



**Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Press Conference Statement
Monday 6 October 2025**

PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT

Press Conference Statement by the Prime Minister Hon. Jeremiah Manele

Good afternoon, members of the press. Thank you for being here, and welcome once again to the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. I also wish to acknowledge and commend the Acting Prime Minister, Hon. Bradley Tovosia, for his leadership during my absence and that of the Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. Frederick Kologeto. Their stewardship ensured the continuity of government business, and this is greatly appreciated.

Before I turn to recent international engagements, I wish to begin by highlighting an important national milestone achieved under the Government for National Unity and Transformation.

Last week, I had the honour of witnessing the signing of a new shareholding agreement for Kolombangara Forest Plantation Limited (KFPL). The parties to the agreement include the Kolombangara Landowners Trust Foundation, through their investment arm Kolombangara Islands Investment Limited, the Investment Corporation of Solomon Islands (ICSI), and a new investor, **New Forests**.

For decades, landowners have wanted a real say in the company operating on their land. Under this new agreement, they now own 20% of the company, giving them a direct voice in decisions. The

government, through ICSI, holds 5%, while New Forests, an international forestry company, owns 75%, bringing investment, expertise, and access to overseas markets.

This is a story of partnership, trust, and inclusive development, showing how government, investors, and landowners can work together to create lasting value for Solomon Islands communities.

Members of the press, in recent weeks, Solomon Islands has been engaged in a series of high-level events, following the successful hosting of the 54th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Meeting here in Honiara.

54th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting

Allow me to extend my sincere appreciation to the government (cabinet and caucus), leaders at all levels and across sectors, the people of Solomon Islands and the public of Honiara, Munda and Noro for the successful hosting of the regional premier meeting for Pacific leaders on our shores last month.

I appreciate everyone involved in organising and supporting the 54th PIFLM, including the national organising committee, service providers, stakeholders, and development partners. I also thank the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force for their excellent security operation during the event, demonstrating their strong capabilities in managing major operations.

Let me now turn to the two overseas engagements.

Papua New Guinea's 50th Independence Anniversary

On 16 September, Papua New Guinea celebrated 50 years of independence — a proud milestone for Melanesia and the Pacific. I was honoured to represent Solomon Islands on this historic occasion. The celebrations highlighted the resilience and achievements of PNG since 1975. On behalf of our Government and people, I extended warm congratulations to Prime Minister James Marape and the people of Papua New Guinea.

Our two nations share deep bonds of kinship, geography, and culture. PNG's journey inspires us as we look ahead to our own 50th Independence Anniversary in 2028. Preparatory work will begin soon to ensure we mark that occasion with pride.

On the margins of PNG's anniversary, I also attended the US-Pacific Roundtable and held bilateral meetings with key partners, including France, the People's Republic of China, and the Asian Development Bank.

80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 80)

From Port Moresby, our delegation travelled to New York for the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly, held under the theme ***“Better Together: 80 Years and More for Peace, Development and Human Rights.”***

In my address, Solomon Islands stressed that peace, development, and human rights are inseparable. For small island states, a strong multilateral system is not optional — it is essential.

We also supported the reform of the UN system that reflects global realities including the security council where we called for the removal of veto power which is undermining multilateralism.

UN High-Level Events and Pacific Islands Forum

As Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, we advanced key regional priorities. Foremost was the Pacific Resilience Facility — a Pacific-led fund to address climate change and disasters. We are calling on partners to scale up contributions from the current US \$163 million to US \$500 million by the end of 2026. Encouragingly, new pledges were announced in New York, with more discussions planned later this month in Washington DC.

We also highlighted progress and challenges on women's empowerment and gender equality. While more girls are

completing school and women are accessing economic opportunities, new forms of violence, especially technology-facilitated abuse, must be addressed.

We drew global attention to the crisis of non-communicable diseases and mental health in the Pacific. We called for stronger national and regional responses, including more trained professionals, improved screening and treatment, and better community support. We also raised the growing concern of drug abuse across the region.

On peace and security, we delivered a regional statement marking the 40th anniversary of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, reaffirming our commitment through the Ocean of Peace Declaration. We also recognized young people as agents of change, especially in advancing climate justice and shaping the future of our Blue Pacific.

We placed climate change at the centre of our message. The International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion confirms that all states have binding obligations to act. For small islands like ours, climate change threatens our very survival. The Court also affirmed that climate displacement is a matter no state can ignore. This recognition carries great significance for our vulnerable communities.

On climate action, Solomon Islands submitted its third Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement — a Net Positive NDC. Our standing forests remove 30 times more than our combined emissions. With international support, we can do even more in conservation, reforestation and renewable energy.

We reaffirmed our commitment to protecting our ocean: welcoming the new BBNJ Treaty, supporting a single-use plastics ban and expressing our concern regarding the stalling of the new legally binding plastic treaty, reiterating the Melanesian Ocean Reserve, and maintaining a moratorium on deep-sea mining. We

also highlighted community conservation efforts and ocean management efforts under our national ocean policy.

We joined Commonwealth leaders in welcoming the new Secretary-General and supported her five-year strategy prioritizing democracy, the environment, youth, gender, and small states.

Solomon Islands reaffirmed solidarity with Least Developed Countries, ahead of our own graduation. We stressed the importance of international support to ensure our graduation remains resilient, sustainable, and irreversible.

At the G7+ Summit, we emphasized the need for sovereign development and strategic unity. Solomon Islands will assume the Chairmanship of the G7+ in January 2026 for two years.

Peace and Security

We reiterated our support for a peaceful solution to the Israel–Palestine conflict, consistent with the UN Charter, international law and recognizing the rights of all states to dignity, security, and self-determination.

We also confirmed Solomon Islands' candidature for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the 2032–2033 term — the first time we will contest such a role. This reflects our determination to ensure the Pacific voice is heard at the highest level of global peace and security.

Solomon Islands also signed the Humanitarian Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel, emphasising our support for the safe delivery of humanitarian aid worldwide.

Bilateral Meetings in New York

On the margins of UNGA, we held nine bilateral meetings with partners including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Austria, Germany, and India. These discussions covered cooperation in climate

resilience, education, health, policing, and economic transformation.

We also established diplomatic relations with North Macedonia and Andorra, bringing our total diplomatic partners to 139. Agreements were signed with Serbia to ease travel and strengthen dialogue, and with Tuvalu to allow Solomon Islands nurses to work there.

These engagements strengthened partnerships in areas that directly affect our people — climate resilience, education, health, trade, and security.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank those who made these engagements possible: the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hon. Peter Shanel Agovaka; the Minister for Provincial Government, Hon. Wayne Ghemu; MPs Hon. Alfred Tuasulia and Hon. Mary Daniella Garu; our High Commissioner, Ambassador and diplomatic staff; officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and my team from the Prime Minister's Office and Cabinet. Their tireless efforts ensured the success of our work abroad.

Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen, the past month has been one of continuous high-level engagements for Solomon Islands: from hosting the 54th Pacific Islands Forum in Honiara, to standing alongside our Melanesian family in Port Moresby, and representing our nation on the world stage in New York.

There will always be differing views on how issues were raised. What matters is that Solomon Islands' positions were presented clearly, consistently, and with dignity, in line with international law — and that our partnerships were strengthened.

I want to assure our people that these engagements are not about focusing abroad at the expense of home. Every statement we make, every partnership we build, and every agreement we sign is aimed at strengthening services, creating opportunities, and improving the daily lives of Solomon Islanders.

Our commitment remains clear: to ensure that international cooperation directly supports national priorities — better health, stronger education, climate resilience, and a more secure and prosperous future for all.

Before I conclude, I wish to take a moment to address the recent Cabinet reshuffle and some public commentary surrounding it. As announced last week, Honourable Rexon Ramofafia, Member of Parliament for Fataleka, has been appointed Minister for Finance and Treasury, while Honourable Trevor Hedley Mahaga, Member of Parliament for Gao/Bugotu, now serves as Minister for National Planning and Development Coordination. These changes were made to strengthen the Government's delivery capacity and to ensure that key ministries remain aligned with our national priorities.

Let me be clear — the reshuffle was guided by one central objective: stability.

By stability, I mean long-term political and operational stability — the kind that allows the Government for National Unity and Transformation to serve its full mandate under the 12th Parliament. As a country, we have seen how frequent changes of government can disrupt policy continuity and progress. My duty as Prime Minister is to safeguard stability so that the GNUT can complete its work and deliver tangible results for our people.

Cabinet reshuffles are not a sign of weakness; they are a normal part of governance. Even as ministers change, ministries continue to function fully, all programs and services remain uninterrupted, and leadership requires making adjustments

where necessary to strengthen performance and unity within the Government. As Prime Minister, I remain fully focused on the national interest and will continue to make decisions that keep our Government steady and our country moving forward.

Umi Tugeda, Tagio tumas!