SOLOMON ISLANDS NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY 2023 – 2032

FOREWARD

Climate change is the single most defining threat to the livelihoods, environment, economy and overall wellbeing of the Solomon Islands and the Pacific region. Whilst it is well-known and scientifically proven that we are least responsible for it, we are amongst the most vulnerable to climate change; and we have limited capacity to address climate change on our own. However, we cannot afford to despair, and we must take targeted actions and the urgency to do so cannot be over-emphasised because the impacts of it including loss and damage are already affecting us and the climate change projections into the future point to more bleak impacts.

This Policy affords us the opportunity to take meaningful and strategic actions to address and manage the impacts of climate change, Loss and Damage (L&D), and utilise our climate change response as an opportunity to strengthen our low emission status and enhance economic growth and resilient development. The Climate Change Policy is intended to be the overarching policy instrument to address climate change. As an overarching policy, it recognises that addressing climate change is also dependent on the implementation of relevant policies and programmes across sectors and vertically along governance levels. One of the strategies to strengthen the governance of climate change action is for the development of a climate change legislation. Whilst this has been an outstanding undertaking from the first climate change policy, I am pleased to note that it remains pertinent and the basis for it has been made stronger with our ratification of the Paris Agreement in 2016 and the intervening period has also seen critical decisions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change such as the finalisation of the Paris Agreement Rule Book in 2021 and the agreement to establish a dedicated fund for loss and damage in 2022, which will also inform the development of a new legislation.

As we know, a policy is only as useful as it is being implemented. In this connection, the Government alone cannot bear all the responsibility for its implementation. Therefore, I invite stakeholders (including ministries, the private sector, donor partners, NGOs and Civil Society Organisations, Faith Based Organisations, Interest groups and communities), leaders at all levels, women, men, youths and children to collaborate and participate in the implementation of the climate change policy.

Hon. Stanley Festus Sofu (MP)
Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Solomon Islands is an island country of more than 700,000 people located in the south-west Pacific with a total land area of 28,900 square kilometres spread over 1.5 million square kilometres of ocean and encircled by the Pacific ring of fire. The economy is narrowly based on forestry, agriculture, fisheries and a modest service sector and it is highly vulnerable to global trends and events.

Our capacity to address climate change on our own is constrained and this is evident in the development challenges we have and our limited capacity to deal with impacts presently experienced. Consequently, we have an elevated baseline disposition to climate change and disasters arising from hydro-meteorological hazards, geo-hazards as well as man-made disasters such as riots and conflicts. However, what is clear is that climate change is a risk multiplier, and climate change projections into the future point to heightened risks. Consequently, Pacific leaders have declared that we have a climate change emergency. In this connection, having a Climate Change Policy in place is vital to guide anticipatory and response measures to deal with its impacts and capitalize on the opportunities to strengthen the Solomon Islands low emission status and transition to a resilient development path.

Against a background of high vulnerability to climate change, increasing evidence of loss and damage, with limited capacity and resources to address the impacts, the inextricable connectivity between climate change and development, the opportunities in responding to climate change to shift the society to a low emission economy and the lack of legislation necessitate the need to have this policy in place to guide the Solomon Islands' present and future response actions on climate change.

Without undermining the seriousness of the negative impacts of climate change across all sectors and the country, this policy is premised on turning climate change response into an opportunity to strengthen the Solomon Islands' low emission status and enhance economic growth and resilience to climate change. The aspirational outcome of turning the response to climate change into an opportunity is captured in the Vision of the Policy:

> "A resilient, safe and low carbon emitting Solomon Islands"

The opportunity to achieve the above will be taken through (a) adaptation, (b) addressing loss and damage, and (c) mitigation. The Policy is intended to guide Government and its stakeholders including ministries, the private sector, donor partners, NGOs and Civil Society Organisations, Faith Based Organisations, Interest groups and communities in addressing climate change. Whilst the Government through the Ministry responsible for Climate Change will lead, coordinate, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Policy, the Government and its stakeholders are also responsible for the implementation of the policy. The table below summarises the policy into its outcomes and their corresponding policy directives, and the number of strategies per policy directive and outcome.

Outcomes	Policy Directives	No. of Strategies
Enabling legislative and institutional frameworks in place	An effective and good governance framework to lead, coordinate and implement an integrated and multi-stakeholder participatory approach to addressing the climate change emergency.	6
Key vulnerabilities are addressed adaptation and risk resilience	Strengthen the capacity and ability of the people, natural environment, and economy to be resilient.	7
Mitigation is driven by strengthening net zero emission whilst economic growth and resilience are enhanced	Solomon Islands strengthens its net zero emission status and pursue further efforts to reduce GHG emissions in key emitting sectors, while protecting and enhancing GHG sinks, and develop new low-emission economic opportunities.	10
Loss and Damage addressed	Loss and damage is already evident and it must be assessed and addressed by advocacy and mobilization of external and domestic resources to address it.	5
National reporting obligations on climate change are met	Ensure that Solomon Islands meets its climate change reporting obligations at the national, regional, and international levels.	3
Technical capacities for assessment, technology and finance mobilisation, and mainstreaming of climate change actions enhanced	SIG and stakeholders strengthen their capacities for assessment, to mobilize finance and technology, and mainstream climate change actions across all sectors.	16

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ACRONYMS

AFOLU	Agriculture, Forestry, and Land Use
CCD	Climate Change Division
CBSI	Central Bank of Solomon Islands
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EbA	Ecosystem-based Adaptation
ECD	Environment Conservation Division
ENSO	El Nino-Southern Oscillation
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
FRDP	Framework for Resilient Development of the South Pacific
GEDSI	Gender, Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HCC	Honiara City Council
LEDS	Low Emission Development Strategy
LDC	Least Developed Country
MECDM	Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology
MID	Ministry of Infrastructure Development
MJO	Madden Julian Oscillation
NbS	Nature based Solution
NCCP	National Climate Change Policy
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
ODS	Ozone depletion Substance
PCCSP	Pacific Climate Change Science Programme
PSC	Parliamentary Standing Committee
PWD	People with Disability
SIDS	Small Islands Developing States
SIG	Solomon Islands Government
SIMA	Solomon Islands Maritime Authority
SLR	Sea Level Rise
SOE	State of Environment Report
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SST	Sea Surface Temperature
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Solomon Islands is a large ocean state located in the South-West Pacific comprising of more than 1.5 million square kilometres of ocean space and less than 29,000 square kilometres of land. The Solomon Islands is endowed with land and marine based natural resources, but its geographical location predisposes it to both hydrometeorological (e.g., cyclones and extreme weather phenomena) and geological hazards (e.g., earthquakes and tsunamis). The biophysical environment is relatively pristine but environmental degradation is evident in areas that are hosting or have hosted economic activities such as logging and mining. The influx of imported items without any proper waste management systems have also contributed to the pollution and this particularly evident in Honiara, although this is also observed in rural areas.

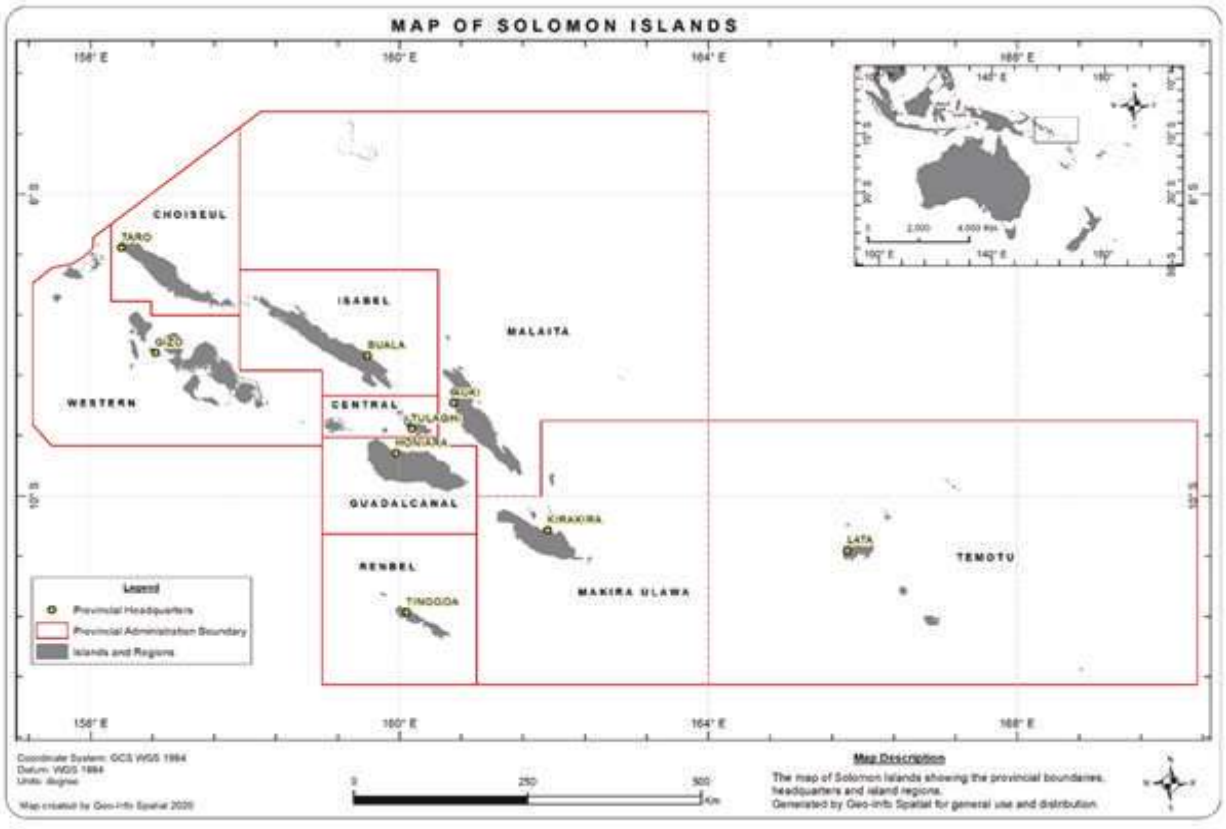

Figure 1: Map of Solomon Islands (Source: MECDM, 2022)

From the 2019 census, Solomon Islands has a population just above 700,000, with a relatively high population growth rate of 2.7%, and bulging youth population. About 80% of the population live in rural areas and continue to rely on the subsistence economy with supplementary income from agriculture, forestry and fishery, and remittances from relatives working off-island. More than 80% of the land in Solomon Islands is customarily owned by tribes and less than 20% is held by Government as Crown land. The fact that the Government is a minority landowner has a lot of implications on how to address issues such as relocation or resettlement as a result of climate change. In addition, majority of Solomon Islanders live in the coastal zone, although there are also villages in the interior of the larger islands such as Guadalcanal and Malaita. The fact that majority of the population live in coastal areas also increases their disposition to be affected by sea level rise and its attendant impacts such as coastal erosion.

The capital city of Honiara is the largest urban centre and the major economic hub. Therefore, Honiara attracts people from other islands seeking employment and income. This is driven in part by limited formal employment opportunities in rural areas, and the ease of access to basic services in Honiara. However, there is also increasing trend in urbanization in provincial capitals such as Auki, Gizo, Noro, Munda and Lata (National Statistics Office, 2019). An unfortunate feature of urbanization in Solomon Islands which contributes to increasing the risks and vulnerability to climate change is unplanned urbanization. This has also resulted in a host of urban development challenges including poor waste management, growth of squatter settlements and its attendant social impacts and construction of homes on marginal lands that are prone to landslides and flooding. The disproportionate focus of national budgets on rural areas was noted to undermine the needs of urban centers such as Honiara and provincial towns and negates the fact that urbanization is taking place and cannot be detached from the context of a developing country.

Since 1991, the UN has categorised the Solomon Islands as a Least Developed Country (LDC) and in 2018, the UN recommended it to graduate from its LDC status in 2024 but given the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest, the Government sought and got the approval from the UN to graduate in 2027. The enabling environment for the provision of essential services and the economy is encumbered by several factors including geographical isolation, thin transport and communication infrastructure and poor governance and prioritisation of development, and weak enforcement of legislations and policies.

1.2. ECONOMY

The economy is narrowly based on the primary sector, mainly forestry (logging) and fisheries (tuna) with notable contributions from the service and industry sectors. Mining has yet to make any significant contribution to the economy as it is primarily based on the direct export of bauxite and nickel ore, and the recently revived Goldridge mine has started the export of gold concentrate. In addition, the economy is also heavily dependent on overseas development assistance, although the Solomon Islands has one of the lowest debt to GDP ratios in the Pacific region. What is also very clear, is that the economy is highly vulnerable to global economic trends and shocks such as the global pandemic, economic recessions, conflicts (e.g., Ukraine war) and onslaught by disasters and climate change.

In the past 7 years, the economic growth rate was positive but was trending downwards from 2016 – 2019 and it became negative in 2020 – 2022 as a result of COVID-19, Ukraine war and the effects of riots in Honiara towards the end of 2021 (see Figure 2). The foregoing clearly demonstrated the susceptibility of the domestic economy on global trends and events as well as internal events that are well within the capacity of the country to prevent in the first place. The monetised formal economy is dwarfed by the subsistence economy which feeds about 80% of the population, provide income and support social and cultural obligations in both rural and urban areas. Basic social services are state controlled as evidenced by the national health and education systems. These two sectors are also heavily dependent on funding by development partners. Development, social and gender inequities are present albeit efforts to even them out.

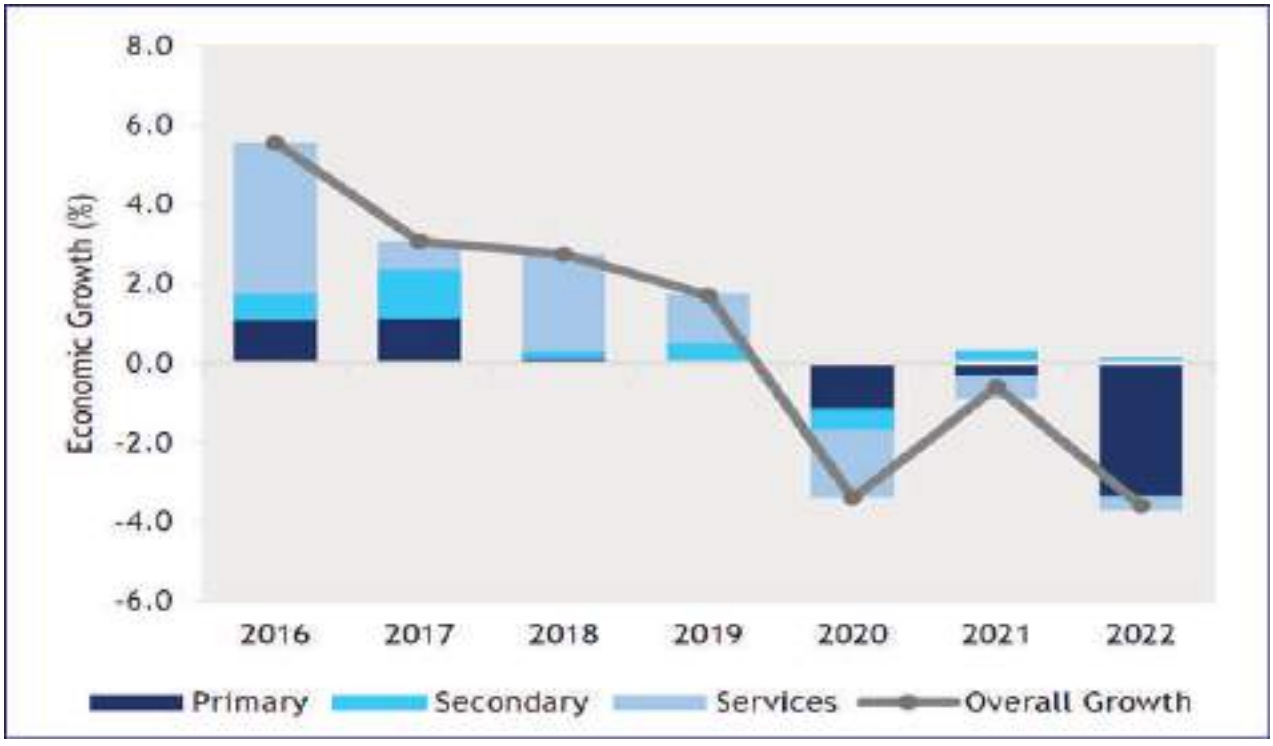

Figure 2: Economic growth for Solomon Islands from the period 2016 – 2022 (Source: CBSI. 2022. Annual report)

The outlook for Solomon Islands economic growth is anticipated to recover in 2023. The economic growth is projected to rebound to 2.7% from the contraction of 3.6% in 2022. The upgrade for 2023 reflects broader recuperation expected across all sectors with economic activities synchronizing to the new normal following the pandemic. The reopening of Gold Ridge Mining towards the end of 2022 is expected to boost gold production and additional gains in the export sector. Furthermore, the preparations and hosting of the Pacific Games in November 2023 is a key catalyst underpinning the recovery with spillover benefits anticipated in transport, accommodation, catering, logistics and wholesale (CBSI, 2022). Despite the positive outlook, the domestic economy remains fragile given the external uncertainties and the country's vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change, deteriorating infrastructures for service delivery, and inefficiencies in inter-island transport system which hinders market access for domestic producers (CBSI 2022).

1.3. CLIMATE AND OBSERVED TRENDS

As it is with other countries in the Pacific region, the climate in Solomon Islands is generally influenced by a number of factors: trade wind regimes; the paired Hadley cells and Walker circulation; South Pacific Convergence Zone, Intertropical Convergence Zone : semi-permanent subtropical high-pressure belts, and zonal westerlies to the south; and the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) as the dominant mode of interannual variability (Fitzharris, 2001; Folland et al., 2002; Griffiths et al., 2003). The Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) also is a major mode of variability of the tropical atmosphere-ocean system of the Pacific on times scales of 30 to 70 days (Revell, 2004), while the leading mode with decadal time-scale is the Interdecadal Pacific Oscillation (Salinger et al., 2001).

Consequently, the climate of Solomon Islands is hot and humid all year round, with an average temperature of 27 degrees Celsius. There are two distinct seasons: a wet season from November to April and a dry season from May to October. The temperatures are strongly tied to changes in the surrounding ocean temperature. Warmest months are January, February, April, May, October, November and December (31°C). Months with the lowest average temperature are July and August (29°C). During January to March the equatorial trough is usually found close to, or south of the Solomon Islands, and this is a period of West to North-westerly monsoonal winds (NDC, 2021). The heaviest rainfall at most places occurs at this time. The equatorial trough is in the Northern hemisphere from May to October and the Islands in the north experience stronger and more persistent Southeast trade wind blowing from the subtropical ridge towards the equatorial trough. These winds are moisture bearing resulting in heavy rainfalls during the South-easterlies on the windward side of most large islands.

The average annual rainfall ranges from 3000 to 5000 millimetres with the majority of monthly rainfall exceeding 200 millimetres. The wettest months are during the Northwest monsoon season, with a tendency for reduced amounts during February when the equatorial trough is normally furthest south. Places on the southern sides of the larger islands also tend to have a rainfall maximum between June and September. Orography also plays an important role in rainfall distribution within and among larger islands where at altitudes about 600-1000 metres above sea level on windward slope average annual rainfall could reach 9000mm. On the other hand, droughts are usually associated with El Nino and heavy rainfall with La Nina. For example, during the 1987 and 1998 El Nino events.

The observed climate since records clearly show increasing trend in surface temperature in Honiara and Munda since 1952 and 1963 respectively. There are no clear rainfall pattern changes since weather observation started from the 1950s. Limited time series data on sea level indicated that it is rising at 8mm/annum which is about 2-3 times higher than the global average. In addition, it is also clear that ocean acidification is increasing in the Solomon Island waters (Australian Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO, 2011).

1.4. CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECTION

The climate change projections developed for the Pacific Island countries, by the Pacific Climate Change Science Programme (PCCSP), Bureau of Meteorology and Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) provide the only credible snapshot of what the future climate change will look like for the Solomon Islands (Australian Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO, 2011). Thus, projected changes in land and sea surface temperature, rainfall, sea level and ocean acidification point to increases in the near- and longer term meaning that many of the biophysical, natural and human systems in Solomon Islands will be adversely affected.

Projections for all emission scenarios indicate that the annual average surface air temperature and sea surface temperature (SST) will increase in Solomon Islands (Table 1). There will be more very hot days and warm nights. The projections for future trends in rainfall indicate a general increase in dry season rainfall and an increase in wet season rainfall with an increase in extreme rainfall days. Tropical cyclones will be more intense but less frequent, while sea level and ocean acidification will continue to rise.

The negative impacts of climate change on Solomon Islands in the foreseeable future and over the longer term are inevitable. Climate change will continue to wreak havoc on every facet of natural and human systems. The scenarios of change outlined above and summarized in Table 1 necessitates decisive, targeted and the long-term commitment of the country as a whole to address climate change.

Table 1: Climate Change projections for Solomon Islands for 2030 and 2055 under High Emissions Scenario (A2)

Climate Variable	Expected Change	Projected Change by 2030 (°C)	Projected Change by 2055 (°C)	Confidence Level
Annual surface temperature	Average air temperature will increase	+0.4 – +1.0	+1.0 – +1.8	Moderate
Maximum temperature (1 in 20-year event)	More very hot days	NA	+1.0 - +1.5	Low
Minimum temperature (1 in 20-year event)	Temperatures will continue to increase	NA	+1.2 - +1.7	Low
Annual total rainfall (%)	Annual rainfall will increase	+1.0 - +2.0%	+4.0-+13%	Moderate
Wet season rainfall (%)	Wet season will increase	+2.0 - +2.7%	+5.0 - +11%	Moderate
Dry season rainfall (%)	Dry season will increase	+2.0 - +9.0	+3.0 - +5.0%	Moderate
Sea surface temperature (°C)	Sea surface temperature will increase	+0.6 - +0.11	+0.9 - +1.3	High
Annual maximum acidification (aragonite saturation)	Ocean acidification will continue to increase	+3.6 –+3.6	+3.1 - +3.5	Moderate
Mean sea level (cm)	Sea level will increase	+9.0 - +1.2	+18.0 - +21.0	Moderate

(Source: Australian Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO, 2011.Climate Change in the Pacific: Scientific Assessment and New Research: Volume 1: regional Overview; Volume 2: Country Reports. International Climate Change Adaptation Initiative, Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, Canberra, Australia).

In a study on the "Effects of Climate Change on 1.50C temperature Rise Relevant to the Pacific Islands" (Pringle, 2018), it was found that even a 0.50C increase (i.e., difference between 1.50C and 2.00C) could adversely affect marine and coastal ecosystems and communities in the Pacific in following ways:

The frequency of tropical cyclones is expected to decrease, while the intensity of these storms is projected to increase with global temperature. Research indicates a greater increase in monthly SSTs for the months of the main Pacific cyclone season under a 2°C scenario compared to 1.5°C. SSTs are an important driver for the formulation of intense cyclones in the region.

At 2°C virtually all coral reefs in the region may be lost (98% loss) with severe implications for biodiversity and island communities, economies and cultures. Reef degradation at 1.5°C is still catastrophic (90%) but significant reef ecosystems could remain.

Ocean acidification will impact upon reefs, fisheries and biodiversity with knock-on impacts for communities and economies. Only by limiting warming to 1.5°C can ocean acidification be halted and the worst impacts avoided.

Deoxygenation of the ocean will increase with a rise in global temperatures. Under warming scenarios exceeding 4°C, ocean oxygen levels in coastal areas could reduce by more than 40%. At 1.5°C this reduction would be limited to less than 10% and, critically, may allow for stabilization and eventual recovery of oxygen levels.

The above climate change projections were corroborated by climate change projections done by the United Kingdom Meteorological Office in 2021 as part of the International Partnership Programme Commonsensing Project. On the other hand, the latter study projected Sea Level Rise (SLR), to increases in the range of +0.29 to 1.05m by 2100.

Even with international support to implement Paris Agreement of "holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 20C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.50C, this will not be achieved easily, not least in the Pacific islands region. This does not bode well for the majority of the Pacific Island countries, including the Solomon Islands.

1.5. VULNERABILITY TO CLIMATE CHANGE

As indicated in the climate change projections, the impacts of it going forward will put Solomon Islands in a dire situation. If we go by the impacts we are already facing, it is not surprising that Pacific leaders have identified climate change as the single greatest threat to the security, environment, culture, economy and well-being of the region. Solomon Islands is already experiencing the effects of climate change through trends of increasing temperature, decreasing precipitation, changing patterns of weather and extreme events, and accelerated coastal erosion due to rising sea levels. These changes in climate bring challenges across sectors including agriculture, fisheries, biodiversity, water resources and people's health (MECDM, 2019).

A single extreme weather event can wipe out development gains that take several years to achieve. For example, 2014 flash flood caused damages and losses (US$108 million) equivalent to 9.2% of the Gross Domestic Product. Additionally, it has been observed that the Solomon Islands seems to be in a "constant mode of recovery" of climatic disasters. This is evident from the fact that even after nearly 10 years following the 2014 flash flood, the country is still repaying loans taken to repair infrastructures such as bridges and roads. Studies conducted in 2015 under the PACRAFI project concluded that the Solomon Islands is expected to incur, on average, US$20.5 million per annum in losses due to earthquakes and tropical cyclones. However, as seen in the 2014 flash flood, this projection was easily surpassed by more than 5 times by a single event.
It is also clear that climate change impacts are inextricably linked to other non-climate hazards and development challenges including the challenges of providing basic services to a geographically fragmented island country based on narrow economy that is ODA dependent and highly susceptible to global trends, conflicts and disasters. The foregoing is indicative of the overall low adaptive capacity which heightens the vulnerability of the Solomon Islands to climate change. What is also very clear is the costs of adaptation and addressing loss and damage are beyond the capacity of the Solomon Islands to address on its own.

1.6. TURNING CLIMATE CHANGE INTO OPPORTUNITY FOR LOW EMITTING AND RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT

It is also clear that climate change impacts are inextricably linked to other non-climate hazards and development challenges including the challenges of providing basic services to a geographically fragmented island country based on narrow economy that is ODA dependent and highly susceptible to global trends, conflicts and disasters. The foregoing is indicative of the overall low adaptive capacity which heightens the vulnerability of the Solomon Islands to climate change. What is also very clear is the costs of adaptation and addressing loss and damage are beyond the capacity of the Solomon Islands to address on its own.

1.6.1. Adaptation

The Solomon Islands, like other island countries are least responsible for the human induced change in our global climate system and yet are at the forefront of climate change impacts evidenced by the unprecedented intensity and frequency of weather-related extremes such as flash floods and increasing ocean acidification and sea level rise. Adaptation together with disaster risk reduction are urgent and important priorities. Given the interconnectedness of climate change impacts to development challenges and their taxing effect on adaptive capacity, adaptation must be addressed within development and likewise development must be addressed in adaptation.tance because of their inter-dependence and for a holistic response to climate change. Therefore, without undermining the seriousness of the negative impacts of climate change across all sectors and the country, this policy is premised on turning climate change response into an opportunity to strengthen low emission status and enhance economic growth and resilient development.

1.6.2. Loss and Damage

The rise in extreme weather events and sea level rise has led to irreversible impacts. For example, fully functional and liveable islands such as Fanalei and Walande have gone under water in the lifetime of a first-year student at Solomon Island National University and our people have been displaced. The loss of these islands is just a sub-set of a broader cluster of L&D issues arising from both rapid and slow on-set impacts of climate change affecting both natural and human systems that are confronting the Solomon Islands. L&D in other important sectors such as fisheries are yet to be quantified but what is clear is that the Solomon Islands stands to lose a lot with its tuna fisheries because projections are for eastward migration of tuna away from the Solomon Islands. This further underscores the fact that there is a limit to adaptation and L&D is a reality we face. The lack of ambition in the Nationally Determined Contributions by major emitters and those with historical responsibility will increase L&D in Solomon Islands.

1.6.3. Mitigation

As indicated in the climate change projections, the impacts of it going forward will put Solomon Islands in a dire situation. If we go by the impacts we are already facing, it is not surprising that Pacific leaders have identified climate change as the single greatest threat to the security, environment, culture, economy and well-being of the region. Solomon Islands is already experiencing the effects of climate change through trends of increasing temperature, decreasing precipitation, changing patterns of weather and extreme events, and accelerated coastal erosion due to rising sea levels. These changes in climate bring challenges across sectors including agriculture, fisheries, biodiversity, water resources and people's health (MECDM, 2019).

A single extreme weather event can wipe out development gains that take several years to achieve. For example, 2014 flash flood caused damages and losses (US$108 million) equivalent to 9.2% of the Gross Domestic Product. Additionally, it has been observed that the Solomon Islands seems to be in a "constant mode of recovery" of climatic disasters. This is evident from the fact that even after nearly 10 years following the 2014 flash flood, the country is still repaying loans taken to repair infrastructures such as bridges and roads. Studies conducted in 2015 under the PACRAFI project concluded that the Solomon Islands is expected to incur, on average, US$20.5 million per annum in losses due to earthquakes and tropical cyclones. However, as seen in the 2014 flash flood, this projection was easily surpassed by more than 5 times by a single event.

2. POLICY MANDATE AND RATIONALE

The Climate Change Policy is intended to be the overarching policy instrument to address present and future risks arising from climate change and its interaction with development actions and capitalise on the opportunities to strengthen the Solomon Islands' low emission status and concurrently support economic growth and strengthen resilience against climate change. As an overarching policy, it recognises that addressing climate change is also dependent on the implementation of relevant policies and programmes across sectors and vertically along governance levels.

An inspection of the national circumstances, recent economic trends and observed climate coupled with its location in the Pacific Basin, competing development priorities and rising impacts of climate change puts this policy in a complex environment for its development but more importantly its implementation. The first National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) was developed in 2012 covering the period 2012-2017. The policy was developed through a wide public consultation held in the capital Honiara, and in the provincial capitals with a wide range of stakeholders. The main focus of the Policy then was on mainstreaming of climate change across sectors.

However, since the development of the first National Climate Change Policy, a number of pertinent national, regional and especially international agreements connected to climate change have been established including the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015. As a member and signatory to a number of climate change-related agreements, Solomon Islands is obliged to contribute to its implementation at the national, regional and global levels. Most of the policy objectives of the government as contained in the first NCCP have not been implemented. However, many of these objectives still remain pertinent today and form part of this National Climate Change Policy outcomes, directives and strategies.

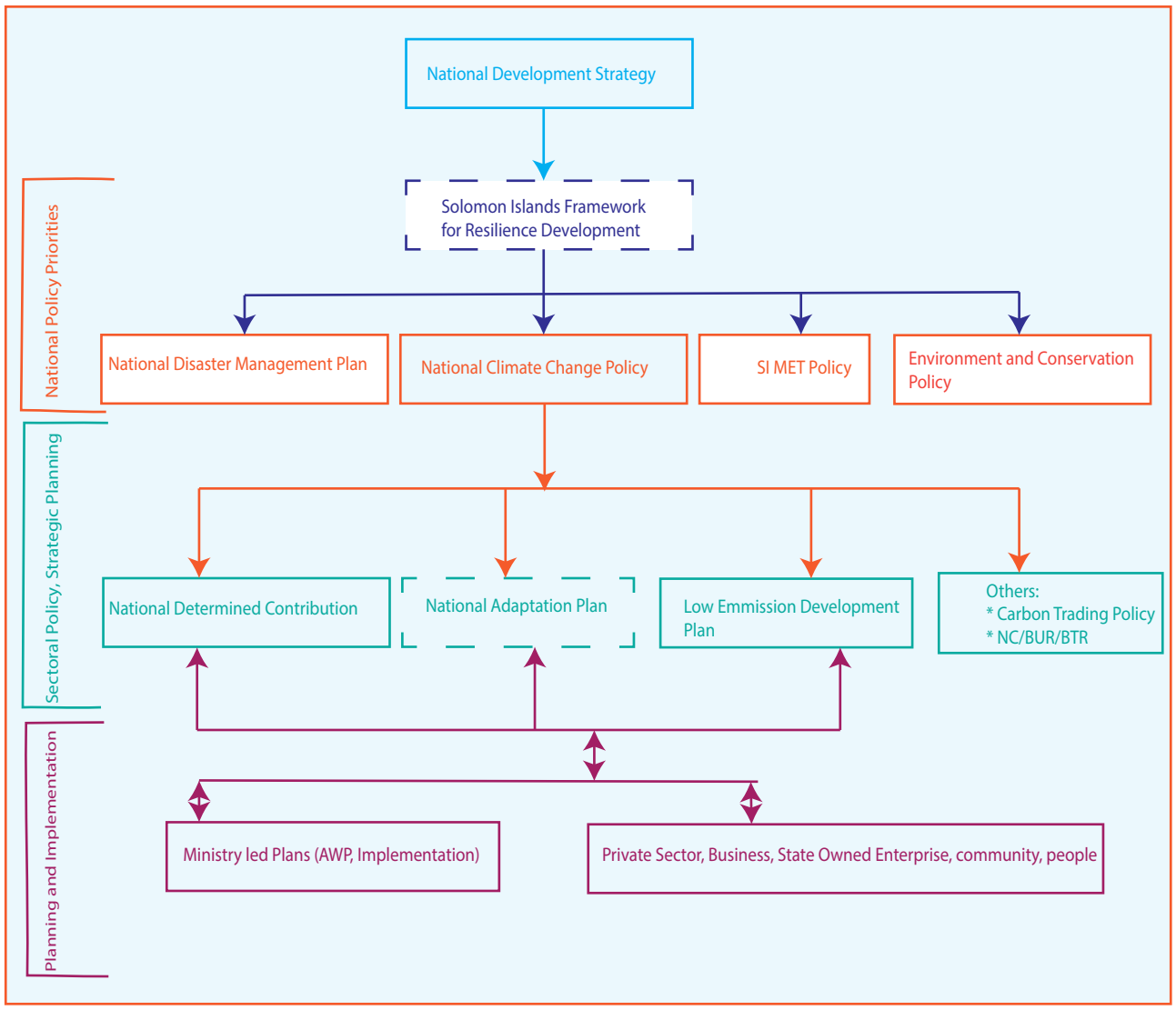

Figure 3: Climate Change Policy Linkages

This policy also aligns with national, regional and international policies, strategies and frameworks including the following:

- Nationally Determined Contribution (2021)
- National Development Strategy (2016-2035)
- State of the Environment Report (2019)
- National Environment Management Strategy (2020-2023)
- Solomon Islands National Oceans Policy (2018)
- Solomon Islands National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (2016)
- Solomon Islands Meteorology Policy 2023
- Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (2015)
- Paris Agreement (2015)
- United Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992)
- United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)
- Sustainable Development Goals (2015)
- REDD+ Road Map (2014)
- Solomon Islands Low Emissions Development Strategy (2023)
- Carbon Trading Frameworks/ Policy (draft in progress)

Against a background of high vulnerability to climate change, increasing evidence of loss and damage with limited capacity and resources to address the impacts, the inextricable connectivity between climate change and development, the opportunities in responding to climate change to shift the society to a low carbon economy and the lack of climate change legislation necessitate the need to have this policy in place to guide the Solomon Islands' present and future anticipatory response actions on climate change.

3. VISION, MISSION, OBJECTIVES

Vision

A resilient, safe and low carbon emitting Solomon Islands.

Mission

To scale up adaptation and risk resilience actions, address loss and damage, and strengthen low emission pathways by 2032.

Objectives

The objectives of the climate change policy are to:

1. Establish and strengthen the governance framework to address climate change emergency.
2. Target adaptation and risk resilience on key vulnerabilities.
3. Focus mitigation actions on sustainably lowering emissions and enhancing sinks, whilst simultaneously promoting economic growth and strengthening our resilience to climate change.
4. Address Loss and Damage.
5. Achieving national obligations to meet our regional and international commitments.
6. Strengthen technical capacities for assessment, technology and finance mobilisation, and mainstreaming of climate change actions.

4. POLICY GUIDELINES

The National Climate Change Policy is founded on the pillars of (a) inclusion, (b) equity, (c) good governance and (d) local ownership. These pillars cuts across the following principles, which are central to the implementation of the policy.

1. Alignment with the constitution and national priorities

This policy and its implementation modalities are guided by the national constitution with specific guidance provided by Solomon Islands National Development Strategy 2016 -2035, in particular, Objective 4: "ensuring effective climate, disaster, and environmental disaster risk management as central to all development decision making" and related national priorities and plans.

2. Solomon Islands Government leadership is critical

The Solomon Islands Government to take leadership in responding to climate change and enable national ministries and provincial governments, private sector, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations, communities and villages to access finance, technical and human resources to build resilience and to mitigate climate change.

3. Stakeholder Partnership and Collaboration

Solomon Islanders together with national, regional and international stakeholders to consult, collaborate and form partnerships to share resources, information and expertise at the community, national, regional and international levels to implement the policy.

4. Public - private partnership is key to promote investment in climate-smart development

The Government to partner with the private sector through sharing of information, resources, and expertise to increase climate resilience and catalyse private sector led innovative solutions to address both mitigation and adaptation
challenges.

5. Mainstreaming and integration

Climate change affects all sectors and levels of governance, covering both human and natural systems. As such, it is everyone's business and shall be addressed in an integrated and holistic manner.

6. Encourage community ownership and self-help

The scope of climate change impacts is pervasive across the country and the climate change projections point to further negative impacts. Against this background and to achieve long term sustainable climate change actions; individuals and communities will need to take decisions and actions that alleviate the negative impacts and compliment the efforts of the national government and other stakeholders.

7. Climate change actions are grounded in the best available science and technology including indigenous knowledge

Climate change interventions shall draw from the best available science and technology, indigenous knowledge/science and moderated by local circumstances and knowledge to reduce mal-adaptation, inappropriate mitigation actions and further loss and damage.

8. Respect for culture and indigenous people

Respect and safeguard social capital, cultural norms, and indigenous knowledge of tribes and communities and engage them in designing plans and solutions that are fit for purpose and relevant to them.

9. Needs and rights of the most vulnerable, women, youths, children, persons with disabilities and the elderly are central to plans and actions

Prioritize the needs and respect the rights of the most vulnerable, women, persons with disabilities, children, youth and older persons, and facilitate their effective participation in planning and implementation of interventions.

5. POLICY OUTCOMES, DIRECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

The policy outcomes are derived from the objectives of the policy and the directives from the outcomes. The strategies are intended to direct action at the implementation level. The strategies consist of both specific and broad typologies. It is envisaged that at the strategies' level, there will be flexibility in terms of variations and addition of new ones as may be necessary while implementing the policy. This is to ensure that the policy is responsive to changes such as climate change itself and appropriate decisions taken at the national or international levels.

5.1. ENABLING LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK IN PLACE

Policy Directive and Strategies

An effective and good governance framework to lead, coordinate and implement an integrated and multi-stakeholder participatory approach to addressing the climate change emergency. To ensure this is achieved, the Government and stakeholders shall:

5.1.1. Develop climate change legislation.

5.1.2. Strengthen and build capacity of the Climate Change Division as the Government mandated agency to lead and coordinate national climate change programmes and participation in international climate change negotiations.

5.1.3. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation to include oversight over climate change.

5.1.4. Ensure Provincial and Local Governments establish climate change and disaster risk management ordinances and build their capacity to implement and enforce the ordinances.

5.1.5. Set out institutional arrangements for coordination and implementation of climate change actions.

5.1.6. Establish a national institution to manage and regulate carbon offsetting and crediting schemes.

5.2. KEY VULNERABILITIES ARE ADDRESSED THROUGH ADAPTATION AND RISK RESILIENCE

Policy Directive and Strategies

Strengthen the capacity and ability of the people, environment, and economy to be resilient. To reduce vulnerabilities and enhance adaptive capacity, the Government and
stakeholders shall:

5.2.1. Develop and facilitate the implementation of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP).

5.2.2. Develop the Solomon Islands Framework for Resilient Development to provide higher level guidance for resilience across sectors and within respective governance levels.

5.2.3. Develop and implement a Public-Private Partnership Strategy to ensure the ministries, NGOs and the private sector integrate and mainstream climate change and risk resilience into their development planning processes, budgets and programmes.

5.2.4. Integrate climate change and risk resilience considerations into environmental impact assessments and strategic environmental assessments.

5.2.5. Promote the use of nature-based solutions including payment for ecosystem services for adaptation and risk resilience.

5.2.6. Strengthen climate change information and awareness, education and communication programs.

5.2.7. Support implementation of the National Disaster Management Plan and its associated programmes at the provincial and community levels.

5.2.8. Support the implementation of the strategic actions on climate change under the National Security Strategy 2020.

5.3. MITIGATION IS DRIVEN BY STRENGTHENING NET ZERO EMISSION WHILST ECONOMIC GROWTH AND RESILIENCE ARE ENHANCED

Policy Directive and Strategies

Solomon Islands strengthens its net zero emission status and pursue further efforts to reduce GHG emissions in key emitting sectors, while protecting and enhancing GHG sinks, and develop new low-emission economic opportunities. To achieve this the Government and stakeholders shall:

5.3.1. Implement the Low-Emission Development Strategy and allied policies such as the National Energy Policy, Renewable Energy Roadmap and E-mobility roadmap with guidance from the Nationally Determined Contribution.

5.3.2. Improving operational and energy efficiency in the transport sector to reduce emissions and phase down fossil fuels.

5.3.3. Support Solomon Islands Maritime Authority, Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Customs and Excise Division to regulate the importation of vehicles and ships that are emission efficient.

5.3.4. Support Customs and Excise and other mandated Government institutions to improve the regulation of Energy Efficient Appliance Standards and ozone depleting substances.

5.3.5. Support Local and Provincial Governments, and Environment and Conservation Division and other mandated Government institutions to regulate and manage waste sector emissions.

5.3.6. Support and promote emission reduction and sink enhancement interventions in the productive sector (forestry, fisheries, agriculture and mining).

5.3.7. Establish carbon tax for goods and services that make notable contributions to national emissions.

5.3.8. Promote investments in renewable energy and development of alternative fuels that can be sourced locally.

5.3.9. Develop and implement carbon trading policy.

5.3.10. Support the establishment of conservation and protected areas in terrestrial and marine areas.

5.4. LOSS AND DAMAGE ADDRESSED

Policy Directive and Strategies

Loss and damage is already evident and it must be assessed and addressed by advocacy and mobilization of external and domestic resources to address it. To achieve these, the Government and stakeholders shall:

5.4.1. Enhance knowledge and understanding of loss and damage from both rapid and slow onset impacts and assess options for intervention.

5.4.2. Strengthen advocacy at the national, regional and especially at the international levels for the operationalisation of loss and damage funding mechanism, and mobilization of targeted resources through other financial mechanisms.

5.4.3. Proactively engage with relevant external and internal partners to mobilise resources for relocation of vulnerable communities (low-lying atolls and artificial islands).

5.4.4. Support and empower the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey, Provincial Governments, Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) and land-owning groups to proactively facilitate the identification of land for relocation of vulnerable communities.

5.4.5. Enhance efforts to deliver on the means of implementation including finance, science and technology, and capacity building for loss and damage.

5.5. NATIONAL REPORTING ON CLIMATE CHANGE ARE MET

Policy Directive and Strategies

Ensure that Solomon Islands meets its climate change reporting obligations at the national, regional, and international levels. To achieve these, the Government and stakeholders shall:

5.5.1. Build capacity of SIG and relevant stakeholders to conduct climate change assessments, develop technical reports and participate in climate change negotiations.

5.5.2. Mobilise resources to support national and international reporting obligations.

5.5.3. Ensure timely reporting on national obligations and commitments.

5.6. TECHNICAL CAPACITIES FOR ASSESSMENT, TECHNOLOGY AND FINANCE MOBILISATION, AND MAINSTREAMING OF CLIMATE CHANGE ACTIONS ENHANCED

Policy Directive and Strategies

i. Assessment

5.6.1. Roll out a national climate change vulnerability, risk and adaptation assessment programme that integrates Gender, Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI).

5.6.2. Strengthen a coordinated and geo-referenced national climate risk information system using the Solomon Islands Integrated Vulnerability Assessment (SIIVA) methodology and other appropriate tools.

5.6.3. Build capacity of national, provincial, and local governments, commercial and extractive industries, and other relevant institutions to undertake regular inventory of GHG emissions by sources and removals by sinks, establish the national carbon profile and prioritize emission reduction strategies and actions for key sectors.

5.6.4. Explore and assess potential sectors for carbon offsetting and crediting programmes.

5.6.5. Operationalise the integrated monitoring reporting and verification tool.

5.6.6. Conduct, collaborate and support research to inform climate change actions at sectoral level.

5.6.7. Support Solomon Islands Meteorological Services to implement a national framework for weather, climate and ocean services that is aligned with the World Meteorological Organization's Global Framework on Climate Services in sectors such as: agriculture; fisheries, health; water; disaster risk reduction; infrastructure and energy.

5.6.8. Promote and support the documentation and use of indigenous knowledge and scientific investigations and encourage their application in enhancing the resilience of people and ecosystems to climate variability and climate change.

5.6.9. Facilitate the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning on the implementation of this policy at midpoint and the end of the policy period, and these will be supplemented with annual reviews by the Climate Change
Division.

ii. Finance and Technology

5.6.10. Strengthen coordination with donor partners to effectively mobilize financial resources to support implementation of climate change actions.

5.6.11. Strengthen national institutions and systems to access and manage international climate finances.

5.6.12. Strengthen existing and create new innovative financial flows from domestic and international sources for climate change actions at the national, provincial and community level.

5.6.13. Conduct technology needs assessment across all sectors to support climate change adaptation, risk resilience and mitigation.

5.6.14. Support national institutions and the private sector to undertake research on innovative technology development and application for climate change action.

iii. Mainstreaming

5.6.15. Support mainstreaming of climate change and risk resilience actions at all levels, across sectors and resourced with budgets.

5.6.16. Support the review of legislations and normative frameworks to mainstream climate change and risk resilience.

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APPENDIX

Glossary

Adaptation	In human systems, the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects, in order to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In natural systems, the process of adjustment to actual climate and its effects; human intervention may facilitate adjustment to expected climate and its effects[2].
Community	The people living in one particular area or people who are considered as a unit because of their common interests, social group, traditional and religious believes or nationality[3].
Risk Resilience	The undertaking of risk reduction and disaster preparedness measures which reduced vulnerability and are sustainable and contribute to an ability for communities to cope with distractions from hazards[4].
Risk Reduction	Is taking integrated action to reduce the risks from disaster and climate hazards and the potential impacts of disaster within the broad context of sustainable development including land use, livelihood/ economic activities and infrastructure[5].
Ecosystem	A functional unit consisting of living organisms, their non-living environment, and the interactions within and between them. The components included in a given ecosystem and its spatial boundaries depend on the purpose for which the ecosystem is defined: in some cases, they are relatively sharp, while in others they are diffuse. Ecosystem boundaries can change over time. Ecosystems are nested within other ecosystems, and their scale can range from very small to the entire biosphere. In the current era, most ecosystems either contain people as key organisms or are influenced by the effects of human activities in their environment[6].

[2] IPCC, 2022: Annex II: Glossary [Möller, V., R. van Diemen, J.B.R. Matthews, C. Méndez, S. Semenov, J.S. Fuglestvedt, A. Reisinger (eds.)]. In: Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Löschke, V. Möller, A. Okem, B. Rama (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA, pp. 2897 2930, doi:10.1017/9781009325844.029.

[3] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/community

[4] National Disaster Council. 2018. National Disaster Management Plan. Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology, Solomon Islands Government. Honiara, Solomon Islands.

[5] *Ibid 4*

[6] *Ibid 2*

Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA)	The use of ecosystem management activities to increase the resilience and reduce the vulnerability of people and ecosystems to climate change[7].
Economic Growth	The expansion of the output of an economy usually expressed in terms of the increase of national income. Nations experience different rates of economic growth mainly because of differences in population growth, investment, and technical progress.
Hazard	A potential or existing condition that may cause harm to people or damage to property or the environment[8].
Indegenous Knowledge (IK)	The understandings, skills, and philosophies developed by societies with long histories of interaction with their natural surroundings. For many indigenous peoples, IK informs decision-making about fundamental aspects of life, from day-to-day activities to longer-term actions. This knowledge is integral to cultural complexes, which also encompass language, systems of classification, resource use practices, social interactions, values, ritual, and spirituality. These distinctive ways of knowing are important facets of the world's cultural diversity[9].
Loss and damange	Research has taken Loss and Damage (capitalised letters) to refer to political debate under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) following the establishment of the Warsaw Mechanism on Loss and Damage in 2013, which is to 'address loss and damage associated with impacts of climate change, including extreme events and slow onset events, in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change[10].'
Mitigation	A human intervention to reduce emissions or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases[11].
Resilience	The capacity of interconnected social, economic and ecological systems to cope with a hazardous event, trend or disturbance, responding or reorganising in ways that maintain their essential function, identity and structure. Resilience is a positive attribute when it maintains capacity for adaptation, learning and/or transformation[12].

[7] *Ibid 2*
[8] *Ibid 4*
[9] *Ibid 2*
[10] *Ibid 2*
[11] *Ibid 2*
[12] *Ibid 2*

Sectoral	Relating to the various economic sectors of a society or to a particular economic sector
Sink	Any process, activity or mechanism which removes a greenhouse gas, an aerosol or a precursor of a greenhouse gas from the atmosphere[13].
Stakeholders	Refers to SIG, I/NGOs, Donors, FBOs, CSO, SOEs
Vulnerability	The propensity or predisposition to be adversely affected. Vulnerability encompasses a variety of concepts and elements, including sensitivity or susceptibility to harm and lack of capacity to cope and adapt[14]. The extent to which a community's structure services or environment is likely to be damaged or disrupted by the impacts of a hazard[15].
Vulnerable Community	Communities' exposure (see definition below) and sensitivity (the degree to which a system or species is affected, either adversely or beneficially, by climate variability or change. The effect may be direct (e.g., a change in crop yield in response to a change in the mean, range, or variability of temperature) or indirect (e.g., damages caused by an increase in the frequency of coastal flooding due to sea level rise))[16] over time to be affected by climate change and climate-related disasters.
Exposure	The presence of people; livelihoods; species or ecosystems; environmental functions, services, and resources; infrastructure; or economic, social, or cultural assets in places and settings that could be adversely affected[17].

[13] *Ibid 2*
[14] *Ibid 4*
[15] *Ibid 2*
[16] *Ibid 2*
[17] *Ibid 2*