



► Summary Report

July 2023

Employment, Informality and Social Protection in the Solomon Islands

Heritage Park Hotel, Honiara, 22-23 March 2023

Key points

- The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Government of Solomon Islands through the Ministry of Commerce, Industries, Labour and Immigration, in partnership with the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Solomon Islands Council of Trade Unions, held a two-day workshop on Employment, Informality and Social Protection.
- A total of 41 participants from government, employers' and workers' organizations, and civil society as well as commercial and national banks attended the workshop.
- The workshop discussed priorities of a National Employment Policy that is currently being developed and laid out the next steps in the process. The development of the policy is supported through the project on "[Advancing the SDGs by improving livelihoods and resilience via economic diversification and digital transformation](#)", which is funded through the SDG fund and implemented by several UN agencies, the ILO being the lead.
- The workshop initiated a dialogue among policy makers and social partners on enterprise formalization and discussed the development of incentives to encourage informal enterprises to formalize. This activity is part of the project on "[Supporting the transition of informal enterprises towards sustainable growth and formalization](#)", supported by the European Union and the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and implemented by the ILO in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- Finally, the workshop also included the validation of a diagnostic review of social protection in the Solomon Islands, including some discussions on next steps to be undertaken towards the development of social protection system in the country. This work is part of a joint UN Programme of the ILO with UNDP and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).



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► Welcoming remarks

In his opening remarks, **Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration (MICLI) Riley Mesepitu** greeted participants from various organizations, including banks, donors, civil society, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). He emphasized the importance of employment, informality, and social protection in the Solomon Islands and acknowledged the support of the International Labour Organization, the joint SDG Fund, and the European Union.

Mr Mesepitu highlighted the vulnerability of the Solomon Islands' labour market to natural disasters and economic shocks, as well as the limitations of its economic and financial capacity. He stressed the importance of a National Employment Policy (NEP) in this context as well as of the formalization of the informal economy and the design of robust social protection systems in the Solomon Islands. He called for the establishment of appropriate multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms and a roadmap for social protection and formalization of informal enterprises.

Mr Mesepitu also emphasized the need for internal, home-grown planning towards achieving the national development strategy, particularly in preparation for the Pacific Games in late 2023. He expressed the hope that the seminar would contribute to the Solomon Islands' National Development Framework by recapping priorities

for national employment policy, starting dialogue around formalization, and validating the findings of a recently conducted social protection assessment.

Mr David Tuhanuku, President of the Solomon Islands Council of Trade Unions (SICTU), highlighted that the general situation in the Solomon Islands is similar to that of other Pacific Island Countries (PICs). With most of the population living in rural areas, the shift from subsistence farming to a cash-economy poses challenges. It is the responsibility of the political leadership to address these issues. He emphasized that the coming together of different organizations and authorities contributes to strengthening the process of consultation and sharing of ideas. He praised ILO's role as convener.

Ms Natalina Hong, the Chief Executive Officer of Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce, and Industry (SICCI), expressed that the workshop is timely for the employers as the country is undergoing broad-sweeping transitions on many fronts that have impacted business, and who are still seeking solutions to many of these challenges. She emphasized that this workshop is an opportunity for employers to contribute and not miss out on crucial discussions especially considering the current pausing of the labour advisory board.

Mr Escipi3n Oliveira, Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States

(OACPS), emphasized the importance of the workshop and the partnership between the OACPS and the EU, ILO, and UNDP, to enhance the business climate within countries. He highlighted the need to support the informal sector and to show companies the benefits of registering, such as protection and access to better services. To this end he stressed the critical role of promoting dialogue between the private sector, employers, and workers.

In the final welcoming remarks, the **ILO's Employment Specialist, Mr Christian Viegelahn**, underlined the important role that a NEP, formalization strategies and social protection can play in the currently challenging economic environment to create decent jobs on the labour market. He underlined the importance of broad-based consultations and country ownership in the process and emphasized that the ILO stands ready to provide continued support to the government and social partners.



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► Part 1: Employment

National employment policy: Data, priorities and process in the Solomon Islands

Mr Christian Viegelahn, ILO Employment Specialist, Country Office Suva, presented on the development of a NEP for the Solomon Islands, recapping on priority issues that were highlighted during the consultations that had taken place at a workshop in October 2022, and emphasizing the need for data collection – through a labour force survey (LFS) or a household income and expenditure survey (HIES) with a labour market module – to inform evidence-based policy making.

Moreover, Mr Viegelahn outlined the content of the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), one of the priority conventions which provides the basis for ILO's support to countries in the development of a NEP. He also emphasized the conditions for a successful policy process, including ownership, alignment with other national processes, broad-based partnerships, a broad and sustained political commitment, accountability and inclusiveness.

Moving forward, Mr Viegelahn suggested the engagement of a consultant through the ILO and in close partnership with social partners, who would assist in developing a draft NEP in consultation with government, employers' and workers' representatives, as well as other relevant civil society actors. Once a draft is finalized, it would need to be

validated at a workshop. The suggestion on the way forward was endorsed by the participants. In terms of timeline, it was agreed to develop the draft in the course of 2023, while the adoption of the NEP would be envisaged for 2024, after the Pacific Games, which will be held in the country in November and December 2023.

Plenary discussion: Are there more points that you would like to make, which should be considered in the National Employment Policy process moving forward?

Mr Riley Mesepitu mentioned that a report on the alignment of national labour laws with international labour standards will soon be available for validation. There is a need to build an information basis to ensure that human resources match the demands of the labour market in Solomon Islands. To this end, the government is currently undertaking a "Labour Market Information" survey.

Some more participants highlighted the importance of good and recent labour market data, stressing the importance to have a LFS. It was also mentioned that the "Labour Market Information" Survey that is currently being undertaken by the government in some provinces, is different from a LFS.

The representative from the Disabled People Association Solomon Islands (DPASI) expressed the desire to keep participating in the process of decision making and policy formulation.

Ms Natalina Hong, CEO of SICCI, emphasized the importance of the NEP and the need for more active involvement of the Tripartite Advisory Board. She also stressed the importance of data collection, particularly the LFS. She highlighted the need for tax and other reforms to support the private sector development and addressed issues such as labour mobility.

A civil society representative emphasized the need to tackle registration of actors in the informal sector in a more holistic approach, specifically mentioning copra and cocoa as areas to look into.

Other participants highlighted the issue of discrimination with regards to gender and race. A Solomon Islander of Chinese descent was given as an example, as such person is often unlikely to successfully apply for work in the country, due to their race.

► Part 2: Informality

What is informality? Concepts, definitions and trends

To kick off the discussion on informality, Mr Viegelahn familiarized participants with the definition of informality, introducing some of the statistical concepts around the topic of informal enterprises and informal jobs. He also described in detail the conceptual framework for informal employment, based on the 17th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) Guidelines, showing that the group of workers in informal employment is quite heterogeneous, including different types of workers.

Mr Viegelahn then continued presenting recent trends and figures on informal employment, globally as well as in the Asia-Pacific region, and showed charts illustrating the statistical relationship between informal employment and poverty, as well as between informal employment and education status. He emphasized the importance of a HIES to assess the exact level of informality in the Solomon Islands, as recent data on informal employment or employment in informal enterprises is currently missing for the Solomon Islands.

Plenary discussion: What do you know about informality in the Solomon Islands?

One participant mentioned the importance of innovation to address the lack of resources and to create opportunities for skills development and employment.

Another participant highlighted the role of the informal economy as a significant source of income, with some street vendors reportedly earning more than public

employees. In this context, however, it was stressed that reliable data is critical for policymaking, and there is a need for researchers to ensure that it is not opinions, assumptions and stories that are used to inform policy decisions. The Ministry confirmed its priority on data collection on labour statistics in both formal and informal sectors.

Root causes of informality and approaches to support enterprise formalization

Ms Helen Kirsch, ILO Technical Officer, Country Office Suva, led a plenary discussion on the reasons for informality.

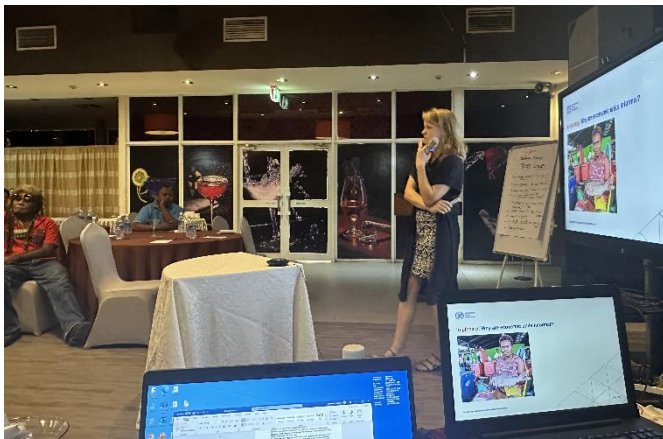
Plenary discussion: Why are economic units informal?

In the discussion participants mentioned a number of factors that can explain why economic units choose to remain informal. Some of the factors that were mentioned by the participants can be summarized as follows:

- Informal enterprises simply do not see any value added to register.
- Informal enterprises are doing well without registering.
- Informal enterprises choose to remain informal so that they do not need to pay taxes.
- Informal enterprises have costs related to administrative work and record keeping that needs to be done as a formal business.

- In some instances, there is a lack of knowledge about how to register.
- The process of business registration itself is quite costly and burdensome, requiring travel into the capital of Solomon Islands and payment of a fee.
- The lack of formalization is a failure of institutions.

In the context of the discussion, participants also mentioned that the government is going out to the provinces and rural areas, promoting formalization and raising awareness about the registration process. They also stated that an enabling environment for enterprises is key to encourage formalization.



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Following the plenary discussion, Ms Kirsch introduced the ILO's approach to formalization of informal economic units which is based on the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204) and combines four strategies, based on dialogue.

- Making it easier to register and comply (e.g. through simplified procedures and requirements)
- Making it more attractive to formalize through incentive schemes, and
- Making it more feasible to formalize through improved productivity
- Making it less attractive to be informal through enforcement and compliance.

The presentation was followed by a group discussion, in which participants explored potential measures under each of these four strategies.

Group discussion: What interventions could be designed within each of these four strategies and which actors would have to be involved?

The group of participants that looked into avenues to promote enterprise formalization through simplified procedures and requirements, presented the following as possible measures:

- Raising awareness at the village level through, for example, financial institutions, and central government as well as provincial governments and incentivizing the development of business information centres in provincial locations for example regarding business registration/licences.
- Hosting a Business Opportunity Information Seminars to inspire business development.
- Subsidizing the first year of taxes through collaborative efforts of MICLI and Ministry of Finance (MoF) and waiving business license fees for strategic sectors.
- Allowing the use of a voter's cards or letters from the village chiefs, pastors to access finance at financial institutions.
- Expanding digital coverage to all locations.

The group that discussed and reported back to plenary on the question how to make it more attractive to formalize a business included the following points:

- Providing mentoring and training sessions with a fee by MCLII, SICCI etc. This can also create a hub centre where sessions can be held.
- Creating awareness of the benefits of registering and the incentives available.
- Offering tax incentives, tax holidays, and rebates through the SMSE Bill.
- Providing access to markets or marketplaces where small businesses can sell their products, particularly in provincial centers.
- Offering a wide business development service offer for registering a business through organizations such as SICCI, the Young Entrepreneurs Council Solomon Islands (YECSI), and the Solomon Islands Women in Business Association (SIWIBA).
- Providing access to finance through banks, financing facilities, MoF, and financial institutions. Example the Economic stimulus package funding.
- Implementing an SME credit guarantee scheme, export financing facility and MSME line facility in placed as well.

One group focused on making formalization more feasible by increasing productivity. Their suggestions included:

- Developing policies and regulations that promote formalization
- Using media platforms like Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC) radio to relay information to the community.
- Strengthening the link between government and provincial authorities, with a particular emphasis on the Ministry of Commerce.
- Inspections that advise non-registered businesses to formalize.
- Simplifying the registration process, potentially by exploring the use of mobile phones to access registration links.

The final group discussed about making it less attractive to be informal in the Solomon Islands, and their recommendations included:

- Formulating a clear national policy to guide the government in addressing issues related to the informal economic sector, especially in rural areas.
- Reviewing and potentially reducing the legal requirements that affect the sector, such as registration fees, license taxes, and annual returns.
- Improving enforcement monitoring to identify areas for improvement and change.
- Changing the mindset of Solomon Islanders towards the informal sector through awareness campaigns and communication on different platforms, including social media.



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The role of incentive and support schemes for enterprise formalization

Ms Judith Van Doorn, Specialist for Enterprise Formalization, and Mr Kareem Bayo, Technical Officer for Enterprise Formalization, ILO Headquarters in Geneva, highlighted the role of incentive and support schemes as a central component of the EU-OACPS-funded project on transition of Informal Enterprises towards sustainable growth.

Both delivered a presentation to demonstrate the different informality profiles of small enterprises and potential pathways to formality, informed by ILO global experience and the inception phase of the current project. By defining the scope and potential types of incentive and support schemes for formalization, participants were enabled to reflect on the role of such schemes in the Solomon Islands with the objective to gradually create pathways for enterprises to grow and become part of the formal economy. A general overview of categories for incentive and support schemes towards formalization was followed by a presentation and discussion of two country examples, the Solomon Islands SME Credit Guarantee Scheme and the You Save Micro Pension Scheme.

Plenary discussion: Are there additional incentive and support schemes for enterprise formalization?

There are two additional schemes to support formalization offered by the Development Bank of Solomon Islands' (DBSI) credit line product. This financial support scheme is targeted at women and youths and provides loans with low-interest rates. The second support scheme is a sub-pension grant which supports businesses to develop and enhance value-added projects and increase the productivity in their operations. Criteria to access these schemes include obtaining registration and the relevant business license.

Another formalization support scheme mentioned by the participants is the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), which has a portfolio of over 300 million dollars. However, the eligibility criteria and decision-making processes to access the schemes are not entirely clear and/or not transparent enough. The participant suggested that if the criteria for accessing the CDF could be improved, the scheme would be more successful in fulfilling its objective of serving small enterprises.

Moreover, the Solomon Islands Government is implementing subsidies to support exporters and farmers,

with a focus on improving record-keeping capacities, that may also motivate some categories of enterprises to formalize.

Plenary discussion: What are the critical factors that would determine success or failure of incentive and support schemes?

To assess existing incentive and support schemes in Solomon Islands and understand the critical success factors for the development of new schemes, a plenary discussion was facilitated. In summary, participants iterated the following key aspects:

- The priority areas of some schemes require changes to better respond to the needs of informal sector enterprises.
- Where relevant, schemes should include a registration requirement that can support pathways towards formalization.
- To increase effectiveness, incentive and support schemes should be independent from tedious and overly bureaucratic procedures to the extent possible.
- A working group should be set up to work out the details of the schemes (e.g. eligibility criteria, target group, other modalities) and can assure that they are inclusive.
- The fact that Solomon Islands is a small country and only has limited access to markets of a large scale limits the impact of schemes.
- Schemes have mostly been provided in isolation, without any accompanying support towards business growth and/or formalization. This is another factor that can influence their long-term success.
- The upcoming MSME Bill is a promising development for the expansion of incentive and support schemes for formalization. The objective is to create an independent authority to manage relevant schemes that target MSMEs (micro and small enterprises)
- Technology and innovation are crucial in promoting formalization as well as entrepreneurship.
- Political influence may interfere with other objectives, and those risks should be considered and managed to the extent possible.
- There are several schemes in place, such as the Rural Seven Club, but there is a need for better support and legislation to address the risk of corruption in and due diligence of these schemes.

► Part 3: Social protection



Social Protection Diagnostic Assessment for the Solomon Islands

Mr Stephen Barrett, Social Protection Expert and ILO Consultant, led the virtual sessions that presented and validated the Social Protection Diagnostic Assessment, with support in the facilitation of the group and plenary discussions from Mr Christian Viegelahn, Ms Helen Kirsch and Mr Bimlesh Raj.

Introduction: Purpose, scope, objectives and methodology

Mr Barrett highlighted the rationale and the purpose of the Social Protection Diagnostic Assessment that was produced as part of a joint UN Programme of ILO, UNDP and UNICEF, which is to inform the development of evidence-based, nationally owned social protection systems to accelerate the SDGs and to develop a project proposal around this objective. Judging from the data, Solomon Islands' social protection system is much less developed than the social protection systems of many other countries in the Pacific. The Social Protection Diagnostic Assessment aims to identify the gaps and defines policy recommendations and options to fill those gaps and develop an adequate social protection system.

Mr Barrett then presented some of the basic concepts around income security interventions and social insurance mechanisms and introduced the existing international conventions on social protection system design. Social protection systems play a critical role in national socio-economic development and can be seen as a delivery platform to contribute to targets around nutrition, climate resilience and others.

Context analysis

In this session, Mr Barrett briefly introduced the context analysis that forms part of the Social Protection Diagnostic Assessment. It examines how conducive the political and governance context is to social protection system development, what the status of informal social protection systems is, and what patterns of poverty and vulnerability exist in the population. Moreover, it covers an assessment of the socio-economic risks that the population faces and the impact that these risks are having, and also looks into contextual risks and challenges that needs to be considered when designing social protection programmes.

After briefly outlining the context analysis for the Solomon Islands, highlighting some of the stand-out issues such as child poverty and malnutrition, endemic violence against women and children, high rates of child labour and rising youth unemployment in urban areas, Mr Barrett proceeded with a group discussion. Participants were divided into five groups, in order to discuss two questions, before some groups were selected to report back to the plenary.

Group discussion: Which specific aspects of the context in Solomon Islands create a need to strengthen formal social protection?

Among the aspects mentioned by the different groups were the following:

- Lack of food security
- Poor governance system and need for institutional reform; mismatch of governance structures
- Paternalistic thinking by politicians
- Non-availability of services due to geographic scatteredness of islands
- High costs of social services and related accessibility
- Vulnerability to natural disasters
- Large number of vulnerable groups in the population
- Low level of economic activities, weak economic base
- Inadequate opportunities for skilled labour and lack of demand for life skills; skills mismatch and resulting lack of labour market opportunities

Moreover, participants highlighted in the discussion that priority needs for social protection will need to be identified through social dialogue and in collaboration with development partners. Legislative actors will need to become advocates for social protection. The delivery of social protection will need to make use of new technologies for easy accessibility. Some compulsory policies for insurance and credit unions would need to be imposed, according to some participants, where the Solomon Islands National Provident Fund (SINPF) Retirement benefit for government and private sector workers was given as a positive example. In terms of funding, funds for social protection would need to be allocated to specific ministries such as the Ministry for Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, as well as to

provincial governments. It was also suggested that the Social Welfare Division should link up with the existing NPF You Save scheme. One group suggested the establishment of a Social Services Council.

Group discussion: Which aspects of the context in Solomon Islands make developing social protection difficult or risky? How could those challenges/risks be addressed?

The following challenges and risks to establish a social protection system, were covered in the discussions:

- Lack of adequate level of technology and connectivity issues
- Unfair distribution of food
- Unfair recruitment of employees
- Insufficient budget to meet the needs for social protection of current and future populations
- Lack of political will
- Diversity of cultures
- Government service deficiencies due to scatteredness of islands
- Poor accountability

Diagnostic assessment

Mr Barrett presented the legal and policy framework for social protection, including international agreements, existing national legislation in the Solomon Islands as well as the National Peace Building Strategy 2016-20 of the Solomon Islands, which makes reference to people being “protected against life risks”. There are also links to social protection within the National Development Strategy.

Using the life-cycle perspective on social protection, existing provisions and mechanisms in the Solomon Islands were highlighted and discussed in detail, including maternity benefits, severance pay, sickness leave, as well as provisions included in the Workers’ Compensation Act of 1982. Some Members of Parliament and senior civil servants have access to retirement benefits. In the Child and Family Welfare Act of 2017, there is some reference to child benefits, but it remains unclear how this legal entitlement is implemented. There is also the SINPF, but limitations to that Fund as social protection mechanism due to lower coverage and other factors were outlined.

Mr Barrett also presented other social protection and related programmes existing in the Solomon Islands,

including disaster assistance schemes as well as the Rural Constituency Development Fund (RCDF) which aims to alleviate poverty and improve livelihoods.

Overall, there severe shortcomings outlined by Mr Barrett of the existing social protection system in the Solomon Islands, in terms of coverage, adequacy and effectiveness. These shortcomings do come along with significant economic and social costs.

Mr Barrett proceeded with a group discussion, asking participants to define priorities, based on the respective contingency for which social protection should kick in, the vulnerable groups that ought to be covered, as well as possible financing mechanism.

Group discussion: Which gaps in Solomon Islands’ social protection system should be prioritized for action? Why?

Different groups highlighted different areas of priorities. Among the contingencies and vulnerable groups to be covered with priority, the following were mentioned:

- Unemployment insurance – currently covered through informal social protection mechanisms through family; focus on rural areas and encourage farmers and fishers to accumulate savings through NPF You Save scheme; urban area focus on youths, adults and people with disabilities
- Disability benefits and insurance – for enhanced inclusiveness; provide free transport for people with disabilities; inclusion of people with mental disabilities
- Pension benefits and insurance
- Child benefits – investment in education system, provide free education, focus on disadvantaged children such as orphans or neglected children
- Benefits to pregnant women and single mothers
- Support for youths – youths cover the majority of the population; focus on school dropouts and unemployed youth
- Support in the case of natural disasters

One group mentioned the general need to review existing laws relating to employment, labour, work compensation and protection of vulnerable groups. Another group stressed the importance of focusing on vulnerable groups, given that their voices are not heard, some services are not available to them, there is currently no focus on their

needs, and the responsible agencies to provide support are not identified.

As for potential financing mechanisms, tax financing and the improvement of tax collection in the informal sector was mentioned. In addition, the RCDF was mentioned as means to help fund schemes for vulnerable groups. Also a revised NPF scheme to include fiscal contributions that could cater for expenditure on social protection was mentioned.

Policy options analysis

The policy options analysis needs to start with an identification of potential first steps in strengthening tax-financed social protection, social insurance and other employment-based benefits to be achieved through stakeholder dialogue. Mr Barrett emphasized that a detailed modelling of policy options requires access to up-to-date labour market data, which are currently not available, as the country has not conducted any LFS or HIES recently. The options that Mr Barrett presented are based on the feedback he received during the consultations with stakeholders in preparation of the Social Protection Diagnostic Assessment and aligned also to the regional experience on the gradual establishment of social protection systems.

For the estimation of costs of social protection policy options, it is key to define the target group, the transfer levels, an estimate of the administrative costs and assumptions on roll-out/coverage. As for transfer levels, international standards or other reference points such as the national poverty line or median earnings can be considered.

Mr Barrett then presented the cost estimates of the progressive roll-out of a child benefit, a single parents' support allowance, a disability living allowance and a basic old-age pension. According to his estimates, total costs would initially start at around 0.7 per cent of GDP, and then gradually increase until 2040 to nearly 2 per cent of GDP, assuming a gradual increase in coverage and benefits for some of these programmes.

Plenary discussion:

- Which of the policy options proposed is likely to secure greatest political and societal support?
- How could the selected option contribute to wider national objectives? How could they be designed to maximize the contribution?
- What concerns need to be addressed/risks need to be mitigated with any of these options?

In the plenary discussion about the above-mentioned questions, which was facilitated after the presentation of policy options, the following points were made by the participants:

- Social protection must not be a stand-alone system but should be complementary to other social programmes.
- There is space to do more in Solomon Islands, on top of the traditional safety net, the so-called "wantok" system.
- The RCDF has been taking up funds that can be used for granting of social benefits under social protection schemes.
- Tax-financing might be a feasible option in the near future.
- Social protection programmes for young people would attract political support, given that they account for the largest portion of the population as well as the challenges they face. Child benefits may be affordable but might need a comprehensive system to implement such benefits. Based on the current economic growth trajectory of the country, social protection policy and its implementation is challenging but should be doable.
- There is a general need for an appropriate social protection model for PICs.

Conclusions and recommendations

Mr Barrett presented “good news” and “bad news” in relation to the prospects to establish a social protection system in the Solomon Islands.

On the one hand, natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic, economic crises and recent social conflict in the country have all shown that the current arrangements are insufficient. Moreover, there appears considerable support for broad-based social protection programmes that would cover key vulnerable groups. The Social Protection Diagnostic Assessment showed that there are affordable options available to establish a nationally determined social protection floor in Solomon Islands. Moreover, new technologies and business models are emerging, which can be helpful to facilitate the provision of social protection and experience shows that progress has been made in other challenging contexts.

On the other hand, the process of strengthening Solomon Islands’ social protection system faces fiscal, capacity and operational headwinds. Moreover, expanded social protection must not come at the expense of investment in essential services and expectations should remain realistic. Sensitive communication and good governance in social protection implementation will be critical to avoiding an exacerbation of social conflict.

As way forward, Mr Barrett suggested a gradual approach with smaller scale programmes targeted at highly vulnerable groups. As examples, he gave survivors of domestic violence, single parents with young children or people with most severe disabilities. Linkages should be established with relevant complementary interventions, in order to maximize impact. Finally, Mr Barrett suggested that these early stages could also benefit from efforts to integrate traditional values and social protection practices, within a progressive and inclusive traditional governance and peacebuilding agenda.

Plenary discussion:

- **Do you agree with the proposal to establish a multi-sectoral social protection working group and Special Parliamentary Select Committee?**
- **Do you have any other recommendations on how best to maintain momentum on social protection system development?**
- **What support could the UN and other development partners provide in the immediate future?**

In the plenary discussion about the above-mentioned questions, participants echoed the need of the country to have social protection policy and legislation. Policy and strategic actions to be implemented can be developed on the basis of the Social Protection Diagnostic Assessment. It will be important to create and provide space to do more for a social protection system in the Solomon Islands.

As next steps, participants recommended the establishment of a multi-sectoral Social Protection Working Committee at the national level, as well as dedicated technical sub-committees on different aspects of social protection such as tax-financing, social insurance as well as on the various proposed social protection benefits such as child benefits, old age benefits and others.

► Further information

ILO. 2023. *Employment, Informality and Social Protection in the Solomon Islands: Solomon Islands' First National Employment Policy is Currently Under Development* (23 March).

► List of participants

- Ms Blondie Akwasia, Coalition for Education Solomon Islands (COESI)
- Mr Alan Aba, Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR)
- Ms Florence Rhibbie Tatemala Auma, Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industries (SICCI)
- Mr Inia Berry, Development Service Exchange (DSE)
- Mr Glins Clay, Ministry of Traditional Governance, Peace, and Ecclesiastical Affairs (MTGPEA-PEAD)
- Ms Lynette Dawheya, MUU/FI
- Mr Nathaniel Dawheya, Association of Solomon Islands Security Services
- Ms Freda Fa'aitoa, BSP Financial Group Ltd
- Mr Casper Fa'asala, Disabled People Association Solomon Islands (DPASI)
- Ms Elirose Fagaqweka, Labour Division, Ministry of Commerce Industries Labour and Immigration (MCILI)
- Ms Linda Folia, Central Bank of Solomon Islands (CBSI)
- Mr Roy Fugui, Labour Division Ministry of Commerce Industries Labour and Immigration (MICLI)
- Mr Eric George, Ministry of Commerce Industries Labour and Immigration (MCILI)
- Mr Sylvester Hirogagana, Australia and New Zealand Banking Group
- Ms Natalina Hong, Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industries (SICCI)
- Mr Desmond Irobina, Workers Union of Solomon Islands (WUSI)
- Mr Charles Kafa, Ministry of Traditional Governance, Peace, and Ecclesiastical Affairs (MTGPEA-PEAD)
- Mr Tony Kagovai, Solomon Islands Council of Trade Unions (SICTU) / Workers Union of Solomon Islands (WUSI)
- Ms Josephine Kama, Local consultant
- Ms Daisy Kariamae, Ministry of Traditional Governance, Peace, and Ecclesiastical Affairs (MTGPEA-TGD)
- Ms Siona Koti, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Mr Robert Lafisi, Solomon Islands National Teachers Association (SINTA)
- Mr James Lalawa, Solomon Islands National Teachers Association (SINTA)
- Mr John H. Lasi, Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR)
- Mr Peter Mae, Ministry of Traditional Governance, Peace, and Ecclesiastical Affairs (MTGPEA)
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- Ms Valery Musuota, Ministry of Commerce Industries Labour and Immigration (MCILI)
- Ms Glenda Ono, Workers Union of Solomon Islands (WUSI)
- Ms Gladys Pae, Guadalcanal Province
- Ms Iris Parisuri, Oxfam in the Pacific
- Mr Ronesh Prasad, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
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- Mr Wendy Ramo'oroa, Workers Union of Solomon Islands (WUSI)
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- Mr Dave Hiva Riuta'aa, Mendana Hotel
- Mr Peter Talisman, Ministry of Commerce Industries Labour and Immigration (MCILI)
- Mr Tobit Taravu, Company Haus Division
- Ms Jean Tito, Social Welfare Division, Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS)
- Mr David Tuhonuku, Solomon Islands Council of Trade Unions (SICTU) / Workers Union of Solomon Islands (WUSI)
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