teacher education programs are adequately preparing new teachers to teach students with disabilities; schools are made accessible for students with disabilities; schools have the necessary resources to teach children with different abilities, and; ensuring that schools do not impose contributions or fees on children with disabilities to ease the financial burden on parents/caregivers.

Recommendations Related to Communities

- Undertake education activities in schools and amongst the public at large to address the widespread discrimination against children with disabilities, including by advancing the agreed upon recommendation of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (2016) that Solomon Islands “develop partnerships with civil society and community-based organisations and international stakeholders to identify women and girls with disabilities in the State party who are facing discrimination based on their disability”.

Health and health services, in particular primary health care

Recommendations Related to Government

- In furtherance of SDGs 2.1 and 2.2, engage with external partners to develop and test new evidence-based interventions to improve early childhood nutrition, adopting a coordinated, multi-sectorial approach, working in partnership with those working in areas which include education, women, agriculture, fisheries, water and sanitation;
- in furtherance of SDG 17.18, work with relevant internal and external partners to improve data collection, collation and dissemination related to children’s health, particularly those found in the 35 ‘national core indicators’, ensuring that stunting and wasting rates are regularly captured and ensuring that all data is disaggregated according to gender, age, disability and location;

- work with relevant internal and external parties to allocate the necessary resources to commence the iterative process of rehabilitating health facilities across the country, paying attention to the quality of facilities available for women to give birth and ensuring that up-to-date data around the physical condition of health facilities and equipment is routinely collected and shared;
- continue to improve the pharmaceutical supply chain to ensure essential child medicines do not run out across the country.

Recommendations Related to Communities

- In furtherance of SDG 2.2, address the severe rates of childhood stunting and wasting by ensuring the appropriate human technical and financial support to the MHMS, in particular the Health Promotion Department, so it can undertake regular, nationwide efforts to raise awareness around childhood nutrition, including activities which address infant feeding practices and target hard to reach populations and those minority groups which are known to be particularly susceptible to these conditions
- undertake efforts to address childhood diarrhoea by ensuring the appropriate human technical and financial support to the MHMS, in particular the Health Promotion Department, so it can undertake regular, nationwide efforts to raise awareness around the prevention and treatment of childhood diarrhea, focussing particularly on imparting messages around the importance of correctly disposing of excrement;
- further compliance with SDGs 6.1 and 6.2 related to safe drinker water and sanitation, by working with relevant external and internal partners, including communities, to ensure appropriate levels of support, funding and technical assistance for the construction of toilets and clean drinking water sources, especially in rural areas and at government-run schools and health facilities.

Measures to protect children from substance abuse

Recommendations Related to Government

- in accordance with SDG 3.5 related to preventing substance abuse, with external and internal assistance, and drawing on regional and international experience and past experience of such programs in Solomon Islands, implement evidence-based, targeted, cross-sectorial, long-term responses to address alcohol and cannabis use amongst children, being aware that different responses are likely to be required in different locations, amongst different age groups, and for boys and girls.

Recommendation related to Children and Families

- In accordance with SDG 3.5 related to treating substance abuse, introduce support services for children who have substance abuse problems to assist them with addressing their addiction as well as the societal and health-related consequences of their substance use.

Recommendation related to Communities

- Ensure that parents, caregivers and communities play a key role in any responses devised to address alcohol and cannabis consumption, production and distribution.

Cluster 8: Education, Leisure and Cultural Activities**Right to education, including vocational training and guidance**Recommendations Related to Government

- In furtherance of SDG 4.1 relating to free, equitable primary and secondary education for all boys and girls, regulate the imposition of contributions for grade 1 to year 9 to ensure they are equitable and non-payment does not lead to the exclusion of children from school or the prevention of children from sitting exams;
- ensure that all key education-related expenses are monitored and controlled, including by introducing the provisions contained in the draft *Education Bill* (September 2017) which enable the Minister to regulate the fees that may be charged for materials and services provided to students, and acting upon the recommendations of the Special Select Committee on short bus routes in Honiara;
- in furtherance of SDG 4.1, institute compulsory education for primary school as soon as possible, ensuring consideration is given to the difficulties many parents face with school-related expenses;
- in furtherance of SDG 4.2 related to access to early childhood development, care and pre-primary education, resolve the current position of ECE by determining which ECE model is appropriate for Solomon Islands, ensuring that any new model is based on evidence, the advice of experts, and is cognisant of the key obstacle which many children presently face in attending ECE;
- in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee on the Right of the Child in its Concluding Observations to Solomon Islands initial state report and the Solomon Islands' 'Education White Paper' (2015), establish ages for admission to, and completion of, primary education;
- revisit the recommendations of the 2011 Auditor General's report related to teacher absenteeism and seek to adopt a holistic, iterative, evidence-based approach towards addressing absenteeism which does not rely solely on "stronger controls and supervision" by staff of the MEHRD;
- undertake new nationwide research on student absenteeism, including rates of absenteeism and reasons for absenteeism, seeking to assess trends since the 2011 'Barriers to Education' study, and, on the basis of findings, assess where interventions to address absenteeism might be most appropriately directed;

- in accordance with SDG 4.c calling for a substantial increase in the supply of qualified teachers, review the current training provided to existing teachers and ensure that a flexible, contextually-relevant model is established and funded;
- undertake a comprehensive independent audit on exam paper leakage, including an assessment of whether exam paper printing should be outsourced to private printing companies, and act on the recommendations made.

Recommendations Related to Children and Families

- Undertake nationwide efforts to raise awareness amongst parents about the importance of ECE, including what ECE is and why ECE is critical to a child's social and educational development;
- in accordance with the recommendations of the 'Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women' in its Concluding Observations to 'Solomon Islands' Combined Initial to Third Periodic Report' under the 'Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women', ensure that girls are not expelled from school because they are pregnant and strengthen efforts to retain all girls in school, including pregnant girls and young mothers.

Cultural rights of children belonging to indigenous and minority groups

Recommendations Related to Government

- Ensure that government vernacular education policies are implemented having regard to the differences between rural and urban locations and sufficient resources are dedicated for teacher training and the updating of learning materials, including free and online training through provision of internet access in key locations;
- monitor the implementation of government vernacular education policies to gauge their effectiveness in relation to learning outcomes.
- awareness activities which detail the limitations of school grants and reinforce the importance of voluntary community contributions to the functioning of the education system.

Cluster 9: Special Protection Measures

Administration of juvenile justice, the existence of specialised and separate courts and the applicable minimum age of criminal responsibility

Recommendations Related to Government

-
- Revisit the drafting instructions for the proposed *Youth Justice Bill* and remedy the deficiencies identified above, particularly the failure to incorporate the ‘best interest of the child’ principle;
 - carefully evaluate the compliance of the drafting instructions for the proposed *Youth Justice Bill*, and any subsequent Bill which is drafted, against the CRC, ‘General Comment No. 10 on children’s rights in juvenile justice’ issued by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2007, and the ‘United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice’ (‘The Beijing Rules’) issued in 1985;
 - monitor any new juvenile justice legislation enacted to ensure it is being applied in a manner consistent with the CRC.