PERMANENT MISSION OF SOLOMON ISLANDS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY HELEN BECK, COUNSELLOR SOLOMON ISLANDS PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS AT THE UN WOMEN EXECUTIVE BOARD SECOND REGULAR MEETING ON, 15-16 SEPTEMBER 2014, NEW YORK

Mr. President,

Thank you for giving me the floor and let me acknowledge your continued leadership of UNWomen Executive Board. Let me also take this opportunity, to thank and acknowledge the leadership of Executive Director Madam Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka of UNWomen and the comprehensive briefing she made to the Executive Board on Beijing +20, Evaluation, Fit for purpose, Structured financing dialogues, United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality, UN-SWAP, Partnerships and Response to conflict and crisis situations, such as Ebola.

My delegation on behalf of the Pacific SIDS, take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Executive Director Madam Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka for gracing us in the Pacific with her presence at the UN Third Global Conference on sustainable development of SIDS in Samoa early this month. We encourage UNWomen to continue to strengthen its work programmes in the Pacific to address the gender challenges, especially in the upcoming Post 2015 development agenda, in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway with a gender perspective to address development needs of women, girls and youth in SIDS.

We also thank the UNWomen Secretariat and staff for the informative briefing sessions that taken up during this session, on meta-analysis, humanitarian strategy, structured financial dialogue among other briefings you have lined up for us.

Mr. President,

Let me also congratulate UNWomen for having its own humanitarian strategy that will guide the organization in its humanitarian work with gender dimension among member states. On this note we acknowledge UNWomen for opening a climate change office in Fiji with the hope it will be replicated to other Pacific SIDS. The increasing existential
threat to our survival is the slow onset impact of climate change, sea level rise and ocean acidification that continue to disproportionately affect our populations especially women and children. We hope that with your engagement, resilience building would be a major part of your programme to assist our region to adapt and mitigate to ensure a secure livelihood for sustainable living for the population in the Pacific. We hope UN Women will do its fair share in guaranteeing the survival of our people from the adverse impact of climate change.

UNWomen must go beyond disaster risk management to embracing a more proactive path in building resilience and early warning preparedness to cope with climate crisis, conflicts, and disasters in your cooperative work with other UN Agencies and partners.

Mr. President,

We thank the UNWomen Secretariat for the report on the annual session of 2014. As we prepare for 2015, Beijing+20 as well as the Post 2015 development agenda, we would like to make a number of comments that can be taken up at future review sessions of the UNWomen Strategic Plan 2014-2017 and the current priorities of UN Women.

Under the regional architecture, we note UN Women office for the sub region in the Pacific, a multi-country office is in Suva, Fiji, all other UN Agencies congregate in a single country, given the vast ocean distances and geographical nature of the subregion, that in future will consider our proposal that UN Women establish itself in other countries of the Pacific SIDS especially in addressing the challenges of gender equality and women’s empowerment in the region.

The current priorities of UN Women remain relevant, gender violence continue to be a serious issue in the Pacific, in particular to Solomon Islands. Many of our countries are trying to address this issue. One of the countries is even looking at changing its laws to include capital punishment to deter some of the horrendous killings and violence against women. On a national level, we would like to thank all those that worked with us over the years to have a Family Protection Act that was passed by our Parliament last month. This is another step forward in our national fight to eradicate violence against women in our society. We continue to support the further implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action to ensure gender equality and empowerment women is realized by all women globally.

Mr. President,

Let me raise an issue critical to my subregion, climate change as global issue continues to disempower our women in the Pacific. IPCC recent report showed that for Pacific
SIDS, global temperature increase already exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius and by 2030, coral bleaching in our low-lying islands and countries will be severely impacted. Sea level raise is raising faster then predicted, resulting in relocation of populations, water and food insecurity and threatening the livelihood of our populations. Atmosphere concentration of carbon dioxide acidification of the ocean is transforming and threatening our economy. For Solomon Islands, the intensity of climate change related disasters is increasing. Last April 2014, flash floods disaster had reversed our development gains and reducing our GDP growth from 4% to 0%. Many of the victims are women and children, and has increase the burden on women in the post disaster rehabilitation.

Mr. President,

We believe climate change as a global challenge has disproportionate impacts on women and cuts across the three pillars of the UN, development, security and human rights. We see empowerment of women must include economic empowerment of women that include their access to appropriate technology that include climate adaptable crops, ICT for communication, energy for all, as some of the mitigation and adaptation actions to combat the negative impact of climate change.

We hope the Secretary General’s Climate Summit next week on 23 September will mobilise political will to have a more ambitious climate agreement in 2015 to address the inalienable right of women and their communities to survive.

We offer our sympathies with the sister countries in Africa affected by Ebola and we call on the international community to assist in finding a durable solution to eradicate the disease. A broader and stronger partnership will be critical to finding a lasting solution.

Mr. President,

On the issue of structured financial dialogue we acknowledge the partnership and contributions that was pledged at the annual session in June. We note UNwomen has not meet its initial resources base, more will need to be done, and those who have the capacity to do more to support UNWomen resources especially in the implementation of programmes at country level, in order for UNWomen to fully carry out its mandate effectively. We thank the UNWomen for detailed briefing provided on the meta-analysis on the operational work of the entity and that the recommendations will be taken on board.

We assure you of our support. Thank you.