



PRESS RELEASE

UN works to provide integrated support to the Solomon Islands as it prepares to graduate from Least Developed Country status

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On 17-18 October, the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Least Developed Country Graduation, in partnership with the Solomon Islands Government, held a 2-day workshop to kickstart the process of preparing for a smooth graduation from Least Developed Country Status.

This followed the decision by the UN General Assembly to grant the Solomon Islands an extended preparation period for graduation having met the necessary criteria in 2018; with formal graduation now due to occur end of 2024.

The workshop brought together experts from the United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS), the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), UNDP, the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the OECD, and the ADB to provide integrated support and advice.

During the event, government decision makers, civil society, the private sector, and development partners worked together to identify development priorities and challenges and to support the formulation of national policies and strategies to minimize the impact of loss of international support measures, harness graduation benefits and mainstream graduation into development planning.

Reaching the thresholds to begin the process of graduation represents a major achievement for the Solomon Islands and marks an important moment for a country, its development partners and the United Nations. However, even with graduation, the Solomon Islands will remain vulnerable to internal inequalities, external shocks and climate change induced vulnerabilities and more needs to be done to minimize these risks.

An important component of graduation is the preparatory process for a smooth transition out of the category. For Solomon Islands this period started with the decision of the United Nations General Assembly in 2018. This period provides an opportunity to the graduating country and its development partners to ensure that leaving the category of the Least Developed Countries does not disrupt its sustainable development process. The Solomon Islands has already begun to proactively negotiate with development and trading partners to fully counteract any emerging vulnerabilities and challenges. The Solomon Islands is one of a growing cohort of countries going through the process of graduation, including neighbouring Vanuatu on track to graduate in 2020, providing a valuable opportunity to learn from the experience of others.

The Inter-Agency Task Force was established as an important part of the UN Secretary General's reform agenda to focus on supporting information exchange on activities related to graduation, raising

awareness, and providing strengthened, coordinated delivery of UN support to graduating countries. Following this, the workshop represented a new approach to providing more integrated and coherent support to countries graduating from LDC status.

The Director of UN-OHRLS Heidi Schroderus-Fox noted that “this first workshop is only a starting point. Now we have to think, all together, about the future, how all stakeholders that participated in this workshop can work together and how the UN Inter-Agency Task Force can work in a coordinated and effective manner to assist the Government in turning its vision into reality.”

Media Contact:

Mr. Damien Sass

Public Information Officer, United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

Email: sass@un.org