



## EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES TRAINING COMMITTEE

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### *Internal Memorandum*

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**From:** Hon. Nestor Giro, Chairman of the Education and Human Resources Training Committee, MP Central Makira

**Phone:** 7938907

**To:** The Clerk to the National Parliament of Solomon Islands

**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> September 2015

**Subject:** World Education Forum 2015 – Participation Report

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Greetings Sir,

#### **1. World Education Forum 2015**

From the 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015, representatives from National, Regional and International Non- Government Organizations and Civil Societies around the world have gathered together at the World Education Forum 2015 in Incheon, Korea to embark on the Draft Incheon Declaration intended to serve as a Roadmap for a Global Education till 2030.

Of the 1500 participants from 130 Government Ministers and High Level Government officials and other key stakeholders, I have had the honor and privilege to form part of the Solomon Islands Delegation to participate at this

World Education Forum as per our United Nation's Committee to the Universal theme of **Education For All** and **the UN 8 Millennium Development Goals** which emerges during the UN Summit of September 2000 and will lapsed at the end of this year, 2015.

The Solomon Islands Delegation Consist of:

**Hon Derrick Sikua**; the Minister for Education and Human Resources Development,

**Dr. Franco Rodie**; the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development

**Ms. Constance Nasi**; the Undersecretary National Education Services, Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development

**Ms. Christina Bakolo**; UNESCO National Commission Desk Officer,

**Mr. Silas Fakani**; Government Protocol Officer (PMO) and

**Mr. Paul Kakai Jnr**; an NGO National Coordinator of the Coalition Education, Solomon Islands,

In organizing this milestone event, **UNESCO** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in collaboration with **UNDP** (United Nations Development Program), **UNFPA** (United Nations Populations Fund), **UNICEF** (United Nations Children's Fund), **UN Women** (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) and **WORLD BANK**; the Government of the Republic of Korea hosted the Forum in Incheon.

## **2. Global Educational Goals and Related Issues**

The overarching theme of the World Education Forum focuses on the Management and Governances of the world educational system. While the Goal of the World Education Forum 2015 is to **"Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"**, the objectives of the World Education Forum transpire to;

- a) Take stock of achievements and shortfalls in the implementation of the Dakar Framework for Action and the education-related Millennium Development Goals over the last 15 year period (2000 – 2015).
- b) Agree on a joint position for the education goals and targets in the post 2015 development agenda, which will be adopted by UN Members States at a Summit in September 2015 and

- c) Agree on a comprehensive Framework for Action to guide and support the implementations of the future education and agenda.

The Forum was also informed of the alarming **121 Million** reported children around the globe who are without schooling while **781 Million** adults who are denied the right to literacy. Two-third of the figures given were women. Thus this calls for a new perspective in the Post 2015 Educational Agendas.

United Nation Members states are called on to ensure educational agendas that are Human Rights Based, Universal, and Holistic; and are cultivated within a lifelong learning perspective. Countries should draw on lessons learnt from the past and be encouraged to fully address the unachieved EFA goals and prepare their younger generations to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

UN Member states need to reaffirm that education is a fundamental Human Right and a public good which is the key to promoting Social, Economic and environment justice. In aspiring to good governance thus connotes that every state has the duty to provide free quality public education and lifelong learning for all and to ensure the right to education is enshrine in their laws and be enforceable.

### **3. 2015 NGO Forum Declaration**

As part of the Delegation, I was privileged to attend to a session for the NGOs with objectives relating to the global education. As a result the **2015 NGO Forum Declaration Towards the Right to Inclusive Quality Public Education and Lifelong Learning Beyond 2015** was development. Below are the declaration statements as such;

1. We, the representatives of national, regional and international non-government and civil society organizations from different parts of the world have gathered at the NGO Forum in Incheon, Korea, from 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015. The Forum has been held ahead of the World Education Forum (WEF) 2015 scheduled to take place in Incheon from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015, to prepare for our active participation and effective engagement.
2. We have taken note of the status of Education for All (EFA) based on the 2015 Global Monitoring Report, complemented by independent EFA assessments, discussed the contributions of civil society on EFA since Dakar in 2000, reviewed the status of the post 2015 process and analyzed the WEF Draft declaration and Framework for Action. Following our deliberations over the past two days, we have adopted this statement, which reflects the aspirations of the Civil Society Organizations as we set our eyes on Education 2030.
3. We re-affirm that education is a fundamental human right and a public good that is key to

promoting social, economic and environmental justice. States have the duty to provide free quality public education and lifelong learning for all and to ensure the right to education is enshrined in law and enforceable. We are however alarmed that today, 121 million children and adolescents are still out of school, with major inequalities in terms of access and quality. At least 781 million adults are denied the right to literacy, two-thirds of them being women. To address these and other challenges, the post 2015 education agenda must be rights-based, universal, holistic and within a lifelong learning perspective, drawing on lessons from the past, fully addressing the unachieved EFA goals and ensuring greater ambition to prepare young people and adults for life and to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

4. We welcome the **Draft Declaration and Framework for Action (FFA)** for the WEF on the assumption that the fundamental content will remain unchanged, that there will be no regression from the current human rights perspective and degree of ambition of the targets and that the recommendations in this Declaration are taken on board.
5. We furthermore expect that the education goal and targets will remain integrated as part of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals to be adopted in September 2015, thus recognizing the critical role of education for social, economic and environmental justice and the indivisibility of human rights. We support the recommendation of the co-facilitators in the New York Intergovernmental Negotiations that where x% is used in the adult literacy, skills and teacher targets, these should be replaced by flail".
6. We agree that the goal to "*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*" should stand as our collective vision for the post 2015 agenda. To this end, we call for the commitment to twelve years of free, publicly-funded formal quality education for all by 2030, nine of which should be compulsory. We furthermore call for ECCE from birth to school entry age group be progressively free. We reaffirm the right to progressively free and public quality higher education and vocational education and training. Each country should set clear benchmarks and milestones to outline how they will achieve this.
7. We need more attention to be placed on what the commitment to lifelong learning really means. It is an approach that is transformative, a commitment to a vision of learning that starts from birth and extends throughout life, and encompasses quality formal, non-formal and informal learning, recognizing all people from children, youth and adults to older people as rights-holders. The foundation lies in early childhood care and education, which is essential both for promoting well-being and for enhancing social cohesion and national development. ECCE must be holistic and comprehensive, respecting the unique characteristics of young children and ensuring that all reach their full potential. Similarly, adult literacy and education policies and programmes must be prioritized and publicly funded, being appropriate to adulthood and designed with learners, focusing on empowerment. Achieving lifelong learning further requires that all barriers to progression through different cycles of education are eliminated, including the recognition of prior informal and formal learning.
8. We reiterate our call for ensuring that access, equity and quality are addressed together for all ages, within and outside formal education settings. Special emphasis should be given to the

inclusion of those marginalized by gender, race, language, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, sexual orientation, health status, geographical location, refugee or migrant status, socio-economic status, age, emergency, manmade disaster and conflict, among others. We recognize that women and girls from marginalized groups face additional, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. States and organizations should never separate access and equity from quality, including in conflict-affected and disaster-prone areas. Indeed, the central challenge that most education systems face is to ensure equity in the quality of education, ending segregation and stratified systems that exacerbate inequalities in societies. Whilst ensuring quality for all education systems must celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity, resisting the drive towards standardization which may undermine diversity. Particular emphasis should be placed on out-of-school children and youth, including those who live in conflict affected states, in providing education opportunities, as well as creating pathways to reengage them with the formal system. We support the commitment that no target be considered met unless met for all.

9. Quality education extends beyond literacy and numeracy by encompassing the acquisition of a broad set of knowledge, skills and values, as well as fostering critical thinking, creativity, solidarity, dialogue and problem solving. It is rooted in fulfilling and inclusive learning experiences, requiring safe, secure and inclusive learning environments; motivated and valued teachers, high quality materials as well as relevant, broad curricula that encompass human rights education, education for sustainable development and global citizenship education. Quality education values individual and cultural and linguistic diversity, strengthens democracy and promotes peace. The learning process must be based on a learner centred approach.
10. Central to the achievement of all education targets, equity, quality education and learning for all are teachers who are well trained, professionally qualified, and valued and have decent remuneration no less than that of professionals with comparable qualifications in the public service and/or private sector. Governments should increase investment in teacher education and the provision of continuous professional development and support, ensuring gender sensitive recruitment and training. They need to create decent and attractive working conditions for all teachers, education support personnel and educational leaders. Teacher organizations need to be respected and recognized as independent and legitimate actors. They need to be centrally involved in all social dialogue concerning education policies, salaries and conditions of service and this should be guaranteed through legislation. Given its centrality the teacher target should have a more immediate deadline of 2020.
11. Whilst supportive of the FFA as a whole we are deeply concerned by the narrow range of indicators in its annex. To achieve the goal we strongly recommend that national and regional indicators should show a progressive narrowing of the gap in access and achievement between the richest 20 % and poorest 40 %, measured each five years. We need to have a more ambitious and holistic set of indicators, both universal and thematic, which are consistent with existing human rights obligations and in line with the content and spirit of the goal and the full set of education targets. Particular attention is needed to ensure that there are diverse indicators for quality education that recognise and track inputs, processes and a wide spectrum of outcomes. In relation to learning, the focus should also be on strengthening formative assessment which can help to guide practical improvement, rather than an over-emphasis on internationally standardized tests and

comparisons. There should be a clear recognition that setting indicators is a political, not purely technical, act and that final approval of thematic indicators must be subject to appropriate democratic oversight.

12. We welcome the recognition that civil society participation should be institutionalized and guaranteed in all processes - as this is crucial to ensuring governments are held to account and achieving inclusive, quality education for all. Accountability, transparency and the importance of civil society's watchdog role, including expenditure-tracking, during the implementation and monitoring of the post-2015 agenda must be underscored. We recommend that this explicitly includes all stakeholders including teachers unions, parents groups and representative student movements as well as NGOs, children and youth-led movements, communities, learners' organizations, disabled people's organizations, indigenous organizations, academic and research institutions, women's organizations and other social movements that represent excluded groups. These diverse actors should be meaningfully involved in all the stages of policy dialogue, planning, decision making, monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 education agenda. Furthermore, human rights can only be fulfilled in a context of democracy that recognizes participation as a right in itself. To this end, we condemn and call for an end to the discrimination, persecution and criminalization of activists and civil society movements that we are presently witnessing across all continents and which jeopardizes the fulfillment of the right to education.
13. We are deeply concerned and also strongly condemn the continued threat to the right to education due to the rising incidents of attacks and violence in and around educational institutions, leading to casualties of students and personnel. In addition, school-related, gender-based violence needs to be recognized as a significant barrier to education, particularly for girls. More attention needs to be paid to addressing the root causes of conflict and violence. It is an outrage that many governments are disproportionately investing in the military and/or are increasing their military expenditure more rapidly than their education expenditure. Education systems, both formal and non-formal, should promote a culture of peace, intercultural understanding, harmony and tolerance, working to overcome all forms of conflict at all levels.
14. The post 2015 education agenda cannot be achieved without adequate financing. We therefore call for the following:
  - a. National governments should absolutely adhere to international benchmarks for ensuring increased domestic financing for education, by allocating at least 6% of the GDP and at least 20% of the national budget to education. The use of a range of 15-20% and 4-6% as it currently stands in the FFA dilutes this essential benchmark.
  - b. More attention needs to be paid to expanding the domestic resource base. Whilst we welcome the FFA's references to expanding the tax base and challenging harmful tax incentives we need to oppose not just tax evasion but aggressive tax avoidance, which, though technically legal, can be immoral in denying countries the funds needed for delivering on the right to education. We join the call for an empowered intergovernmental body on tax which is mandated to set tax rules and empowered to enforce these rules - as a key step to ending the abuse of tax havens.
  - c. Donors should commit to clear targets - whether doubling of aid to basic education or ensuring

that at least 10% of aid is spent on basic education. The Dakar pledge on financing needs to be boldly reasserted in Incheon and delivered on seriously in the coming years. Donors need to prioritize their aid on low income countries and fragile and conflict affected countries. Aid to education in humanitarian contexts needs to be at least doubled from the low base of 2% to 4%. Furthermore, debt cancellation in favor of education should be re-emphasized.

- d. Governments and donors should prioritize spending on achieving the goal and targets for the most marginalized communities. Spending to increase equity improves quality of life for everyone.
  - e. The Financing for Development conference in Addis Ababa must come up with a comprehensive framework for financing the post-2015 sustainable development goals. We call on governments and all partners to ensure that the Addis outcome document has a commitment to financing the education goal and all of its targets, with the specific minimum benchmarks for domestic financing and external support described in paragraph 14 (a) and (c) above.
  - f. The Global Partnership for Education should align fully its strategic plan and financing mechanisms to the collectively agreed education goal and targets. It should support countries to develop comprehensive education sector plans and should avoid creating parallel goals, objectives or targets.
  - g. Clearer commitments are needed to ensure all public money (including aid money raised from taxpayers) is spent on public education and is not supporting or subsidizing for-profit provision in any way. Private sector contributions to the education sector should aim to reinforce the need for greater public investment in education and research rather than to replace the role of national governments. We therefore, reaffirm education as a public good and reject calls for increased privatization or commercialization in education, including any support for low fee private schools and for-profit universities. Equally we oppose any trade agreements that include education as a commodity and facilitate Liberalization of education services and loss of rights, as in the case of the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA). We also call on all governments to put in place stronger regulation of private provision of education to prevent abuse, fragmentation and increasing inequity.
15. We support the need to improve monitoring and evaluation of progress at all levels and the push for a data revolution, especially in ensuring that disaggregated data is transparently available to all in order to inform education policy and practice. The biggest challenges lie in strengthening national systems and capacity-building in qualitative and quantitative data collection as well as meaningful and effective analysis. This needs to be given priority over the aspirations for internationally comparable data. There needs to be a huge effort to track the extent to which all equity gaps in education are reduced.
  16. We recognize the crucial role played by UNESCO as the mandated UN agency for education and we urge continuation of an inclusive, democratic process and architecture which engages member states, relevant UN agencies and civil society. This partnership is crucial to success. As civil society we value the Collective Consultation of NGOs on EFA and the composition of the EFA Steering Committee, which includes civil society representation.

17. We, the representatives of national, regional and international non-government organizations and civil society organizations from different parts of the world are committed to work and cooperate with governments and a wide range of groups, individuals and institutions to reach our goal to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunity for all of quality education for all". In particular we commit to:
- a. Continue engagement and dialogue with UNESCO at all levels and other key stakeholders in articulating the education agenda with the UN SDGs agenda, in particular at the World Education Forum;
  - b. Engage all governments at local, regional and central level to fulfill their commitment to implement the 2030 education agenda and Framework for Action;
  - c. Increase our advocacy for education both within and outside of the education community and hold States and donors accountable for meeting their obligations;
  - d. Foster the active engagement of families, children, youth, students, teachers and communities, especially those most marginalized, so that their voices are heard in agenda-setting, policymaking and implementation;
  - e. Disseminate this outcome document throughout the CCNGO EFA membership and the broader civil society at national, regional and international levels;
  - f. Disseminating the Declaration from the World Education Forum 2015 and the Framework for Action "Education 2030".
18. Together, we need to continue to make a compelling case that education is at the heart of the post-2015 agenda, facilitating achievement of all other SDGs. The new global compact on development requires a new generation of active global citizens of all ages in all countries, developing and sharing the attitudes, knowledge and behaviors which are essential for a sustainable planet. To achieve dignity and social and environmental justice, we need inclusive, equitable, quality education and lifelong learning for all.

#### **4. Declaration on Education 2030**

The Declaration on Education 2030 aspires towards an inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all. It is expected to mobilize all countries and partners in its implementation of the new agendas, and propose ways of its coordination, financing and monitoring - globally, regionally and nationally – to ensure equal educational opportunities for all.

In summary the themes of the Forum and Basis objectives are as follows;



- a. Recognising the Important role of Education in the proposed Sustainable Development Goals which is notable for the purpose of health (obesity), urban growth and employment, sustainable consumption and production and adaptation to climate change.
- b. Recognise that Schooling equips people with competencies to increase their income and escape poverty.
- c. Recognise that fewer children would suffer from stunting if all women had completed primary education.
- d. Recognise the colleration between education and health. Such that educated people are better informed and able to access, understand and apply information about health in reducing diseases and enjoy better health.
- e. Recongise that Education is a key enabler to empower women and girls to contribute to their society based on gender equality.
- f. Recognise Education's potential to boosts economic activity.

### **5. Empowering Teachers: teaching in Post- 2015 Education Agenda**

Another pertaining issue is that of the Teachers. In a communiqué developed at the 12<sup>th</sup> Session of the ILO-UNESCO, the Joint Committee of Experts considered issues relating to Teaching Personals and presented them to the World Education Forum 2015, in Paris - findings are as follows;

1. The Joint Committee appreciates the major progress made worldwide in steadily increasing the number of teaching staff, especially at the secondary education level, during the last two decades. It notes with satisfaction that quality teachers are increasingly recognized as the single most important factor in providing effective learning, and that a wide evidence base supports this view.
2. The Joint Committee is nonetheless deeply concerned by persisting challenges brought about by teacher shortages and by the low status of teachers at all levels of education, as reported by the Global Monitoring Report 2015, as well as by teacher organizations and NGO/CSOs.
3. In particular, the Joint Committee has noted that the latest trends show:
  - (a) a continued lack of recognition of teachers as professionals at all levels (de-professionalization), driven by austerity measures and poorly designed accountability schemes. Such trends have had an impact on the safety and health of teachers, in particular on their psychological well-being (burnout) and physical security;
  - (b) weakening social dialogue in education;
  - (c) lack of participation of teachers and their organizations in education policy reforms;
  - (d) decline in teachers' status and working conditions;

- (e) increasing disparities in teaching qualification requirements at all education levels;
  - (f) increasing for-profit privatization of education and a related impact on quality of education;
  - (g) violence targeted specifically at schools and teachers.
4. Moreover, early childhood education teaching personnel enjoy the least recognition, appreciation and investment in their professional development, despite the increasing recognition of the importance of ECE in laying the foundation for learning throughout life.
5. With reference to the proposed 2030 education goal and its set of targets, the Joint Committee notes with concern the narrow focus given to the issue of teaching personnel, with its main emphasis being on ensuring the adequate supply of teachers. The Joint Committee has noted that the target related to teachers is referred to as the "Means of Implementation", implying that teachers/teaching personnel are merely seen as an "input" into the education system.
6. The Joint Committee is of the firm view that teachers are not only a means of implementing education goals; they are the very key to sustainability and national capacity in achieving learning outcomes and creating societies based on knowledge, values and ethics. For this reason, the professional status of teachers must be addressed as a critical element of education goals.
7. The Joint Committee firmly believes that the key condition to attaining quality education at all levels is to ensure that every learner is taught by a qualified, motivated and professionally-supported teacher who is able to participate in education decision-making.
8. In view of the above, the Joint Committee calls on governments, teacher organizations and unions, international development partners, and other stakeholders in education to take urgent actions, in line with the provisions of the Recommendations of 1966 and 1997, so as to:
- (a) ensure that the central role of teachers in the full achievement of all the 2030 education-related targets is explicitly recognized and included as one of the core targets of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education;
  - (b) ensure that the status of teaching as a profession is publicly recognized and respected;
  - (c) ensure that practicing teachers are properly qualified through formal teacher education processes in line with each country's requirements;
  - (d) devise strategies for the provision of appropriate incentives, including competitive remuneration, clear career paths and continuous professional development opportunities to attract and retain good candidates to become teachers;
  - (e) establish and respect appropriate legal frameworks and institutional mechanisms that secure social dialogue and acceptable working conditions for teachers;
  - (f) ensure that teachers and their organizations participate prominently and play a constructive role in policy discussions and reform efforts in education;
  - (g) identify and agree on a comprehensive set of key indicators that would allow systematic monitoring of progress on the status and quality of the teaching profession at global, regional and national levels;
  - (h) identify good practices that lead to improvement in the teaching profession, so as to inspire more positive actions by government and other stakeholders;
  - (i) analyze and address new challenges in teaching in various contexts such as the evolving school environment, new forms of technology and for-profit privatization;
- G) establish policies and strategies to protect teachers from violence within the framework of violence-free schools, and, in areas of armed conflict, adhere to international

principles which prohibit the targeting of schools or use of schools for military purposes.

These findings could not express more on the importance of teachers in the whole scope of development as they are the very key to sustainability and national capacity in achieving learning outcomes and creating societies based on knowledge, values and ethics. For this reason, the professional status of teachers must be addressed as a critical element of education goals.

Much of the findings are similar to the challenges faced by our teachers in the Solomon Islands today. While the profession has once been deemed with esteem is losing face in the wider public service and around the globe, it would be a catastrophe if both the executive and the Legislature turned a blind eye to their cries.

The Education and Human Resource Training Committee in its latest report on the Inquiry into Teacher Absenteeism in Schools in Solomon Islands has highlighted and put forward to Parliament the welfare of Teachers and the outcry to create a Ministry to serve the Teachers in Solomon Islands.

## **6. The National Parliament of Solomon Islands' Roles In the Education System**

The National Parliament of Solomon Islands is constitutionally mandated to represent the voices of the citizen of Solomon Islands. On the basis of human rights and spiritual, mental, social and physical needs, education is essential. Survival requires awareness of one's environment. Thus the welfare, development and progression of Solomon Islands can be curbing if there is no tangible and practical national ambition for the quality and quantity education for its citizens.

It is evident that the task of educating our human resources is coordinated by the executive. However as the legislature, its role to play an oversight is pertinent. The legislature must ensure in its scrutiny role that the executive of the day's educational policies are beneficial to this island community. It must ensure that it reflects the traditional knowledge, values and practical skills for survival and actualization amongst the citizens.

The legislature must ensure that it closely monitors the justification of the policy implementations as per the financial implications on public funds. The Education and Human Resources Training Committee in playing its role also wishes to remain an avenue whereby educational issues can be discussed. Such inter-connectivity on the roles of the legislature and the executive, accountability can prevail and there is ensured of accomplishing national educational aspiration.

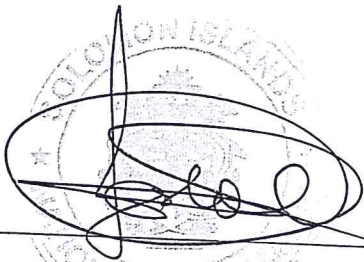
Hence the Legislature is in a crucial position to make these happen for Solomon Islands. On the part of the teachers, we should no longer listen to their prepositions through "Union strikes". We as the Legislature should be proactive by foreseeing and addressing

issue of national educational interest through legislative instruments that will ensure equity, justice and accountability.

Hence the Education and Human Resources Training Committee, wishes to note here that we will farther pursue;

1. A progressive evaluation on the Committee Recommendation on the Report on the Teacher Absenteeism in Schools in the Solomon Islands from the Executive, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development and bodies concern
2. Review the proposed Education Bill 2015.

On this note I hereby submit my report.



Hon. Nestor Giro

Chairman, Education and Human Resources Training Committee

National Parliament of Solomon Islands