Beijing + 15:

Review of progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action in Pacific Island countries and territories

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SPC
Secretariat
of the Pacific
Community

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Message from Dame Carol Kidu

It is a privilege to contribute to this 15-year review of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This report contains evidence of the region's achievements and challenges and portrays 15 years of sweat and struggle in our individual nations as we have aspired to achieve global benchmarks for equality and empowerment for our Pacific women.

I salute all Pacific Island gender advocates (both female and male champions) who have contributed to the ongoing implementation of the Pacific Platform for Action to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in our region. The persistent voices and strategic actions of these champions have not been in vain, and I remember my delight when the Pacific Island Forum leaders first included gender equality in decision-making as part of their agenda in their Tonga Communiqué in 2007. Thanks to the combined efforts of advocates from all levels of society and many walks of life, I have since been able to quote that communiqué when needed in cabinet meetings as well as in public advocacy. As the only woman in a parliament of 109 members, I cannot thank these gender champions enough for their commitment to change the reality faced by many Pacific women.

That reality for many Pacific women has not improved as anticipated with the euphoria of Beijing and post-Beijing activities. In fact, life has become harder for some women as our societies grapple with the uncomfortable interface between tradition and modernity. Some Pacific customs that traditionally provided protection for women have been abused to the detriment of women's welfare. In addition, the traditional decision-making power of women in the private sphere, as well as publicly in matrilineal societies, was eroded with the advent of patriarchal colonial powers, and has still not been acknowledged by post-independence male dominated parliaments.

To tackle the persistent inequalities faced by women in many Pacific nations, it is imperative that leaders at all levels, and especially political leaders, thoroughly understand and commit to the global social contracts that our nations have signed – the Beijing Declaration, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Millennium Declaration. It is also imperative that reviews such as this 15-year review of our Beijing commitments provide a basis to move forward – not just for women but for all Pacific peoples.

Global research has clearly demonstrated that the level of development of a nation is reflected by the status of women in that nation – not their theoretical status by custom but their actual status in reality. When Pacific women at all levels – from village level to national parliaments – are empowered to become equal partners with men in the national and regional development agenda, then individual nations and the Pacific region as a whole will benefit.

I express my sincere thanks to all the people involved in the production of this report and I trust that this 15-year review of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action will become the catalyst for renewed effort to make gender equality a reality in our Pacific region.

Hon. Dame Carol Kidu DBE MP,
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Papua New Guinea

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List of acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome
AMAK	Aia Maea Ainen Kiribati
APGEST	Asia Pacific Gender Equity through Science and Technology
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BPA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CETC	Community Education and Training Centre (SPC)
CLGF	Commonwealth Local Government Forum
CNMI	Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
COP	Community of Practice
CPI	Consumer price index
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific
CSO	Civil society organisation
CTA	Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation (ACP-EU)
DSAP	Development of Sustainable Agriculture in the Pacific (SPC)
ECE	Early childhood education
EFA	Education for All
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBEAP	Forum Basic Education Action Plan
FRSC	Forum Regional Security Committee
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
FWCC	Fiji Women's Crisis Centre
FWRM	Fiji Women's Rights Movement
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HIES	Household income and expenditure survey
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and communications technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IT	Information technology

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MDG	UN Millennium Development Goal
NCD	Noncommunicable diseases
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSO	National statistics office
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
PAA	Priority Action Agenda
PACFAW	Pacific Foundation for the Advancement of Women
PacRICS	Pacific Rural Internet Connectivity System (SPC and Pactel International)
PAPE	Policy, Advocacy, Planning and Evaluation Programme
PEG-net	Pacific Energy and Gender network
PICTs	Pacific Island countries and territories
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PPA	Pacific Platform for Action
PPDVP	Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence Programme
PPSEAWA	Pan Pacific and Southeast Asia Women's Association
PRISM	Pacific Regional Information System
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
RPPA	Revised Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality
RRRT	Regional Rights Resource Team
SCR	UN Security Council Resolution
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SNA	System of National Accounts
SOPAC	South Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States dollar
USP	University of the South Pacific
VAW	Violence against women
WHO	World Health Organization
WIBDI	Women in Business Development Inc
WTO	World Trade Organization
WUTMI	Women United Together Marshall Islands
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

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Executive summary

Representatives of women's groups in New Caledonia

Among the major and persistent gender issues in the Pacific Islands region are high rates of gender-based violence, low proportions of women in all levels of decision-making, significant under-representation of women in the formal economy, unaddressed gender dimensions of climate change, natural disasters, food security and renewable energy, and inequitable access to clean water and sanitation. In some countries and territories, there are extremely high rates of teenage pregnancy and maternal mortality and low rates of access to modern forms of contraception and sexual and reproductive health services and information, whereas in others significant gains have been made in these areas. Most national legal systems remain highly discriminatory against women, with few employment protections in place for women, very little legislation on violence against women, differing minimum ages of marriage for males and females, and constitutionally protected customary laws and practices that often disadvantage women in areas such as land and housing rights, family law and political and community leadership. Women's roles remain highly stereotyped in most Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs). With a few key exceptions, little sex discrimination remains in the region overall in terms of access to primary and secondary education, although women are under-represented in tertiary education and the quality and content of education are areas that need more analysis.

Recently, two significant developments have signalled that women and women's issues are starting to be heard and to be taken into account at the highest levels of decision-making. Both developments are the outcome of long, concerted efforts of, and strategic partnerships among, Pacific national and regional government mechanisms, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), women's equality activists, and development partners. The first is the affirmation in the 2009 Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' communiqué of the need to eliminate sexual and gender-based violence, through which Pacific leaders recognised that gender-based violence is widespread and is a national and regional development issue demanding attention at the highest levels.[1] This communiqué is already providing support and leverage for national action on legislation, policies and programming relating to domestic violence.

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1.   *See Appendix 2: 2009 Forum Leaders' Meeting and Cairns Communiqué.*

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The second is the slow but growing recognition of the need for women's participation in decision-making forums commonly regarded to be the domain of men. While there are still major gaps in this area overall, early signs of progress include the recent meetings of the Forum Regional Security Committee where women and women's issues have started to be heard and, in 2010, the Papua New Guinea cabinet's approval of proposed measures to increase gender balance in Parliament.

There has also been a discernible growth in Pacific women's understanding of their human rights, and in building advocacy and movements around these rights. Examples include: the increased knowledge of and involvement in the reporting processes of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); CEDAW's translation into several Pacific languages; the use of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security; research and mobilisation on eliminating violence against women and using temporary special measures to increase the number of women in parliaments; the establishment of databases of women's credentials for appointments to boards and commissions; and the pressure from some women's groups to be included in policies on land ownership. There has also been a significant increase in women's networking, particularly in the use of electronic networks to link Pacific women into the regional and global women's movement. The growing discussions with members of Parliament, most of them male, on national and regional human rights frameworks are also a breakthrough.

Weaknesses remain in mobilisation around economic, social and cultural rights: the rights to food, water, housing, health, reproductive freedom, sanitation and livelihoods. Mobilisation on land rights, while in some domains on the increase, is still an area in which significantly more work and advocacy are needed.

Major action is also necessary to move beyond advocacy and policy and towards concrete implementation and practical realisation of the commitments under the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPA) and the Revised Pacific Platform for Action (RPPA). Overall, while knowledge and advocacy have increased in a number of areas, government efforts to implement the BPA and RPPA have been disappointing and there have been few discernible impacts for the average Pacific woman.

Several contextual factors have conspired to make implementation difficult. Some PICTs are facing high population growth rates, while the population size in others is decreasing due to out-migration. The high levels of out-migration have left many professional posts unfilled, with severe consequences for the delivery of educational and health services, especially to rural areas. The high proportion of youth in many PICTs also challenges the provision of education and health services and employment creation. These challenges are especially apparent in a recessionary period such as the current one. Climate change and natural disasters impair family livelihoods and economic well-being as well as the region's biodiversity and security. Political instability and/or ethnic conflict in Bougainville, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Fiji Islands, French Polynesia and PNG have exacerbated gender inequalities and taken the national focus away from the development and human rights agenda. The region is also facing several health crises including the HIV epidemic particularly in PNG, high and increasing levels of non-communicable diseases and sexually transmitted infections, and (in PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu) malaria. The pressure on PICTs to meet these challenges has resulted in their dependence on aid and remittances.

Large-scale resource development has in many cases had a detrimental effect on women and their rights. Adverse consequences range from the erosion of women's land rights to the exploitation of women through prostitution.

The increasing feminisation of poverty is a major challenge in all PICTs, especially for the 70% of women who live in rural areas and women living in urban squatter settlements. Increasingly visible differences and gaps in women's experiences have emerged. Migrant women are another vulnerable group and in some countries and territories migrant women have no protection of their human rights. Expanding the reach of transformative gender equality initiatives, responsive to a broad range of women in different contexts and circumstances, is thus critical to the advancement of women's human rights in the future.

There is a pressing need to strengthen women's voice and influence in decision-making at all levels – local, national and regional – in order to create the space needed to prioritise women's rights and interests. The lack of gender balance in virtually all high-level bodies has resulted in the absence of gender-related actions in most national and regional activities, most of the time. The low level of representation of women in local and national politics has resulted from, and reinforced, views that decision-making is the domain of men. Men also significantly outnumber women at the highest levels of policy and decision-making in regional agencies such as those within the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP),[2] as well as in the courts, the public service and the private sector.

Discussing women in small business development, SPC

Similarly, there is a major need for a fundamental shift in the national and regional architecture for gender equality, including through high-level multi-sectoral mechanisms that have ownership of and accountability for gender equality processes and outcomes. Governments and regional agencies have not seen women's issues and gender equality to be a priority part of their mandate or governance responsibility. National women's machineries (NWMs) are generally located in lower-level ministries and departments, have low budgets, are poorly equipped, have low staff numbers and rely on donor programmes for anything other than core operating expenses. For the most part, public perceptions are that matters to do with gender equality are the responsibility of the NWMs. Proactive actions for women carried out by government agencies outside the NWMs are viewed as 'women's issues' rather than as the core business of all line and central ministries. NWMs are seldom included in the visioning stages of core projects carried out by line ministries. While NWMs enjoy quite robust relationships with health and education line ministries, their involvement in infrastructure, economic development and natural resource sectors, including basic resources such as land and water, is negligible. There is also little recognition of the place of gender equality principles in national planning.

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2. *CROP agencies include the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, South Pacific Tourism Organisation, University of the South Pacific, Pacific Islands Development Programme, Fiji School of Medicine and Pacific Power Association.*

All of these same barriers and perceptions exist within regional organisations. These organisations have wholly insufficient gender expertise inside their highly influential technical programmes and no systematic mechanisms for gender mainstreaming. In addition, they rarely include gender experts in high-level or sectoral planning, programming and policy meetings.

There are mixed views of the role of NWMs and whether they should prioritise programmes or policy-making. NWMs tend to focus more on community service delivery and educational programmes. They have not, as a matter of routine, envisioned their work in terms of what policy and legislative actions are needed to progress CEDAW, the BPA and the RPPA. Further, NWMs have focused on developing horizontal collaborative partnerships rather than engaging at the executive level so as to enshrine women's rights in national development strategies, laws, policies, budgets and processes. A number of NWMs that have had success in engaging at the executive, judicial and legislative levels note that their success has been the result of a long-term process and the work of strong, politically astute and fearless women's NGOs and government staff.

Women making and selling handicrafts, Fiji

Some tensions exist between NWMs and civil society groups. Civil society organisations (CSOs) are often better resourced, have better access to information through drawing on their largely issues-focused networks, and have more freedom to stand up for women's rights due to their independence from government. Rather than creating divisions, these two groups need to combine forces and leverage their synergies and complementarities. There is also a need to build a critical mass of youth who are knowledgeable about gender equality issues and processes. Young people returning from regional training or leadership programmes are energised in articulating women's rights issues, though often they have limited access to structures in which their abilities could have a positive influence.

Issues faced by the girl child have been missing from social and economic policies that address poverty, HIV and AIDS, health and nutrition, reproductive rights and care and protection. PICTs must give priority to addressing major violations of the rights of the girl child in the next five years, such as child abuse and neglect, child labour, and sex role stereotyping.

There have been major gains in the last five years in research and data collection including through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), violence against women (VAW) surveys, sex disaggregation of data, and improvements to the Pacific Regional Information System (PRISM) to better reflect gender and youth issues. SPC's new regional gender indicators framework will further strengthen data collection and use, provided that governments and partners work actively to implement and sustain it. Additional research and indicators directly related to women's empowerment, including on women's time use and health, are needed, as is an understanding of the relationships between data sets so that data do not sit in isolated silos. The Sexual and Reproductive Risk Index (RRI), VAW surveys and Policy, Advocacy, Planning and Evaluation (PAPE) programme are other good models for continuing to enhance and strengthen data collection and use. NWMs and national statistics offices must be supported and resourced to develop sustainable systems for producing gender indicators across all sectors.

Many of the BPA and RPPA indicators are presented as outputs, such as the number of women in parliament. There is less recognition of the complex and various steps that are needed to achieve those goals, which vary by country. It is important now to break down the final 'output' goals into smaller steps along the way. The act of breaking down goals into process acknowledges achievements made and serves as a reminder of the kinds of collaboration and actions required to achieve the BPA and the RPPA. It can also serve as a model of actions that other countries can consider to achieve similar goals. One example is VAW, which has gained significant traction in recent years. Steps to address this issue in the Pacific involve actions by NWMs, other government departments including health, justice, law enforcement and statistical offices, NGOs, community agencies, the legislature and traditional decision-making systems as well as the media. Each is a necessary part of a wider jigsaw puzzle of actions. Breaking down larger goals into small steps, with a focus on process and relationships, makes the process and progress transparent and demonstrates the shared responsibilities and the importance of a collaborative approach. Given the complex web of factors at the root of most forms of gender inequality, opportunities exist in a number of areas for making the most of this holistic approach in addressing those factors.

In summary, progress in some thematic and technical areas has been made and there are good examples for the region to learn from and emulate. However, gender equality needs to become much more deeply rooted in the Pacific, particularly through fundamental structural and institutional changes, which will allow for an accelerated pace of change and more sustainable long-term results. These changes must transcend sectors, and gender-integrated systems and architecture must be in place – both nationally and regionally – to ensure a systematic multi-sectoral approach.

The 15th anniversary of the Pacific and Beijing Platforms for Action on gender equality and women's empowerment provides an excellent opportunity to reflect on systemic barriers to progress and develop new and innovative strategies to transform the pace of change, so that not only will women be able to enjoy their full human rights but the Pacific region as a whole will be able to enjoy the multiple development benefits of gender equality.

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Background and purpose

In 2010, the world is celebrating the 15th anniversary of the groundbreaking Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPA) adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. The BPA is a comprehensive and transformative framework for action to move humanity forward through the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls who, despite holding up half the sky and being the key to our collective political, social, economic, environmental and cultural security and prosperity, still suffer countless archaic and destructive forms of discrimination the world over. The BPA's 12 Critical Areas of Concern (see Box 1) were recognised by the world as crucial for governments, civil society, United Nations (UN) agencies and other stakeholders to focus on to eliminate discrimination against women and achieve gender equality. In each Critical Area, the problem was diagnosed and strategic objectives were proposed with concrete actions that various actors were to take in order to achieve those objectives.

Box 1: BPA Critical Areas of Concern

A	The persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women
B	Inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to education and training
C	Inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to health care and related services
D	Violence against women
E	The effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation
F	Inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources
G	Inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels
H	Insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women
I	Lack of respect for and inadequate promotion and protection of the human rights of women
J	Stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media
K	Gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in the safeguarding of the environment
L	Persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child

> See the full text of the BPA at
> http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/

In the lead-up to the Beijing Conference, the Pacific Islands region adopted the Pacific Platform for Action (PPA). Its purpose was to identify regional issues and priorities within those Critical Areas and to put them into a local context. The framework was subsequently reviewed and a Revised Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality (RPPA) was endorsed in 2004.

In preparation for the global 15-year review of implementation of the BPA (*Beijing+15*), UN regional commissions collaborated with the UN Division for the Advancement of Women to facilitate regional dialogue and preparations. In the case of Asia and the Pacific, this activity was coordinated by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok, Thailand. Several Pacific governments participated in ESCAP's Asia–Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting in Bangkok in November 2009 to discuss regional progress in implementing the BPA, and again at the 54th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York in March 2010 when the world came together to discuss global progress.

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This report brings together the Pacific contributions to those processes and additional research on the region as a whole, in order to provide a comprehensive 'Pacific picture' of the status of implementation of the BPA at national and regional levels. It is guided primarily by the BPA and its 15-year review instrument, but also by the RPPA and other relevant regional and international gender equality frameworks. It also aims to increase understanding at regional and national levels of what is needed to move gender equality forward through key areas for action.

The report will be used as a baseline document for discussion at the 11th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women, to be convened by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) in August 2010, and will provide governments, civil society actors, development partners and Pacific Island women and men more generally with a resource for understanding where we are on the road to gender equality, and the journey we have yet to travel.

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Methodology
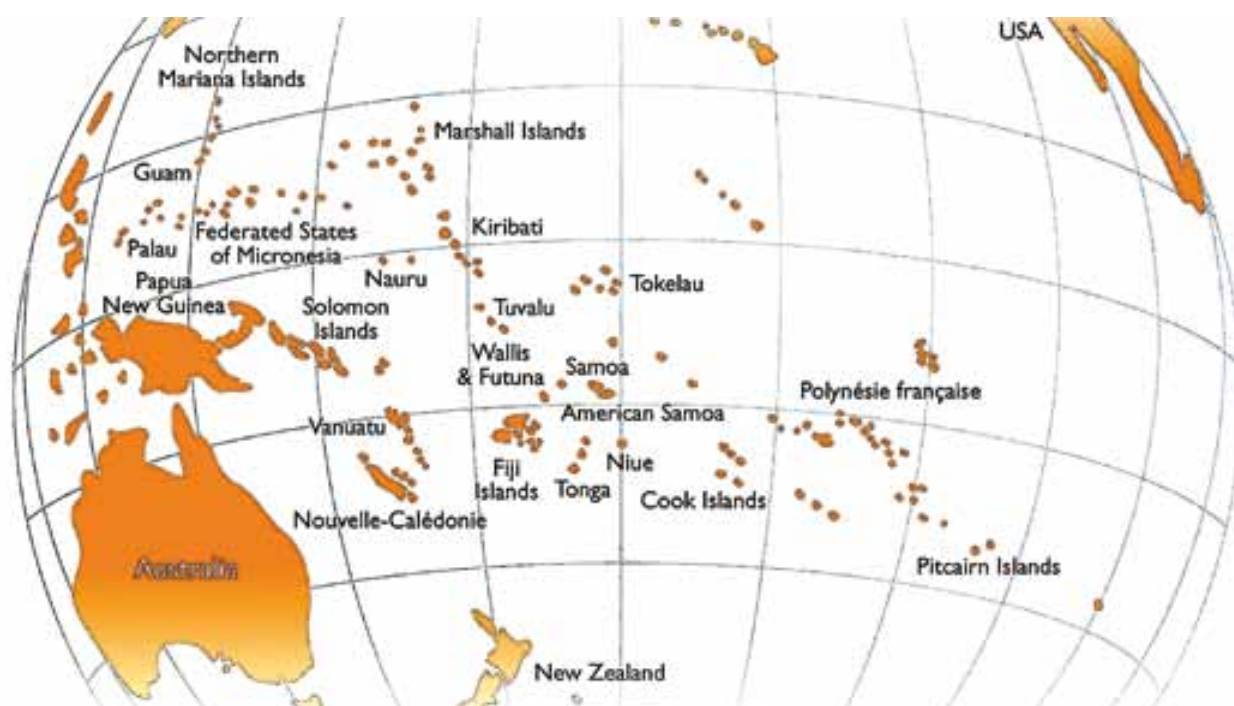
This report covers all 22 Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs),[3] to the extent that data and research reports on them are available. It draws on information and research from a range of sources. A review was conducted of the responses of Tonga, Solomon Islands, Cook Islands, Fiji Islands, Nauru and Samoa to the UN *Beijing+15* Questionnaire (Appendix 1) and of the proceedings from the ESCAP Expert Group Meeting (Bangkok, May 2009) and the regional High-level Intergovernmental Meeting (Bangkok, November 2009) held in preparation for the global *Beijing+15* review. In-person consultations were held with government delegates present at SPC's Gender Mainstreaming Capacity Stocktake meeting (Noumea, December 2009)[4], which included gender and planning officials from Papua New Guinea, Cook Islands, Solomon Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Tonga, and separately with the Government of New Caledonia.

National women's machineries (NWMs) that had not participated in the Noumea and Bangkok meetings were contacted by phone and email. Telephone and in-person interviews were also conducted with donor and development agency staff, governments, businesses, civil society networks and other key informants. Members of Pacific-wide gender networks facilitated by NGOs such as femLINKpacific and the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC) were contacted by email, by telephone or in person. Comprehensive literature reviews were conducted and the websites of all Pacific parliaments and development partners across the region were consulted.

Finally, peer review and feedback were sought on drafts of this report through Pacific government and development partner networks.

All research and consultations were based on the questions outlined in the UN *Beijing+15* Questionnaire. This report is organised according to the sections in that document (see Appendix 1), with consideration also given in appropriate sections to the additional or contextual priorities contained in the RPPA.

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3. *American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Cook Islands, Fiji Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Pitcairn, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna.*
4. *Stocktake and Strategic Support Initiative for PICT Gender Mainstreaming Capacity: Synthesis and Strategy Meeting, 7–11 December 2009, Noumea.*

Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action

1. *Context: Overview of the Pacific Islands Region*

1.1. The Pacific Islands region is diverse in terms of geographical make-up, physical resources, populations, social and customary systems, and contact experience, with differing experiences of transition to new social, political and economic systems (see Table 1). Countries vary in scale and structure from small compact islands, such as Niue and Nauru, through to those such as Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea (PNG), which comprise many scattered and isolated islands or provinces, each with their own customary ways and language.[5] Agriculture, fisheries and tourism are the region's major industries. Some PICTs, such as PNG, Fiji Islands, Solomon Islands and New Caledonia, also have forestry or mineral wealth. The region's large exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and marine resources provide for family food security and government revenue.

1.2. The Pacific region is highly vulnerable to natural disasters. Communities are still suffering from the earthquake and accompanying tsunami in Solomon Islands (2007), the Viti Levu floods in Fiji Islands (2009), and the earthquakes and accompanying tsunami in American Samoa, Samoa and Tonga (2009). Each of these disasters caused tremendous destruction to the region's environment, livelihoods and social fabric. The extreme weather and accelerated sea-level rise projected to occur with climate change will also be detrimental to family livelihoods, economic well-being and health, as well as the region's biodiversity, culture and security.

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5.   *For example, over 800 distinct languages are spoken in PNG.*

Manono Island - Samoa

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1.3. High population growth rates in a few countries and young populations (over 56% of Pacific Islanders are under 25 years of age) place huge pressures on the provision of education, health services and employment options. In addition, escalating rates of urbanisation have seen the growth of overcrowded urban settlements in all PICTs, with all the hallmarks of incipient poverty and potential for social instability. At the same time, rural areas are becoming the areas of women and children, and women's workloads are changing and increasing there. Some PICTs are facing declining populations due to out-migration as people seek better schooling and employment opportunities abroad.

1.4. The extended family is the main institution in all PICTs and the majority of land is held in customary tenure, under the guidance of customary leaders. Women's roles are set within these systems. They are seen to be responsible for family well-being, and are historically the guardians of the natural resources and the cultural and social knowledge associated with their use. Apart from government employment, the formal employment sector in most PICTs is small and families rely on semi-subsistence lifestyles to produce goods for family use (food, household items, fuel and medicine), exchange, income generation and use in ceremonies.[6] Regional data indicate that fishing provides 50–90% of protein for people in Pacific areas (Sheppard n.d.).

1.5. Customary governance systems have endured, especially in rural areas where government services may not be available. The church is another influential institution in the region. Traditional family systems are weakening as people increasingly identify with modern regional and global ideas accessed through information and communication technology (ICT), education, migration and travel.

1.6. Some PICTs have witnessed an increase in political crises, social unrest and violent conflict in recent years. There is a complex political situation in Fiji Islands, where a series of coups d'état have taken place in the past 20 years (most recently in December 2006), while Tonga, which is a monarchy, is the scene of longstanding advocacy for democracy. The tensions in Bougainville (1960–1990s) and Solomon Islands (1998–2003 and 2006) developed from land and natural resource conflicts. There is ongoing ethnic tension in Solomon Islands between the peoples of Malaita and Guadalcanal, and racial tension between indigenous and Asian businesses (Zinn 2006). PNG, in particular Port Moresby, continues to suffer from serious law and order challenges. French Polynesia has had 12 changes of government since 2004.

1.7. In 2008, the Pacific experienced its highest level of economic growth this decade at 5.1% (almost double 2007 figures), but this was largely confined to PNG and Solomon Islands by virtue of their commodity exports, with other countries experiencing low growth rates and increasing commodity import costs. As a result of the global financial crisis, economic growth in the Pacific region was forecast to reach only 3% in 2009 and 2.7% in 2010, with several countries expected to experience negative growth[7] (AusAID 2009b). The Asian Development Bank (ADB) estimates that an additional 50,000 people will be living below the poverty line in the Pacific in 2010 because of the global economic crisis (ADB 2009). The crisis came on top of a sharp increase in the cost of oil and imported foodstuffs, and the higher oil prices of early 2010 are expected to add to inflationary pressures (see Table 2).

1.8. Human resource shortages are a growing challenge. PICTs cannot retain medical staff, ICT staff, science teachers, and a raft of other specialisations as people seek employment in Australia, New Zealand and beyond. While the export of people may provide remittances to families, these payments do not replace the professional skills and social capital that have been lost. Remittance payments from expatriate citizens have fallen over the last year. The World Bank estimated that in 2009, remittances in the Pacific would decrease in dollar terms by 4.2–7.5% (Ratha and Mohapatra 2009, p. 2). The preliminary 2009 figures indicate slight decreases for Fiji Islands, New Caledonia, Tonga and Samoa. Actual remittances received by Pacific nations in 2009 vary from USD 7 million for Vanuatu to USD 761 million for French Polynesia (Table 3).

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6. For example, Samoa's household income and expenditure survey report (2009) states that subsistence production accounts for just over 50% of all food consumed in the poorest households; 40% in peri-urban north-west households; and 17% in Apia urban areas (Government of Samoa and UNDP Suva 2009).
7. FSM, Fiji Islands, Palau, Samoa and Tonga.

1.9. Overcoming these complex issues requires multi-faceted solutions due to the 'very large variety of natural, socio-economic, cultural, political, geographic, language... and other factors including external aid dependency' (Papua New Guinea, and United Nations in Papua New Guinea, 2004, p. 3).

Table 1: Key geographic and social data for Pacific Island countries and territories

| Country/ territory | Land area (km²) | Sea area (000 km²) | Estimated number of people | | | Pop. annual growth rate (%) | Pop. density (people/ km²) | Literacy rate % | | Life expectancy at birth | |
			Total	Males	Females			M	F	M	F
American Samoa	199	300	65,896	33,632	32,264	1.2	331	–	–	69.3	75.9
CNMI	457	777	63,072	31,740	31,333	–0.1	138	–	–	73.5	77.1
Cook Islands	237	1,830	15,708	8,039	7,669	0.5	66	99	99	68	74.3
Fiji Islands	18,273	1,290	847,793	432,429	415,363	0.5	46	95	91	63.8	67.7
French Polynesia	3,521	5,030	268,767	137,472	131,295	1.2	76	–	–	72	76.6
FSM	701	2,973	111,364	56,898	54,466	0.4	159	94	92	67.4	68.0
Guam	541	218	187,140	96,577	90,563	2.7	346	–	–	71.1	76.1
Kiribati	811	3,550	100,835	50,005	50,830	1.8	124	93	92	58.9	63.1
Marshall Islands	181	2,131	54,439	27,938	26,501	0.7	301	97	97	63.7	67.4
Nauru	21	320	9,976	5,067	4,909	2.1	475	99	99	55.2	57.1
New Caledonia	18,576	1,740	254,525	128,124	126,401	1.5	14	–	–	71.8	80.3
Niue	259	390	1,479	726	753	–2.3	6	100	100	67	76.0
Palau	444	629	20,518	10,996	9,522	0.6	46	98	98	66.3	72.1
Pitcairn	5		66	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
PNG	462,840	3,120	6,744,955	3,478,101	3,266,854	2.1	15	55	44	53.7	54.8
Samoa	2,785	120	183,123	95,131	87,992	0.3	66	99	98	71.5	74.2
Solomon Islands	30,407	1,340	549,574	282,713	266,861	2.7	18	84	67	60.6	61.6
Tokelau	12	290	1,165	590	575	-0.2	97	98	96	67.8	70.4
Tonga	650	700	103,365	52,441	50,924	0.3	159	97	98	67.3	73.0
Tuvalu	26	900	11,149	5,549	5,600	0.5	429	99	99	61.7	65.1
Vanuatu	12,281	680	245,036	124,905	120,132	2.5	20	78	72	65.6	69.0
Wallis and Futuna	142	300	13,256	6,577	6,680	–0.6	93	–	–	72.7	75.9
Total	**551,390**	**29,428**	**9,853,136**	**5,065,650**	**4,787,487**	**1.9**	**18**	92	89	66.1	70.3

Source: Secretariat of the Pacific Community, PRISM, 2010. Date range is 1990–2008

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Table 2: Economic indicators, 2007–2009

Country/territory	CPI			GDP	
	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008
American Samoa	3.6	3	6.1	–	–
CNMI	7.5	4.8	5.8	–	–
Cook Islands	2.5	7.8	8.8	9.5	–1.2
FSM	3.3	–	–	–3.2	–1.0
Fiji Islands	4.7	7.8	1.8	–6.6	0.2
French Polynesia	1.9	3.1	0.5	–	–
Guam	6.8	6.9	2.8	–	–
Kiribati	4.2	11	–	–0.3	3.8
Marshall Islands	3.1	18.3	–	2	1.2
New Caledonia	1.8	3.7	0.4	5.6	0.2
Niue	6.7	9	–	–	–
Nauru	–	–	–	–0.1	–
Palau	3.3	12	5.2	2.5	2
PNG	0.9	10.7	8.2	6.5	7.0
Samoa	5.5	11.5	13.2	5.5	4.5
Solomon Islands	7.7	1.4	0.93	10.2	7.3
Tonga	5.8	10.3	2.1	0.8	1.2
Tuvalu	3.3	3	6.2	2.5	–
Vanuatu	4	4.8	–	6.8	6.6
Wallis & Futuna	2.8	2.7	–	–	–

Source: PRISM (2009 a+b)

Table 3: Remittances, 2004–2009 (USD millions)

Country/territory	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Remittances* as share of GDP 2008 (%)
Fiji Islands	172	184	165	165	175	169	5.0
French Polynesia**	598	557	622	689	751	761	–
Kiribati	7	7	7	7	9	9	6.9
New Caledonia**	493	512	537	685	624	612	–
PNG	16	13	13	13	13	13	0.2
Samoa	88	110	108	120	135	131	25.8
Solomon Islands	9	7	20	20	20	20	3.2
Tonga	68	66	72	100	100	96	37.7
Vanuatu	5	5	5	6	7	7	1.2

Notes:

* A remittance is a transfer of money by a foreign worker to his or her home country.
** Remittances as a share of GDP are not given for these territories as data on their GDP for 2008 are not available.

Source: Outlook for Remittance Flows 2010–11: Remittance flows to developing countries remained resilient in 2009, expected to recover during 2010–11. http://econ.worldbank.org

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2. Overview of achievements and challenges in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment

2.1. Policies and mechanisms for gender equality

Institutional machinery, policies and programmes

2.1.1. NWMs are in place throughout the region. They range from one-person desks in social ministries to much larger and quite well-placed units, but in almost all cases they are highly marginalised in terms of resources, technical capacity and policy influence, as discussed in Section 4.

2.1.2. PICTs have a mixed record in developing national gender/women's policies. A few have such policies in place, some have drafts awaiting a cabinet decision, and a much larger group is still working towards developing a national policy or needing to do so (Table 4). The large number of countries without a national policy suggests that women have yet to realise the importance of policy-level action to secure their rights, there is ongoing uncertainty about the extent to which NWMs should focus on programmes versus policy-level actions, and there is a lack of access to executive-level debate, including a lack of gender champions in executive-level decision-making. This last point in part reflects the small number of female legislators and cabinet members in the region (see Section 3.7).

Delegates at 10th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women (2007), SPC

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Table 4: National women's machineries by location, policy and plan of action

Country/territory	NWM	Location	Policy	Plan of action
American Samoa	Department of Youth and Women's Affairs	Dept of Youth and Women	–	Territorial yearly plan of action
CNMI	Women Services	Office of the Governor	–	–
Cook Islands	Gender and Development Division	Ministry of Internal Affairs	First National Policy on Women endorsed in 1995 2007 revised National Policy on Gender (Draft)	National Plan of Action (2007)
Fiji Islands	Department of Women	Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation	Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-economic Development 2009–2014 Policy for Achievement of Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women	Women's Plan of Action (1999–2008)
French Polynesia	Delegation à la famille et à la condition féminine	Ministère de la solidarité et de la famille	–	–
FSM	National Gender and Development Officer	Department of Health, Education and Social Affairs	–	Draft Women's Plan of Action (1995–1997) has never been finalised or approved
Guam	–	Guam Division of Labour	–	–
Kiribati	Community Development Services Division	Ministry for Internal and Social Affairs	–	–
Nauru	Dept of Women's Affairs	Ministry of Home Affairs	–	Critical Areas of Concern Priorities (May 2006)
New Caledonia	Chargée de Mission	Direction de la Culture, de la Condition Féminine et de la Citoyenneté	–	–
Niue	Department of Community Affairs	Ministry of Health, Women›s Affairs, Public Works and Niue Power Corporation	–	National Action Plan (2003-2008)
Palau	Bureau of Aging and Gender	Ministry of Community & Cultural Affairs	–	–
Papua New Guinea	Office for the Development of Women	Department for Community Development (Prime Minister's office)	Women's Policy (1990)	Women's Five Year Management Plan (1995) Platform for Action (1995–2005)

RMI	Women in Development Office, Community Development Division	Ministry of Internal Affairs	–	Women in Development Office Strategic Plan
Samoa	Division for Women	Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development	National Policy (draft)	National Plan of Action
Solomon Islands	Women's Development Division	Ministry of Women, Youth and Children's Affairs	National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development (2010–2015)	Strategic Plan of Action (2010–2012)
Tokelau	National focal point of women	Office of the Council for the Ongoing Government	National Women's Policy (2010-2015)	National Action Plan (2010–2015)
Tonga	Department of Women's Affairs	Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture	Gender and Development Policy 'Towards Gender Equity, Harmonious Society and a Better Future for All' (2001)	Implementation Plan 2003/2004–2005/2006
Tuvalu	Department of Women	Ministry of Home Affairs	Policy (2007–2009)	Corporate Plan (2007–2009)
Vanuatu	Department of Women's Affairs	Ministry of Justice and Community Services	Gender Equality Policy	National Plan of Action for Women 2007-2011
Wallis and Futuna	Délégation aux Droits des Femmes et à l'Égalité		–	–

2.1.3. Further, even where policies exist, implementation lags well behind. Among typical reasons for the delay are that appropriate budgets are not in place, technical capacity is lacking, and political will is extremely weak. There is a dearth of concrete legislative action. 'Some PICs have passed important policies, initiated projects to increase women's economic empowerment and increased budgets for relevant departments, but very few have passed legislation to implement CEDAW in order to secure a rights-based system under CEDAW. Thus implementation is largely dependent on political will and commitment and not on enforceable rights' (SPC, 2007d, p. 2).

2.1.4. Most PICTs have national plans of action for women/gender, although in many cases these are out of date. National plans of action have already been reviewed in Fiji Islands, Cook Islands and PNG, reflective of a long history of gender experience in those countries. Those in Marshall Islands and FSM are in a fledgling state. Although some national plans of action include executive-level engagement such as legislative reviews, for the most part NWMs have tended to focus on programme-level actions and service delivery.

2.1.5. The challenge of mobilising a coherent national gender equality programme is exacerbated in widely scattered island states, such as Marshall Islands, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Cook Islands. In some cases, another contributor to this challenge has been the devolution of governance responsibilities to outer island governments.

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2.1.6. There is widespread government dependence on donor agencies in promoting gender equality, which presents significant issues of sustainability. Governments urgently need to put gender equality at the core of their national political and policy agenda.

2.1.7. NWMs describe themselves as marginalised in high-level discussions. Often, they lack sufficient gender expertise and the confidence to assert their positions.

Mechanisms for monitoring, accountability and support

2.1.8. As a result of MDG monitoring and a growing body of household income and expenditure surveys, demographic and health surveys and VAW surveys, increasing amounts of sex disaggregated data and gender indicators are now available in line ministries, which can contribute to BPA and RPPA monitoring and evaluation. However, most data are not passed on to NWMs as a matter of routine: it is up to NWMs to seek this information out, if they are aware of it. Few NWMs have adequate ICT equipment or expertise to maintain their own national gender databases and rely on drawing data from the national statistics office and other sources when required. A recent initiative led by SPC's Human Development Programme to improve gender statistics in the region and enhance the capacity of NWMs to analyse and use such statistics will help build on the momentum being seen in data collection in the region (see Section 4.5).

2.1.9. In the absence of robust gender reporting mechanisms at the national level, CEDAW reports, BPA reviews and national reports and discussions at the Triennial Conferences of Pacific Women convened by SPC provide the major report-back forums for Pacific women and are the places where Pacific women's achievements and challenges are recognised.

2.2. CEDAW

2.2.1. The main impact of CEDAW in the region has been in providing a legal framework within which women can demand their human rights. CEDAW-focused actions and processes continue to play a major role in empowering Pacific women, widening their choices and increasing their capacity to participate in democratic processes. Women increasingly understand what their human rights are as a result of training and technical support from a variety of partners such as Legal Literacy Training from SPC's Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), the gender-based violence programmes of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, the voter and education training of National Councils of Women, and tool kits such as "Translating CEDAW into Law" by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and RRRT's "CEDAW Roadmap".

2.2.2. Overall, however, implementation is still quite weak and it remains difficult to pass key legislation to implement CEDAW. A few exceptions to this general situation are discussed in Section 2.3.

2.2.3. Several Pacific countries have submitted at least their initial CEDAW report and have had concluding comments issued by the UN CEDAW Committee (see Section 3.9). The CEDAW reporting process has contributed to a rights-based approach in addressing gender inequality, and in some cases has acted as a catalyst for change. For example, programmes and policies advocating temporary special measures to increase the number of women in decision-making are on the rise, and there is increased support for law reform programmes that address VAW. Following the examination of Cook Islands' initial CEDAW report, the Cook Islands Government approved a CEDAW Law Reform programme. Of the UN CEDAW Committee's 20 recommendations to the government, 13 were taken on by the Women's Division to address in the remainder of its current action plan period. At present it is actively pursuing four of them: legal reform, raising awareness of temporary special measures, development and consultations on a family law bill, and domestic violence issues.

2.2.4. Further, in its concluding observations to France's 2006 CEDAW report, the CEDAW Committee recommended that France include more information on its overseas territories in its next periodic report. As a result, the three French Pacific territories are currently researching and preparing territorial CEDAW reports for inclusion in France's 7th and 8th periodic reports due in 2013. This will be the first time these territories have engaged directly and thoroughly in the CEDAW reporting process. Continuing to enhance the engagement of overseas territories in CEDAW and other international human rights reporting processes will be important for the region in the future, given that seven of the 22 PICTs are non-sovereign territories with gender and human rights issues that are often quite different from those experienced in the respective metropolitan countries.

2.2.5. National CEDAW-related meetings tend only to occur close to reporting deadlines. In some cases, national CEDAW committee representatives do not have a firm understanding of their role. Some agencies send different representatives to each CEDAW meeting, which limits consistency, and representatives often do not report back to their home agency. Some representatives did not see it as their role to provide data or information to feed into research and deliberations.

2.2.6. Among the key obstacles to CEDAW implementation over the past five years are the differences between custom and modern laws that exist in every PICT, especially in relation to land rights, access to resources and family law. Jalal (2009, p. 2) reported that 'customary law … plays a big part in sanctioning harmful practices against women' in the region. The Vanuatu Women's Department has recognised the importance of working with traditional leaders to address this. CEDAW discussions carried out with traditional chiefs in the Shefa Province have seen the adoption of CEDAW principles into the Provincial Development Plan. These chiefs are now promoting the new Family Protection Act (see Section 3.4).

2.2.7. Activities to help communities understand the changes taking place in male and female roles are central to effective implementation of CEDAW. One example is the research by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Land and Women: The Matrilineal Factor (Stege et al. 2008), which highlights how changing social systems have in some cases eroded women's traditional status and power in land ownership and management.

2.2.8. Another obstacle is that NWMs lack knowledge of related regional and international frameworks and policy documents that support and complement CEDAW. For example, while most NWMs consulted knew about the inclusion of sexual and gender-based violence in the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Communiqué (Appendix 2), few knew about UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and related resolutions on women, peace and security. These and other mandates can be used to strengthen the advocacy platform for women's rights and to empower Pacific women and girls, particularly if they are used together.

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2.2.9. In the former United States territories of FSM and the Marshall Islands, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was considered to have more traction than CEDAW. CRC responsibility was written into the job description of the government's Community Development Division position, but CEDAW responsibility was not specifically written into the job description of the Women's Development Officer. The Marshall Islands' newly established joint CRC–CEDAW committee is a logical arrangement, particularly in small nation states. By contrast, integrating CEDAW into job descriptions within the Samoan government's Division for Women has been a practice for the past five years.

2.3. Legislative and policy-making achievements

2.3.1. Overall, PICTs have relatively few achievements in legislative and policy-making in the five years from 2004 to 2009. The main reason for this shortfall is that the overwhelmingly male-dominated parliaments do not prioritise legislation promoting gender equality, nor do they resource policies for women's empowerment. However, there are pockets of achievement.

2.3.2. Fiji Islands has made good progress in the area of family law with the passing of the Family Law Act 2003. Amendments to Tonga's Nationality Act (Cap 59) in 2007 eliminated previously discriminatory provisions by granting citizenship to a child born of a Tongan mother and foreign father.

2.3.3. In Cook Islands, the Crime and Family Law Act is under review. In early 2010 the government organised a consultation on family law reform structured around five main themes: marriage and end of marriage; care of children; spousal and child support; domestic violence; and property division upon relationship breakdown. The next step in the process will be the drafting of a new family law act. UNDP is providing support to the government to develop the act.

2.3.4. Samoa set up an Office of the Law Reform Commission and a Law and Justice Steering Committee in 2009, which are looking into legislative reform of acts including the Divorce and Matrimonial Property Act 1972, Crimes Ordinance Act 1961 and Labour and Employment Act 1972. An important part of the review process involves ensuring proposed amendments are compliant with CEDAW and CRC.

2.3.5. NZAID's direct budget support programme in primary education made a fee-free policy possible in Solomon Islands in 2009. This policy is important for gender equality because it means girls are more likely to be at school, although they may still be withdrawn to care for siblings or to work for cash. Further, anecdotal reports indicate that some primary schools are still demanding fees. In Samoa, the new Education Act 2009 initiated a school fee relief scheme for primary school children under which all school fees will be paid for by the government. This measure was put in place to help ensure the achievement of international goals for universal education by 2015.

2.3.6. Steps have been or are being taken in some PICTs to improve employment-related legislation. For example, in 2007 the Interim Government of Fiji Islands decreed the Employment Relations Promulgation which amended the Employment Relations Act to provide for maternity leave. Previously a woman was entitled to 84 days maternity leave with an allowance of $5.00 per day. Under the promulgated regulations a woman is entitled to full pay for the first three births and half pay thereafter. However, the implementation of the promulgation has been delayed due to the employers' lobby, which requested a maternity leave tax incentive scheme. In October 2009, the FSM President signed the Maternity Leave Act into law (Public Law No. 16–15). The act amended section 145 (1) of Title 52 of the FSM Code by removing maternity

as a reason for leave of absence. It added a new subsection 3 to allow paid maternity leave for FSM national government employees. The new law grants employees six consecutive weeks per year of maternity leave, which will not be considered as annual or sick leave (Government of the Federated States of Micronesia 2009, paragraphs 1–2). In Samoa, amendments have been proposed under the Labour and Employment Act to grant maternity protection for female workers in the private sector for three months, with six weeks on full pay and then 66% of their pay rate for the remaining period. In Tonga, amendments to the Public Service Act provided for an extension of maternity leave for women in the civil service from one to three months, effective from January 2010. Government policy discussions on maternity leave and sexual harassment in the work place have also taken place in Cook Islands.

2.3.7. Overall, although these examples show signs of improvement, employment-related legislation is still extremely weak for women in most PICTs, as discussed in Section 3.6.

2.3.8. Significant reforms are needed in the area of legislation on VAW, but some changes are starting to be seen. Section 3.4 discusses the achievements and challenges in respect of VAW-related legislation and policies. There are also major gaps in legislation and policies to promote gender balance in decision-making positions, although there are promising examples in the French territories and significant lobbying is underway in several other countries, as discussed in Section 3.7.

2.4. Budgets

2.4.1. In virtually all PICTs there is no evidence that gender perspectives and the concerns of women are taken into account in the preparation of budgets at either national or local level.

2.4.2. A 2008 SPC study reported that on average less than 1% of domestic resources are allocated to achieving gender equality (SPC 2008b). Many budgets cover staff salaries and overheads only, with donors meeting the main part of the budgets for substantive work on gender equality.

2.4.3. An exception in Samoa was highlighted in the SPC study. There, the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development was noted as having a number of gender development programme outputs in its budget format. Moreover, the Cabinet Development Committee has introduced gender analysis as a requirement for any aid project proposal, which the report noted as a positive step in enhancing the role of gender development policies in the government's resource allocation decisions.

2.4.4. There is no evidence in the past five years of an increase in resources for gender equality, except to the extent it is highlighted in the MDGs and supported by direct budget support from donors, as it is, for example, for primary schooling in Solomon Islands and maternal and child health initiatives in PNG.

2.4.5. Among the key obstacles to gender responsive budgeting are lack of understanding of the annual budget process in many PICTs and lack of capacity to influence it. There are also problems in transparency, timely auditing of expenditure, transparent presentation of annual estimates and proper scrutiny of budgets and budget estimates by parliaments. Moreover, there are few databases anywhere that allow for basic sex disaggregation of outputs or more detailed gender analyses.

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2.4.6. Another obstacle is the lack of tracking of budgetary allocations for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women. Poor budgetary practices in many PICTs impede proper resource tracking. In some cases, donor funds are allocated directly to members of Parliament and are not subject to audit.

2.4.7. ADB, UNDP and Australia have supported programmes aimed at promoting gender responsive budgeting in some PICTs with varying levels of success, and continued support will be needed to address serious capacity deficiencies across the public service.

2.4.8. UNIFEM is piloting work on gender equality and aid effectiveness in PNG, which is among the countries that have made significant progress in localising the commitments and principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Research on donor partners, government gender policies and aid flows identified some of the key challenges to advancing the national gender equality agenda, including evaporation of gender equality priorities in the national budgeting process and fragmented integration of gender sensitive indicators into the monitoring framework for assessing the implementation of the national development strategy. It also revealed the limitations in tracking donor resource allocations for gender equality in the context of broader discussions on financing for development. Various openings are being leveraged, including the PNG Long-Term Development Strategy, the discussions between development partners and the government on PNG's Commitment on Aid Effectiveness, and the establishment of a Forum on Gender Equality for the government and its development partners, which is helping the development partners to take a harmonised approach to programming and funding for gender equality.

2.5. Millennium Development Goals

2.5.1. The RPPA recommends that governments 'adapt the MDGs to make them more appropriate for PICTs and integrate them into national planning processes in all Pacific Island countries' (para. 131). An increasing number of countries and territories have integrated the MDGs into their national planning framework and are using the MDGs and indicators to monitor their development progress.

2.5.2. One notable example is PNG, which has tailored the MDG targets and indicators to fit the national development context, including formulating additional indicators and targets. PNG's Medium-Term Development Plan (2011–2015) is an MDG-consistent planning framework. At least two other countries have formulated a 9th MDG: Niue has a 9th goal on depopulation, and Cook Islands on governance. Solomon Islands, Tonga, Samoa, Fiji Islands, Tuvalu and Kiribati have National Development Plans or Strategies strongly aligned to the MDGs, and Vanuatu plans to reflect the MDGs more strongly once its Priority Action Agenda (PAA) is reviewed. Vanuatu is also developing a monitoring and evaluation framework for the PAA to monitor its implementation alongside monitoring progress towards the achievement of the MDGs.

2.5.3. Fourteen PICTs have prepared a National MDG Report (Nauru and the territories have not), and PNG, Fiji Islands, Samoa, Cook Islands and Tonga are in the process of preparing a second National MDG Report. Most of these reports are formulated through a participatory process led by government and involving civil society. Governments are clearly paying attention to the MDGs as a framework they can use to formulate policies and strategies that reflect the aspirations of the people, to reach the poor and vulnerable, and to expand access to basic social services.

2.5.4. MDG3 on promoting gender equality is often understood as meaning parity in education. When that dimension is examined, overall PICTs show little or no overt discrimination between girls and boys in access to, enrolment in and completion of primary education, with some exceptions in Melanesian countries. It should be noted that the level of achievement differs from country to country, but there is little remaining inequality based on gender.

2.5.5. MDG3, however, also uses women's political participation and women's share of employment in the non-agricultural sector as indicators of equality. While the latter shows improvement (averaging from 38–50% depending on the PICT), the representation of Pacific women in Parliament remains among the lowest in the world (see Section 3.7).

2.5.6. It is widely recognised that MDG3 does not go far enough in addressing the wide spectrum of issues concerning gender equality and women's empowerment. Additional areas that need to be considered include women's access to and control over assets and resources, violence against women and girls, vocational education for young women, and women's participation in the full range of decision-making processes at all levels.

2.5.7. There has been insufficient attention in the region to MDG5 on improving maternal health, as in most parts of the world. Only Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu are on track to achieve this MDG by 2015, and it is estimated that five women a day still die from pregnancy-related complications in the region, particularly in PNG and other parts of Melanesia. In addition, many Pacific women have little access to reproductive health services (see Section 3.3).

2.5.8. It is often suggested that there are insufficient data across the Pacific to monitor the MDGs. Although this may have been true a decade ago, in the last 10 years a lot of effort has gone into data collection and analysis and the situation has thus improved significantly. Many PICTs have undertaken household income and expenditure surveys (including Fiji Islands, Tuvalu, Samoa, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and FSM), demographic and health surveys (including PNG, Solomon Islands, RMI, Tuvalu and Nauru), Multi-Indicator Cluster Surveys (Vanuatu) and censuses, all of which have provided much needed data.

2.5.9. However, some challenges are noted. Often, PICTs do not have sufficient data points to facilitate analysis of trends over time to indicate whether they are progressing or regressing. Data quickly get stale and out of date and the cost of regular updates is often prohibitive. Moreover, available data are often not mined to obtain the information required. For this to happen, data users have to communicate their needs to data producers: regular communication leads to better data being collected and analysed, and consequently used.

2.5.10. Finally, although the MDGs are often monitored and reported at national level with MDG reports typically quoting average data for goals, targets and indicators, progress is actually achieved at sub-national levels. Consequently, if the data are to provide accurate estimates and highlight areas or groups that are being left behind, they have to be disaggregated based on geographical location (urban, rural, province) as well as on sex, age and other factors. These challenges can be addressed and managed and already there are concerted efforts and actions among development partners and regional organisations, including SPC, to ensure the development of better statistics in the region over the next few years.

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2.6. Government policy discussions and/or parliamentary debates

2.6.1. In general, gender equality is still extremely low on the political agenda across the Pacific, and there are accordingly very few high-level policy discussions on the topic. Some encouraging openings are being seen in the area of VAW (see Section 3.4) and in increasing women's representation in parliament (see Section 3.7).

2.6.2. In November 2009, the 2nd Biennial Thematic Conference of the Pacific Parliamentary Assembly on Population and Development (PPAPD) and the combined 3rd General Assembly of PPAPD and 8th Forum of Presiding Officers and Clerks addressed the theme 'Parliamentarians rally for sustainability, equity and accountability'. One of the outcomes was the adoption of a Framework for Action on Achieving Gender Equality and Eliminating Violence against Women, which includes agreed strategies for parliamentarians to address VAW, ensure adequate funding for NWMs, review and revise legislation for gender equality, support the use of measures to increase women's representation in parliament, and raise awareness on gender issues with various stakeholders and constituencies. It remains to be seen how this framework will be implemented and monitored.

2.7. Armed conflict

2.7.1. Some Pacific women have made good use of UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 and related resolutions as instruments to be heard and to claim space to participate. SCR 1325 focuses on three key pillars – participation, protection and peacekeeping. The Security Council also calls on all actors in negotiations and peace processes to adopt a gender perspective including measures that protect and respect the human rights of women and girls, especially those relating to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary. No PICTs have acted in accordance with this resolution in these matters. However, since 2006, efforts have been underway to assist Pacific Islands Forum member states to incorporate SCR 1325 into their peace and security agenda. Additionally, through interaction with the annual Forum Regional Security Committee (FRSC), progress continues (see Section 3.5).

2.7.2. In 2007, PIFS, with the assistance of UNIFEM, UNDP Pacific Centre and femLINKpacific, held a Regional Conference on Women, Peace and Human Security to identify threats to women's human security, discuss policies and form partnerships for strengthening the involvement of women in peace building in the Pacific. In this work, women activists have entered a previously male-only domain. In 2008 the FRSC discussed and endorsed a project on Land Management and Conflict Minimisation, which included some discussion of the gender dimensions of land-based conflict in the Pacific. The committee also endorsed the Guiding Principles and Implementation Framework for Customary Land Management and Conflict Minimisation, which reflect the importance of a gender dimension (ESCAP 2009c). However, much more detailed analysis and work is needed on, and much higher priority must be given to, women's land rights as an integral part of land and conflict management in the region.

2.8. Globalisation

2.8.1. The explosion in ICT in every PICT, and the global connections it permits, are opening up new opportunities for some Pacific women and girls (see Section 3.10). However, only a small minority of Pacific women have access to ICT and to global markets.

2.8.2. Measures taken to tighten access to overseas labour markets for migrants are likely to affect Pacific women on temporary work visas such as caregivers and nurse aides in the health sector. Australia's horticultural pilot scheme and New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme are targeted primarily at the horticultural and viticulture sectors, drawing a high number of Pacific men. This gender imbalance raises concerns regarding equitable opportunities for women (Sumeo 2009, p. 10).

2.8.3. The proportion of skilled and highly skilled Pacific Islanders among all migrants is increasing, as a result of shortages and private sector recruitment in the receiving countries. Low remuneration, poor promotion opportunities, limited training and educational opportunities, and poor working and living conditions, particularly in remote regions, are push factors for skilled migrants. The shortage of skilled workers has also contributed to increased intra-Pacific migration, with workers migrating to countries offering better work conditions and salaries, such as Fijian nurses and teachers migrating to the Marshall Islands and Kiribati, and tourism workers moving to Cook Islands. Migration from Wallis and Futuna to New Caledonia for educational and work opportunities has resulted in more Wallisians and Futunans living in New Caledonia than in their homeland.

2.8.4. Skilled migrants – particularly skilled health workers (Connell 2009), but also teachers (Voigt-Graf 2003), football players (Grainger 2008) and others – make up a growing proportion of migrants, especially from Tonga, Samoa and Fiji Islands. This brain drain has become excessive in some of the small states, but remittances have boomed. Consequently there is a shortage of various skilled workers in most island states with 652 doctors and 3467 nurses and midwives born in the Pacific Islands region working in Australia and New Zealand. More than half of them are from Fiji Islands with significant numbers from PNG, Samoa and Tonga. There are almost as many Fiji-born doctors in Australia and New Zealand as there are in Fiji Islands. There are more Samoa-, Tonga- and Fiji-born nurses and midwives in Australia and New Zealand than in the domestic workforce (Negin 2008).

2.9. Sector areas

2.9.1. Gender mainstreaming gained significant traction in the Pacific in the lead-up to and following the adoption of the BPA in 1995. During the following decade, however, attention waned due to a lack of leadership and minimal resources for actions linked to the follow-through and monitoring of implementation of national commitments to gender equality. Any potential gains were thus largely lost, and as a result there are few examples today of systematic gender mainstreaming in government, and few government sectors that have clear gender-related policies or plans of action.

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2.9.2.   In most national development and sectoral strategies, gender issues are either not mentioned at all or are in a separate section (often related to social or community development) rather than mainstreamed throughout all development goals and strategies. The few examples of gender being mainstreamed, at least in part, in the sectoral work of government tend to be in the areas of health and education.

2.10. Partnerships

Strengthening government and NGO partnerships: Government of French Polynesia and Fiji NGO

2.10.1. Diverse groups of women, including rural women, urban women, those living in squatter settlements, young women, those with special needs, and migrant women, all have unique needs and concerns. The challenge for NWMs is to find ways of working with these groups on policy and programmes to address the great disparities in income and quality of life that are becoming more visible.

2.10.2. In most PICTs, the main partners for NWMs are the traditional NGOs, such as the Aia Maea Ainen Kiribati (AMAK), the Soqosoqo Vakamarama in Fiji Islands, Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI) in RMI, and National Councils of Women across the region. These networks provide a vital outreach for women's programmes into the most isolated and rural communities and bring legitimacy to NWM strategies, as well as considerable knowledge. Church-based groups are another important partner. For example, Solomon Islands listed its significant partners as not only donors, the National Council of Women and the local NGO Vois Blong Mere, but also the Solomon Island Christian Association Federation of Women (SICAFOW), and noted a high dependence on church-organised groups to implement many of its gender related activities. The ability of such groups to work on gender equality rather than on service delivery or projects that act to maintain and perpetuate gender inequality has yet to be analysed.

2.10.3. However, anecdotal reports suggest that partnerships with traditional women's groups, many of which follow customary leadership patterns and mores, have made NWMs quite conservative. In 2009, the Nauru Young Women's National Council (aged 16–35 years) was established because young women felt that some of the issues in the Women's National Plan were not their priorities, and they wanted to focus on issues that were crucial for them.

2.10.4. NWMs have started to develop new partnerships with national issue-specific groups such as women and business, women's rights, and VAW groups. Ties with sportswomen are also emerging, as are links with teachers' unions and academics, such as those at the University of the South Pacific (USP) which has recently announced plans to introduce a gender studies programme.

2.10.5. Partnerships with young women's groups are vital to ensure programme growth and sustainability. The lack of robust partnerships with young women's groups is due in part to the fact that age is a form of hierarchy in many PICTs. One challenge is to give young women the chance to participate in training and activities related to gender equality, and to have their points of view and experiences reflected in the priorities of NWMs and government policy. Organisations such as Development Alternatives for a New Era (DAWN), the Association for Women in Development (AWID) and the Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) in partnership with UNIFEM and other agencies have provided opportunities for young Pacific women to be trained in feminist advocacy and build individual capacity to be strong gender advocates. A National Youth Parliament, which has been hosted in Samoa for the past three years, coordinated by the government Division for Youth through a network of the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, is a national-level initiative that is facilitating leadership and decision-making opportunities for young women. These efforts are key to growing and strengthening the women's movement in the region.

2.10.6. Civil society organisations (CSOs) are often much better resourced than NWMs, and are thus often better able to develop and implement gender equality initiatives. It is critical in the Pacific to strengthen both the resourcing of NWMs and their partnerships with CSOs so that gender advocacy is as strong and unified as possible.

2.11. Men and boys

2.11.1. There has been a recent increase in gender equality programmes targeting men and boys in the Pacific. These programmes promote dialogue on notions of masculinity and the way power is expressed in male–female relationships. The period 2004–2009 has seen such programmes gain ground.

2.11.2. Some programmes for males are targeting attitudes and behaviours relating to reproductive health, such as those relating to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV. Among these programmes are the Men as Partners pilots in Fiji Islands and Solomon Islands (funded by UNFPA, NZAID and SPC), the Save Adolescents for Excellence Project by the Tongan Family Health Association, and the Foundation of the People of the South Pacific (FSP) Vanuatu's Advancing Health and Education and Development (UNFPA 2005). The Won Smolbag (Vanuatu) theatre group also advocates on health issues including HIV, AIDS and unplanned pregnancies through live theatre, as well as radio shows and television series that are aired regionally. The 'sex industry condom use 100%' programme is being carried out in Fiji Islands, Kiribati and PNG.

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2.11.3. A number of programmes focus on males and domestic violence. For example, FWCC runs the Male Advocates programme in Fiji Islands, which emphasises a human rights approach. Reports are that Vanuatu police officers who trained as male advocates are serving as change agents within the service. In Cook Islands the Gender and Development Division has established a group of gender trainers, which provides training for government ministries and agencies, heads of ministries, and managers. The gender trainers team includes more men than women. The team uses a buddy system (one male and one female). Under the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, a Men Against Violence Advocacy Group was also set up in Samoa in 2008. Its membership comprises male village representatives who take a leading role in the community to advocate for the elimination of violence against women and

Men in Kiribati supporting the elimination of violence against women

children. In Tonga, the Women and Children Crisis Centre held an initial male advocates workshop in 2005, and in 2009 the first male advocate positions were created. They are now carrying out lobbying, awareness raising and fundraising activities to help eliminate violence against women.

2.12. Climate change, energy and food security

2.12.1. The Niue Declaration on Climate Change that Pacific Leaders adopted at the 2008 Pacific Islands Forum emphasised the growing threat of climate change to the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being and security of PICTs; to sustainable development; and to people's ability to continue to live on their customary land and preserve their culture. At the 2009 Pacific Islands Forum in Cairns, Leaders recognised that for Pacific Island states, climate change 'is the great challenge of our time…' (PIFS 2009a, para. 4) and adopted the Pacific Leaders Call for Action on Climate Change. Leaders also welcomed the UN General Assembly's adoption of a resolution on 'Climate change and its possible security implications' on 3 June 2009. The resolution was an initiative of the Pacific Small Island Developing States at the UN, and Leaders undertook to continue to assist, encourage and strengthen work in the region in support of its recommendations.

Wallis

2.12.2. The Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change (2006–2015) is cross-sectoral, linking weather and climate with water, agriculture, energy, forestry and land use, health, coastal zone management, marine ecosystems, ocean management, tourism and transport. Climate change, and all of these related sectors, has clear gender dimensions and yet the framework is silent on gender. Waste management strategies, water management and sanitation sector programmes, and the establishment of the Pacific Water Partnerships on Sustainable Water Management are related strategies with a direct impact on women and women's activities.

2.12.3. Climate change discussions provide an entry point for a broader review of the realities of women's lives. For example, women's gender roles and low socio-economic status make them disproportionately vulnerable to environmental risks and disasters (SPREP 2009; AusAID 2008a). Global statistics indicate that women and children are 14 times more likely to die during a disaster than men. The 2009 tsunami experience in Samoa triggered demands for a more meaningful approach to mainstreaming gender in the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of disaster preparedness and recovery programmes. This resulted in the inclusion of staff from the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development in government committees conducting related village-level programmes.

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2.12.4. Nonetheless, despite their specific issues, concerns, knowledge and contributions, women continue to be at the fringe of discussions about natural resource use in the Pacific generally. Encouragingly, the paper presented by SPC to the Pacific Climate Change Roundtable (Lane and McNaught 2009) recognises the central place of women in the climate change debate, and in its issues and solutions. The paper highlights the different knowledge of women and men, the differential risks of climate change for women and men, the need to ensure that adaptations encompass their needs and circumstances and the importance of equal participation by women and men in all decision-making regarding climate change. It also recognises the need for research into how disasters and climate change impact on social structures, and for the translation of complex climate forecasts for local communities so that men and women understand the impacts of climate change on their livelihoods. Despite these issues, gender experts are still not being systematically included in regional dialogue on climate change.

2.12.5. As primary food producers and family caregivers, Pacific women are likely to be affected by climate change, particularly by the effects of floods and droughts on crop production, changes in the availability of coastal fish and shellfish from increasingly degraded coral reefs, and the greater risks of damage to their houses from more intense tropical cyclones and rising sea levels. Changing rainfall patterns and the ensuing water shortages (UNFPA 2009), increases in vector- and water-borne diseases, the loss of renewable energy resources and fuels for cooking, and the high costs of energy for household lighting and for transportation to markets (SOPAC and PEG 2009) have daily impacts on women's lives. Women are vulnerable to livelihood and food insecurity, the burden of disease, and conflict and competition for resources, especially as rural women's workloads are increasing with more males moving to urban centres.

2.12.6. The strategic plan for SPC's Land Resources Division targets food and nutrition security, sustainable resource management, biosecurity and trade facilitation, all of which are central to addressing climate change. Increasingly the division's work plans are mainstreaming climate change, as well as gender issues and youth development.

2.12.7. Women are increasingly accessing funding from the UNDP Global Environment Facility (GEF) for country action on the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Programme of Work on Protected Areas project (2007) (see Table 5). UNDP reports that there are many other past, ongoing and planned energy projects at local, national, subregional and regional levels that have gender components. In addition, the Pacific Foundation for the Advancement of Women (PACFAW) prepared a Pacific Women's Statement on Climate Change for the 15th Conference of the Parties negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.[8] This statement noted that Pacific communities were already adapting to the detrimental effects of natural disasters exacerbated by climate change, each of which posed risks to the livelihoods and health of Pacific women. Women are also participating in the WWF climate witness programme which explores the knowledge held by men and women about the current impacts of changes in climate on fragile ecosystems. This information has been used as the basis for water storage plans.

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8. *Pacific Beijing + 15 NGO Forum, 30 November – 3 December 2009, Suva. PACFAW represents 20 largely Fiji based women's NGOs but also AMAK (Kiribati), National Council of Women (Tonga), Tuvalu National Council of Women (TNCW), and Pacific Conference of Churches.*

Table 5: Grants to women from the UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme, 2009

Country	Total projects	Number of projects with women's organisation as grantee	Number of projects coordinated by women	Project focal area
Fiji Islands	31	2	9	Biodiversity, climate change mitigation, land degradation
Tonga	7	1	3	Biodiversity, climate change
Nauru	4	0	0	Biodiversity
Kiribati	7	1	2	Biodiversity, climate change
Tuvalu	5	1	1	Biodiversity

Source: Data provided by UNDP Pacific Centre

2.12.8. The mainstreaming of gender (and cultural values) into regional and national energy policies and practices has become increasingly recognised as crucial as the Pacific strives to improve social well-being, productiveness and economic prosperity. From 2003 to January 2010, the Pacific Energy and Gender Network (PEG) through the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) with funding support from the Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation (CTA) based in the Netherlands, ENERGIA, UNDP, REEEP and IUCN, implemented initiatives to introduce and highlight the significance of gender equality in energy policies and projects. These functions are now being progressed and up-scaled through SPC's Economic Development Division and Human Development Programme.

2.12.9. PEG is currently working with some PICTs and technical partners on two energy projects: solar PV LED lighting systems in the Solomon Islands (known as the Umi Solar PV Project), and the mainstreaming of gender into IUCN energy funded projects in Palau, Vanuatu, Tonga, Tuvalu and Samoa (Etuati 2008). Since its inception in 2003, PEG has been recognised with two international awards: an Honorary Energy Globe Award in 2008 for the project "Linkages between Energy and Gender in the Pacific" and the National Energy Globe Award 2009 for the Umi Solar PV project. The replication of these initiatives will form a key component of PEG activities through SPC's Economic Development Division and Human Development Programme.

New solar PV lighting systems, Malaita Province, Solomon Islands (2009), courtesy of SOPAC

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2.12.10. Women's concerns and knowledge could be better signposted in other programmes concerned with climate change mitigation, adaptation, awareness raising and sustainable resource management, all of which impact on women's lives. Among these programmes is the Regional Programme on Adaptation to Climate Change in the Pacific Region (January 2009), which is aimed at avoiding deforestation (SPC Land Resources Division n.d.).

2.12.11. It is important to ensure that Pacific women's contribution to strategies on climate change, disaster risk reduction, food security and energy is not confined to their roles as holders of traditional knowledge and/or agents of community mobilisation. To achieve both sustainable development and the RPPA and BPA goals it is necessary for women to have equal access to education and information, participation in all local and national decision-making processes and the technology needed to adapt to changing resource and environmental needs and conditions.

2.13. Financial crisis

2.13.1. The global recession is affecting every part of the Pacific region through slower economic growth, increased economic uncertainty, and worsening household vulnerability. Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu have lost value in their investment funds since 2008. These funds provide much-needed revenue. The Compact Trust Fund, set up with FSM, the Marshall Islands and Palau to replace US financial aid following the achievement of sovereignty, has underperformed due to the recession.[9] In each country, there was also a decline in domestic revenues, placing stress on public services such as health and education. Even before the financial crisis, most Pacific nations were struggling economically and experiencing lower commodity prices, with many relying on different forms of external assistance.

2.13.2. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reports that children, youth and women are bearing the lion's share of the burden of the global economic crisis. Its surveys in Tonga and Tuvalu in December 2009 reveal that a staggering 80% of families living in vulnerable communities do not have enough money for food. Those in remote areas are affected particularly severely. Malnutrition is an increasing concern. Rising prices, falling remittances and loss of jobs are contributing to child labour and child neglect (Radio Australia 2010).

2.13.3. Many governments have assessed options for cutting expenditure or finding additional financing for future budgets, including from development partners. Samoa's 2009 budget indicated significant cuts in funding for health and education (Ilalio, 2009), both critical areas for women's employment and equality and the long-term health and wealth of the country after the recession. In the Pacific, women pick up these government responsibilities in their households or communities, adding to already long days in subsistence environments. In response to the economic crisis – currently compounded by a decrease in tourism due to political instability – the Fiji Interim Government reduced the retirement age for public servants to 55 years. This age discrimination has a major effect on women's employment in the public sector, where women would have expected to retain their paid positions for a number of years beyond the age of 55 (Young 2009). The Solomon Islands Government stopped all new appointments to positions in the public service, the largest employer, in a context where there were hundreds of positions to be filled.

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9. *www.adb.org/documents/reports/pacMoniter*

2.13.4. Tourism, an important income earner for many Pacific economies, has been adversely affected by the recession. Among the countries that experienced a significant drop in tourism was Fiji Islands. The devaluing of the Fijian currency by 20% in 2009, which it was hoped would assist the recovery of Fiji's tourism industry (Pareti 2009), did not have the anticipated outcome. French Polynesia experienced a huge decrease in tourism with an estimated drop of 30% in arrivals through 2009 (Adams 2009; Radio New Zealand 2008). The tsunami that affected Samoa and parts of Tonga in 2009 has further reduced tourist numbers. Tourism officials in Palau blamed the global economic recession and swine flu for the continuing decline in tourist arrivals. The Palau Visitors Authority said the total number of visitors in April was 5329, a drop of almost 20% compared with April 2008 when 6623 tourists visited Palau (Sanchez 2009). A decline in tourism in the Pacific affects women in a number of ways. In the formal sector they are retrenched from positions in hotels and other service sectors. Earnings from handicrafts and other marketing activities associated with the informal sector are also affected.

2.13.5. Despite all of the concerning trends described above, there is little evidence of measures being taken to reduce the negative impact of the global financial crisis on women. Nor have any measures been taken that could be said to be aimed at mobilising women's economic potential as the region experiences recession.

2.13.6. Pacific responses to the economic recession have reduced access to core services, which may have a number of long-term impacts. First, the withdrawal of children from school may affect participation and attainment levels, with particular disadvantages for girls where patriarchal values in certain communities prioritise education for boys such that girls are the first to be withdrawn from school when extra family income is needed (Pacific Business Online 2009). Girls may also be withdrawn from school when caregivers see no employment opportunities for young people following education. Long-term falling enrolment, retention, and education standards will constrain national development. A second possible impact of reduced access to services is the loss of higher remittance income in future, resulting from a deterioration of skills due to reduced investment in education and training. Third, cuts in infrastructure spending are likely to further limit economic growth and to slow recovery. Fourth, a reduction in health services will worsen health outcomes for all and ultimately increase health care costs to society. Finally, at the household level, families most at risk are likely to live in urban areas where people have limited social support mechanisms and fewer resources to plant traditional food gardens. Women and children are particularly vulnerable in this situation (AusAID 2009).

2.13.7. In Samoa, a school fee relief scheme and a number of sub-grant projects under the Ministry of Health's Sector Wide Approach Programme, aimed at the promotion of vegetable gardens and physical activities amongst women and youth groups, are examples of government responses to some of these issues. Rising fuel and food prices for imported goods, in particular rice – an introduced staple food in many Pacific communities – have prompted Pacific leaders and others to publicly promote the growing of local foods such as taro, cassava, breadfruit, and yams (Singh 2008). In Honiara in 2008, when the prices of rice and fuel soared, the transformation of any spare ground was immediate as urban women began to plant traditional crops wherever good soil was available.

2.13.8. While some PICTs – for example, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, Tonga and Samoa – have the capacity to measure key macro-economic variables and release regular data on trade, the consumer price index (CPI), gross domestic product (GDP), tax, banking, tourist figures and building consents, there are no databases in any PICT that can be used to assess the specific impact of the financial crisis on gender equality and women's empowerment.

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3. Progress in implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and the further initiatives identified in the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

3.1. Critical Area A: Women and poverty

See the BPA Diagnosis and Strategic Objectives on Women and Poverty at
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/poverty.htm

3.1.1. Poverty in the Pacific exists in forms of social exclusion and poverty of opportunity to participate (the capability approach), as well as financial poverty. Poverty in the region is impacted in some areas by the lack of access to basic services such as sanitation, water, electricity and natural resources, and the lack of opportunity to fully participate in the socio-economic life of communities (Abbott 2006). Poverty is also a result of the migration of many skilled workers from the Pacific Islands, taking skills with them that leave many islands and nations without qualified professionals. In the largely collective Pacific cultures, hardship is also visible when one is unable to meet customary responsibilities to family and villages, and religious responsibilities to the church.

3.1.2. Data to measure the MDG poverty benchmark of USD 1 a day are not readily available in the Pacific region, and additional indicators are needed to fit the Pacific context. Many people's needs and responsibilities are met through subsistence agriculture and fishing, and goods and services are often provided without monetary exchange. However, a growing cash economy and aspirations for modern goods have altered the traditional family systems and raised expectations of monetary rewards for 'work'. There is also a growing expectation that the government has a responsibility to provide more services, particularly where there is corruption and politicians use revenue for personal gain.

Woman fishing in Kiribati

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3.1.3. While adequate data to measure poverty in the region are lacking, evidence shows that basic needs poverty is increasing in many Pacific Island countries, with a total of one-third of the region's population not having the income or access to subsistence production to meet basic needs (AusAID 2009b). The different types and levels of poverty are mostly visible in urban areas where the subsistence economy is not as strong and employment is not always available. An increase in the number of very poor squatters in Suva (Fiji Islands), Honiara (Solomon Islands) and Port Moresby (PNG) has given rise to characteristics of poverty found internationally, for example begging and homelessness. Squatters are also 'poor' because they have no access to land for gardens. Even where people are employed, wages are often low, making it difficult to sustain basic household needs, including children's education and health (Connell 2009). The search for employment and better wages remains a driver for people to leave the Pacific to seek higher income in more developed nations.

3.1.4. Women, particularly those in rural areas, have become increasingly vulnerable to poverty and the effects of poverty. Women have a higher risk of poverty linked to labour force discrimination, lack of property rights, and heavy responsibilities with regard to subsistence farming, the household and the community. Female-headed households are becoming more prevalent and are particularly vulnerable to poverty (Nelson 2008). Accompanying hardship and poverty is a developing sex industry, exploiting local women and both female and male children, as well as trafficking women from Asia. There is a particular prevalence of sexual exploitation in the logging, fishing and mining industries in countries such as PNG, Solomon Islands and Kiribati, where the workforces engaged by foreign contractors are often non-Pacific, and pornography, the sexual abuse of children, teenage pregnancies, and a rise in STIs are recorded.

3.1.5. In the squatter settlements that have proliferated in most PICTs due to rapid urbanisation, women and families are also experiencing cash poverty and hardship as a result of unemployment and underemployment, while having little land for gardens or fishing places, and no bush lands for fuel and medicinal crops. Many of these families live in severely overcrowded and substandard accommodation with limited access to clean water, sanitation or waste disposal services. Women's limited access to small loans for entrepreneurial activities, due in large part to their lack of collateral such as land to secure a loan, has been a major constraint.

Peri-urban settlement, Fiji

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3.1.6.   In Vanuatu the micro-finance organisation VANWODS, established in 1995, has now become an important financial institution providing support to over 3000 women in rural and urban Efate and two other main islands. In Samoa, the South Pacific Business Development (SPBD) Micro Finance Scheme, established in 2000, now covers about 66% of the villages on Upolu and 40% of those on Savaii, the two main islands of Samoa. This scheme targets unemployed women and facilitates a strong culture of teamwork, support and networking, building on community mobilisation. In 2008 SPBD celebrated the achievement of 20 million (in Samoan currency) total loan disbursements since its inception.[10] Another micro-finance programme, which began in 2005, is being delivered by the Development Bank of Samoa for income-generating activities and small family businesses. In Solomon Islands some emerging women's groups and associations have established micro-finance programmes without any government or NGO assistance. Tokelau's General Fono (Parliament) recently enacted rules for the establishment of a Tokelau Development Bank to encourage and sustain economic development both at the national and village levels, including through small loans and business skills training.

3.1.7.   The website sendmoneypacific.org was formally launched in Australia and New Zealand in March 2009,[11] jointly supported by the Work Bank, the Reserve Bank of New Zealand, NZAID and the New Zealand Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs. This programme targeted the high transactional costs of remittances, which have been in the range of 15–25%. The region as a whole is estimated to lose up to NZD 80 million annually in fees. Phase one of the programme resulted in a number of remittance providers, led by the Westpac Bank, reducing fees to below 8%, facilitated by a regulatory change to New Zealand's Financial Transactions Reporting Act in September 2008.

3.1.8.   Over the last two years the Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme has successfully used performance-based grants to catalyse innovation, hasten the expansion of financial services to the unbanked, and set specific gender targets.[12] Six grants, across four Pacific Island countries, have been approved to a range of service providers, including regulated financial institutions, a mobile network operator, an Internet service provider and a government welfare payment agency; collectively these grants will help extend services to 180,000 previously unserved clients. Grantees have signed performance agreements tying fund disbursement to the achievement of minimum targets for women and rural clients of 30–50%. Grantees will be required to report on sex disaggregated targets.

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10. www.spbd.ws
11. http://www.microfinance-pasifika.org/assets/files/PMW2009/Presenations/Wednesday15b/JONATHAN-CAPALN-_Fiji2.pdf.
12. The Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme is a joint initiative of the UN Capital Development Fund, UNDP, the European Union and AusAID, working out of the UNDP Pacific Centre.

B. Examples of obstacles encountered and remaining gaps and challenges

3.1.9. In all cases, the micro-finance schemes in PICTs need to be assessed not only for their disbursement of loans but also for their impact on increasing women's empowerment and equality.

3.1.10. The economies of the Pacific do not provide a large enough range of paid employment opportunities to be able to meet current youth employment demand. There are high levels of unemployment and underemployment, and significant levels of out-migration (often of the most qualified) and remittance dependence. Levels of dependence on development assistance are also high.

3.1.11. There has been little official statistical data to show the nature and extent of women's participation in the subsistence economy and/or the amount that this activity contributes to the national economy. National accounting data do not include all subsistence work, in breach of international rules. In particular, subsistence production in agriculture, fishing, transport and building and construction is seriously underestimated. Further, neither governments nor donors use the international guidelines and rules for national income accounting as a baseline for strategic poverty reduction and economic planning (see Appendix 3), meaning that policies to increase productivity and services in the subsistence economy are nonexistent. When women and men are invisible as producers in the nation's economy, they will be invisible in the distribution of investment and benefits (Waring 1988).

3.1.12. Pacific governments have not reviewed their macro-economic policies, programmes and practices in the context of achieving the BPA. There is no evidence that issues of structural adjustments, the levels of debt and borrowing, annual budgets, productive and service sector investment and, in particular, significant subsistence production and poverty have been or are the subject of ongoing rigorous gender analysis.

3.1.13. PICTs have vulnerable and fragile economies. They are dependent on the export of one or a few commodities, and on a few service sectors such as tourism. The traditional social protection net of the family and church is under stress, and sometimes gone, and government assistance in the form of pensions or social benefits is available in only a few PICTs. In most PICTs, the capacity of institutions and policy implementation are both weak. Transparency International (n.d.) and the region's newspapers confirm that significant corruption in the political and bureaucratic systems exists, which increases the vulnerability of communities that are already deprived, and especially of the women living in them.

3.1.14. Although there have been some small revisions in the law to protect women's equal rights and access to economic resources, there is no evidence of changes in administrative practices that affect outcomes for women. Women's access to land is a major issue. Strong patriarchal cultures, particularly in parts of Melanesia, have contributed to the historical and systemic discrimination against women. Governments often use customary rules in the context of land ownership as an excuse to block women or their direct descendants from sharing land resources equally with those who are descendants from the male lineage (Amnesty International 2008). In PNG it is common practice for government and other agencies to exclude women landowners from the majority of decision-making forums on the use of land for mining projects; such exclusion further limits women's ability to protect their interests and capital assets. A growing political movement focused on diminishing the authority of the PNG government over land and returning control to landowners could assist PNG women (Sumeo 2009).

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C. Lessons learned

3.1.15. In the work on reducing remittance transaction costs, the keys to success were having an energetic, strategically planned and sustained effort across all agencies engaged, and the capacity to confront private sector commercial banks to great effect. This approach can be replicated in other contexts, particularly where commercial interests are at play and market forces can drive change.

3.1.16. Gender analysts and advisers have consistently developed, used and regionalised rigorous gender-based methodologies to address the feminisation of poverty in the Pacific (Nelson 2008; Rego and Sicat 2009).[13] Much of this research has been outstanding, and complies with international best practice. However, reports from gender experts working in the Pacific over the last 15 years indicate that research has rarely influenced policy and strategies in the Pacific and much of it is not used as a baseline for strategic policy interventions. Pacific gender advocates need to focus much more strongly on following up on their research, including through systematic, sustained and collaborative advocacy, to ensure that research findings with a potentially high impact are actually used in practice.

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13. *See also DAWNnet.org*

Key Actions

Governments

▶ Review national development and poverty reduction strategies alongside the BPA and RPPA strategic objectives on Women and Poverty to ensure they are aligned.

▶ Count all subsistence productive, reproductive and service work of women and men, and girls and boys, and use this as the basis of measurement of GDP and to inform all economic policy-making and investment.

Donors and development partners

▶ Significantly increase efforts to systematically mainstream gender across all development, poverty reduction and economic growth programmes to ensure they are targeting women, especially rural women.

▶ Particularly for agencies engaged in the measurement of growth, review and comply with the United Nations System of National Accounts rules and alter practices around the vast amount of informal and in particular subsistence production, reproduction and service work in the Pacific that is not captured in highly influential data sets.

Civil society

▶ Engage women at the local and community levels and in rural areas in defining development policies and priorities.

▶ Bridge the gap between state development and decision-making processes and women in different situations of hardship at the local and community levels and in rural areas through programmes that will ensure that women's human security needs are addressed.

▶ Advocate for the priority of needs of women in hardship situations through media, research and partnerships with parliamentarians.

3.2. Critical Area B: Education and training of women

> See the BPA Diagnosis and Strategic Objectives on Education and Training of Women at
> http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/educa.htm

3.2.1. The positive correlation between women's education and poverty reduction is well documented in the BPA and RPPA. Education for women is associated with greater economic benefits, improved social and political participation and empowerment, and wider choices. It also has positive inter-generational effects.

3.2.2. Basic education is the goal in all PICTs, although there may not be the resources or the measures in place to achieve this. The main educational mandates observed by PICTs are the Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP 2009) as agreed to by the Forum Leaders, and UNESCO's Education for All (EFA). PICTs have also endorsed the MDGs and other UN agreements such as the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, the UN Literacy Decade and the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action on Disability (Asia-Pacific) (ESCAP 2002). The United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW) has also referenced the needs of older and aging women in education and training.[14] National governments have begun reporting back on these issues and commitments as a matter of policy.

3.2.3. The FBEAP and the EFA both give prominence to non-formal education and lifelong education to provide opportunities for upskilling. They are a means of addressing existing levels of illiteracy and the needs of a considerable number of women and girls (and youth generally) who have not had the benefits of formal schooling for reasons such as the civil strife in Bougainville and parts of Solomon Islands. Lifelong education is central to people's informed participation in democratic processes.

3.2.4. Gender equality in access to education has been achieved or is close to being achieved in primary and secondary schooling in most Polynesian and Micronesian countries of the Pacific, while some disparities still exist in the Melanesian sub-region as well as in Cook Islands (primary), Niue (secondary) and Tuvalu (primary) (see Table 6). Girls' participation in secondary schooling in PNG and Solomon Islands is still significantly lower than boys';

Primary school girl

however, Vanuatu shows highly significant gains at this level. Another significant finding is that more girls than boys are in secondary schooling in the Cook Islands, Fiji Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Tokelau and Tuvalu. Nonetheless, as of 2009 women still have higher overall levels of illiteracy than men in a few PICTs (see Table 1 in Section 1 above). Tertiary enrolment varies by country and territory: in some cases women are under-represented; among the notable exceptions are USP, where recent statistics show female students are enrolling in equal if not higher numbers than males and particularly in study by extension mode, and the University of Guam which has 60% female enrolment.

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14. *See Five-year Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action June 2000 item 41a.*

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Table 6: Access to primary and secondary education, males and females, 2000s

Country/territory	% Net enrolment ratio in primary education			% pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5		
	1990	2000	Latest	1990	2000	Latest
American Samoa	...	...	...	...	...	...
CNMI	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cook Islands		92.3 (2001)	100.0 (2007)	100.0 (1986)	98.2 (1996)	85.0 (2007)
Fiji Islands	92.0 (1986)	94.7	94.0 (2005)	91.4 (1996)	88.4	99.0 (2003)
French Polynesia	...	...	...	...	...	...
FSM	93.7 (1994)	92.3	100.0 (2006)		67.0	...
Guam	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kiribati	76.2	93.5	97.0 (2005)	98.0		82.0 (2003)
Nauru	75.2 (1992)	60.3 (2002)	...		92.0 (2002)	...
New Caledonia	...	...	...	...	...	....
Niue	...	90.2	100.0 (2006)		90.5 (1998)	100.0 (2005)
Palau	81.8	76.2	93.0 (2005)			80.0 (2007)
Pitcairn	...	...	...	...	...	...
PNG	66.3	77.4	77.0 (2003)	58.1	56.8	68.0 (2002)
RMI	86.5 (1988)	75.6 (1999)	83.2 a (2007)	88.0 (1988)	86.1 (1999)	89.0 (2005)
Samoa	...	...	90.0 (2004)		94.0	...
Solomon Islands	39.0 (1986)	56.0 (1999)	65.4 a (2007)	85.0 (1991)		79.0 (2005)
Tokelau	...	...	100.0 (2004)	...		100.0 (2006)
Tonga	91.6 (1986)	89.4 (1996)	95.0 (2005)	84.0		89.0 (2004)
Tuvalu	98.2 (1991)	100.0 (2002)		95.8 (1993)	....	100.0 (2002)
Vanuatu	74.5 (1989)	78.2 (1999)	72.7 a (2007)	90.2 (1991)	91.2	88.5 (2007)
Wallis and Futuna	...	...	...	...	...	...

Table 6: Access to primary and secondary education, males and females, 2000s (contd)

Country/territory	Ratio of girls to boys in primary school			Ratio of girls to boys in secondary school		
	1990	2000	Latest	1990	2000	Latest
American Samoa	…	…	…	…	…	…
CNMI	…	…	…	…	…	…
Cook Islands	0.98	0.89 (2003)	0.88 (2007)	1.12	0.94 (2003)	1.01 (2007)
Fiji Islands	0.94 (1992)	0.98	0.95 (2005)	1.05 (1992)	1.07	1.06 (2005)
French Polynesia	…	…	…	…	…	…
FSM	0.92 (1994)	0.94	0.96 (2006)	0.98 (1994)	1.04	0.99 (2006)
Guam	…	…	…	…	…	…
Kiribati	0.98	0.93	0.98 (2005)	1.16	1.14	1.01 (2005)
Nauru	1.03 (1992)	1.15	0.94 (2007)	0.75 (1992)	0.84	1.06 (2007)
New Caledonia	…	…	…	…	…	…
Niue	…	0.90 (2001)	1.06 (2007)	…	0.83 (2001)	0.87 (2007)
Palau	0.89	0.97	0.92 (2005)	1.08	0.88	1.05 (2005)
Pitcairn	…	…	…	…	…	…
PNG	…	0.86	0.80 (2000)	…	0.67	…
RMI	0.85 (1988)	0.80 (2002–2003)	0.93 (2006)	0.91 (1988)	1.04 (2002–2003)	0.95 (2006)
Samoa	…	…	0.93 (2005)	…	…	1.06 (2005)
Solomon Islands	0.80 (1986)	0.86 (1999)	0.89 (2005)	0.57 (1986)	0.70 (1999)	0.77 (2005)
Tokelau	…	0.96 (2003)	0.96 (2003)	…	1.12 (2003)	…
Tonga	…	0.90 (2001)	0.90 (2005)	…	0.99 (2001)	0.98 (2005)
Tuvalu	0.87 (1991)	0.93 (2002)	0.88 (2006)	1.05 (1991)	0.86 (2002)	1.21 (2006)
Vanuatu	0.88 (1991)	0.91 (1999)	0.99 (2007)	0.84 (1994)	0.93 (1999)	0.98 (2007)
Wallis and Futuna	…	…	…	…	…	…

Source: PRISM (2009c)

a: Value refers to net attendance ratio

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3.2.5. Priority needs for women continue to be their transition into traditionally male-dominated subjects such as trades and sciences and their participation in all levels of educational decision-making. Women's ongoing marginalisation in each of these areas is a result of social attitudes and practices that classify women into particular domains of activity and fields of action. While women are dominant in early childhood education (ECE) and primary school posts, they are a tiny minority in tertiary and higher-level posts. Female Ministers of Education and Chief Executives of education ministries have played key roles in shaping national and regional educational policies during this five-year period, for example in Samoa, Niue, Solomon Islands and Nauru.

A. Examples of successful policies, legislative changes and programmes and projects by governments or other actors

3.2.6. Gender equality measures are in place in most education ministries, largely (but not only) as a result of donor influence. Gender officers are now included in some curriculum writing teams, for example in Solomon Islands and Samoa.

3.2.7. Gender, which featured in the academic curriculum of USP through the early 1980s but then lost traction, has recently regained its place as an academic field of study. USP has introduced gender courses and a full Gender Studies Programme is currently under development. UNIFEM is sponsoring a gender in journalism course (2010) and a course of study on human rights is in discussion.

3.2.8. Teachers and academics can play a powerful role in advocating for the BPA and RPPA goals. Agencies such as RRRT are carrying out training in human rights and legal literacy to educate teachers for this role. As part of its training outreach RRRT has supported regional teacher organisations such as the Council of Pacific Educators and national bodies such as the Kiribati National Union of Teachers and Solomon Island National Teacher Association to undertake human rights advocacy by incorporating gender within their teacher outreach programmes.

3.2.9. Participation in ECE has increased significantly in the region, to a rate above 90% of children in this age group in Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau and Tuvalu. More boys than girls attend in PNG and more girls in Cook Islands, Fiji Islands, Niue, Palau, Samoa and Tonga (UNESCO 2008). Rural women's committees and pastors' wives have played a major role in ECE in all PICTs. More recently governments have been taking more responsibility for ECE. The National University of Samoa now trains ECE teachers and has supported the development of a national ECE curriculum.

3.2.10. Children and adults with special needs have been marginalised in education due to a mixture of social attitudes and resource capacity. After disaggregating disability data from the national census of Samoa by sex, Lene (2006) found that 52% of women with disabilities and 42% of men with disabilities had not attended school, or had attended for a maximum of three years. Interviews with some of these women revealed strong feelings of social exclusion and rejection and experiences of other marginalising actions. Inclusive education initiatives are being piloted in a number of Pacific countries such as Samoa and from a Pacific perspective (Fairbairn-Dunlop n.d.). Teacher training and curriculum development for disabilities education are also in progress. The ESCAP Asia/Pacific Proclamation of Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities was signed by 12 PICTs (PIFS 2009b).

3.2.11. The Pacific Plan for Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration (PIFS 2005, revised 2007), under the sustainable development pillar, calls for harmonising approaches in the education sector and investigating the potential for expanding technical and vocational education and training programmes in order to support the FBEAP, labour market demands and economic security. In 2005 SPC was requested by Ministers of Education to host the Pacific Association for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (PATVET) secretariat in order to support this work, which is continuing with the involvement of PIFS, USP and a wider group of TVET providers. Most recently Forum Leaders (2008) highlighted the need for continued emphasis and support for improved quality and access to TVET, building life skills and other forms of formal and non-formal education to prepare Pacific Island young people for their futures. This prioritising of more diverse opportunities for lifelong education is positive and needs to be urgently progressed taking into account the specific situations of young men and women in the region.

3.2.12. Given the importance of agriculture in Pacific economies and livelihoods, technical support and advancement in this area are key for development and women's empowerment. Ensuring women have access to agricultural education and information was a priority in the Development of Sustainable Agriculture in the Pacific (DSAP) research.[15] Findings were that there was no one delivery system that would suit all women. For example, in PNG the women's taro-growing cooperative preferred to work as a women's group and on their own land holdings. In Fiji Islands, farm families and youth worked together in project activities. On the isolated Tongan island of Huuga, the agriculture projects were regarded as 'whole of community' projects. In Samoa, women participated in project activities along with males according to the techniques being shared. The partnerships in this project, involving NGOs, the Agriculture Department and DSAP, ensured that project activities spread to women's groups and communities in very isolated rural areas – where there are increasing numbers of female-headed households and incipient poverty. Comments were:

This is the first time the women in this village have had a project. This is so highly motivating … this feeling has reflected back on the families, the husbands and the youth (Male ex-Agricultural officer, Huunga)

This is the first agriculture project for these women and it's on our own land. This is the first time they have met the DSAP extension officer and this is the first time a woman has gone on a Trade Mission to Fiji (Women's Representative, Lae Urban Council, PNG)

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15. *DSAP promotes and implements sustainable agriculture that will improve food production, enhancing food security and income generation in the Pacific. Funded by the European Union the programme commenced in 2003 in 16 PICTs – Fiji Islands, French Polynesia, Tuvalu, Tonga, Vanuatu, Wallis & Futuna, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Kiribati, PNG, Cook Islands, Niue, Marshall Islands, Nauru, FSM and Palau.*

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3.2.13. SPC's Community Education and Training Centre (CETC)[16] continues to be the only regional institution offering community development training for Pacific women. To date, CETC has trained more than 1500 women in community development, leadership and management across the region. This training is delivered through an annual seven-month residential course for 30 Pacific Island women who come from a cross-section of backgrounds and skill levels. More recently CETC has recognised the need to broaden and strengthen training offerings so that trainees are better equipped to: (1) enter and participate in both the informal and formal sectors of the economy through integration of a Business Development and Advisory Programme while contributing to growing a pool of female trainers in small business development in the region; (2) understand, analyse and address the gender dimensions of critical and emerging issues such as the use of ICT in community development and the human rights approach to community development by equipping trainees with practical tools that will allow them to exercise their rights to improve the livelihoods of their families and communities; and (3) move into decision-making and leadership roles, by building in training modules and courses that focus on good governance and women's participation in this process, beginning at community level. Among the challenges in achieving these outcomes are the tasks of: (1) continuing to strengthen CETC offerings, including through certification to enable women community leaders to move into higher-level governance responsibilities at local and provincial levels, and to enable women community entrepreneurs to grow and expand enterprise activities; (2) decentralising the services of CETC to countries and territories and possibly sub-regional centres; and (3) providing CETC training and development services to both men and women. Funding to support these developments is also a challenge.

16. http://www.spc.int/cetc/

Community Education and Training Centre students, SPC, Fiji

3.2.14.   Governments with limited financial resources face tremendous pressure to provide education for an already large and growing school-aged population, many of whom live in isolated areas. Progress in the BPA and RPPA goals of gender equality in education are largely dependent on national decisions about where the priority lies. Is the central concern with basic education for all (rural and urban) or with the expansion of secondary and tertiary education? Do governments prioritise promoting widespread literacy and 'the three Rs' or expanding the curricula to include IT, HIV and AIDS, peace education and human rights?

3.2.15.   A major constraint is that available educational data relate almost exclusively to access. More scarce are data on the quality of education, including the extent to which it may be perpetuating gender stereotypes. Definitions of literacy also warrant further research. For example, does literacy mean reading and/or writing? In English or French or in the vernacular?[17]

3.2.16.   Girls and young women in some PICTs, particularly in Melanesia, may face greater barriers to education and training because girls may be expected to carry out household chores and care for other children, the elderly and the sick. Often when families are faced with limited resources and heavy financial demands, parents prefer to invest in the education of their sons and to keep their daughters at home for their vital contribution to the household economy (Duncan and Voigt-Graf 2008).

3.2.17.   Another major challenge is that the education system is based on a presumption of white collar jobs being available after completion. In reality, such jobs are relatively few in the Pacific in relation to the number of graduates each year. The approximately 700 new jobs created annually in the formal sector in Vanuatu are wholly insufficient to absorb the 3500 entrants to the labour force. The government recognises that a large proportion of school leavers will need to be productive in the village economy (agriculture, fishing and forestry) and in other types of income-earning activities within and outside Vanuatu (Duncan and Voigt-Graf 2008). Education and training need to be better tailored towards Pacific economies and realities.

3.2.18.   The education sector is facing human resource constraints, especially due to the migration of teachers and education professionals to developed countries.

3.2.19.   Data from Cook Islands shows that trades are still overwhelmingly male-dominated (see Table 7).

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17.   *See PRIDE project.*

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Table 7: Participation in trade training by Cook Islands women and men, 2007–2009

Trade courses	Male	Female	Total
O.Is Electrical Stg 1	9	0	9
O.Is Electrical Stg 2	9	0	9
Basic Small Engine – Atiu	15	0	15
Basic Small Engine – Mitiaro	32	0	32
Basic Small Engine – Mauke	19	5	24
Basic Small Engine – Manihiki/Rakahanga (EU)	60	5	65
Basic Small Engine – Rarotonga #1	10	2	12
Basic Small Engine – Rarotonga # 2	10	3	13
Basic Small Engine – Rarotonga #3	13	0	13
Basic Small Engine – Rarotonga #4	9	4	13
Introduction to Auto Trng – Secondary	24	1	25
Basic Carp – Rarotonga: 15/1/2007	14	1	15
Basic Carp – Rarotonga: 23/4/2007	10	0	10
Foundation Skills in Building – Aitutaki (EU)	16	0	16
Foundation Skills in Building – Mangaia	17	1	18
Unitec Automotive – active students	21	1	22
Unitec Carpentry – active students	10	0	10
Unitec & Open Poly Electrical	15	0	15
Total	**313**	**23**	**336**

Source: National Human Resource Department (HRD) statistics provided by Repeta Puna, Cook Islands Government, and prepared by Ngarangi Tangaroa (Programme Manager – Tertiary Awards Department of HRD)

3.2.20. Women from Fiji Islands, Kiribati and Samoa participated in the Asia Pacific Gender Equity in Science and Technology project (APGEST), which reviewed women's participation in bio-based technology, green health, water and hygiene, renewable energy, and information and communications technology. National studies confirmed that: women's involvement in science and technology was not equal to men's; women did not have careers as engineers or scientists or in science-based jobs; and even where women had been leaders in localising new technologies, they were overlooked when assessing community needs and selecting local project leaders (UNESCO and UNDP 2006). Females performed exceptionally well in science but tended to drop science subjects in the 6th form and move into social sciences. Rather than lacking aptitude, they often turned away from science for reasons such as the scheduling of laboratory classes in the evenings, a lack of career counselling as to how dropping these subjects would affect their future career choices, and the absence of female role models in science subjects. These findings prompted Samoa's Ministry of Education to set a gender equity policy at the Samoa Polytechnic, with support from AusAID in 2005. It would be useful to evaluate the impact of this policy. In Guam, a film is currently being made entitled 'Portrait of a Scientist as a Young Woman' to encourage middle and high school girls and freshman and sophomore college women to study these subjects.

3.2.21. In Vanuatu, a 2002 gender analysis of the education sector led to the development and endorsement of a Gender Equity in Education Policy (2005–2015) to address a range of inequalities, including findings that females were underrepresented in higher levels of secondary school, only one third of enrolments in technical and vocational training were female, there was clear gender stereotyping in school subjects taken by males and females, only 8% of secondary school principals were women, and all directors of education were male. However, there has been very little implementation of the policy over the past five years, which is illustrative of the very common situation in the region of policy commitments not translating into actions.

Woman researcher, Solomon Islands

Photo: Chris Palethorpe

3.2.22. The lack of educational achievement by boys relative to girls is arising as an issue in countries such as Samoa and Cook Islands. Research and programming will be important measures in addressing this issue. Such research on boys' achievement is currently being carried out in Samoa.

3.2.23. While it is promising that gender studies are being restored to the curriculum at USP, efforts will need to be intensified and sustained in order to make up for decades of lost time. The Pacific Islands region is significantly under-resourced with technically qualified local gender experts, necessitating the recruitment of international technical experts and detracting from local capacity to influence change internally.

## C.	Lessons learned

3.2.24. Positive educational outcomes require not only participation in an education system, but also an education that is of high quality in terms of the teachers' skills and ability to engage with a diverse audience of learners and their families.

3.2.25. In light of the local contexts of PICTs, there needs to be less emphasis on the traditional examination model and more on diversifying education systems to facilitate relevant youth employment opportunities. This need has been recognised in several key regional documents, including the Forum Education Action Plan 2001, the Pacific Plan 2005 (revised 2007) and the Pacific Youth Strategy 2005 and draft strategy for 2010 (UNICEF et al. 2005). Ongoing and more recent efforts at the regional level to improve coordination and support for technical and vocational education both regionally and nationally will also contribute to broadening the range of educational options for young people and ensuring that they are better linked to labour market needs and directed equally at young men, young women, boys and girls.

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3.2.26. Schools are an important site for gender advocacy and human rights education, if teachers and academics have the skills, knowledge and passion to act as role models, educators, researchers and practitioners of gender equality. Schools can also be centres for practising and modelling human rights and gender studies.

3.2.27. The awareness that gender is an academic field of study, which includes a recognition of the importance of research and technical expertise in informing gender policies and practices, has re-emerged along with recognition of the need to break down the 'silo' approach to achieving BPA and RPPA goals. Growing local technical expertise in areas such as human rights law, gender and development theory and methodologies, and gender-responsive social and economic policy will be critical to enhancing the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of gender equality initiatives throughout the region.

3.2.28. Education is a lifelong process. There is a need for multi-level and community-wide strategies to change long-held discriminatory attitudes so as to increase women's choices and participation in education throughout the life cycle.

Key Actions

Governments

▶ Review national education policies and strategies alongside the BPA and RPPA strategic objectives on Education and Training of Women to ensure they are aligned.

▶ Review educational curricula to ensure the elimination of all sex stereotyping, including in social life, family life, work and employment opportunities, sporting activities and all other spheres and endeavours, and the inclusion of gender equality and human rights training and perspectives, including training materials in vernacular languages.

▶ Introduce annual forums and competitions for secondary school and university students (e.g. debate, youth parliament, video and media) on gender equality issues guided by CEDAW, the BPA and the RPPA.

Donors and development partners

▶ Increase support for the strengthening of technical and vocational training for women in fields where the greatest opportunities lie, and for the integration of women into non-traditional tertiary education fields.

▶ Develop short courses and internships in gender and human rights for teachers/educators identified as potential national leaders for gender equality training and curriculum development.

▶ Support short-term exchanges for young people in the Pacific to work with gender specialists in regional institutions in order to understand and learn to analyse gender issues and methodologies in a Pacific context.

▶ Support the development and strengthening of gender studies and human rights courses in national and regional Pacific universities.

Civil society

▶ Promote, champion, support and participate in multi-level efforts to ensure that education policies and curricula in all forms of education increase women's equality, choices and participation and eliminate gender stereotypes.

▶ Recognise and support efforts to increase the number of gender experts in the Pacific region.

3.3. Critical Area C: Women and health

Promoting safe sex at Pacific Youth Festival, Fiji

3.3.1.   The relationship of health and education to women's rights is well documented: women's knowledge of health practices and the availability of quality health services, safe water supplies, sanitation services and adequate housing impact on women's ability to practise preventative health-related behaviours. Poverty and the degree of availability of sufficient and nutritious foods also influence women's health, as do high fertility rates, early births and insufficiently spaced births. Women's increasing workloads as they take on more intensive cash-earning work, in addition to household and caring work, affects their health, and rural women are especially vulnerable. Risky sexual behaviours (often related to male–female power relations) and sexual violence also render women vulnerable to STIs and HIV and other health issues.

3.3.2.   There are significant variations in access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation in the Pacific. For example, over 90% of people in many PICTs like Fiji Islands, Niue, Palau, Samoa and Tonga have access to both safe water and sanitation, whereas only 53% of the population in Kiribati and 30% of the population in rural PNG have access to safe water and only one quarter to half the population in FSM, Kiribati, and Solomon Islands have access to proper sanitation (PRISM 2009c).

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Water supply on an atoll island, Nonouti, Kiribati

3.3.3.   Women's sexual and reproductive health rights are still significantly compromised by widespread patriarchal control over women's lives and bodies and stereotyped gender roles based on notions of the superiority of men and inferiority of women in the region (SPC 2010a).

3.3.4.   In some PICTs, progress in maternal health has been seen in the form of increases in antenatal care coverage and use of skilled birth attendants. Significant variations exist however. For example, while over 70% of Pacific women have access to at least one antenatal care visit, fewer than 70% access four or more antenatal visits. The PNG rate of access to four or more visits was as low as 55%, and for Nauru the rate was 40% (Family Planning International 2009).

Women and families at health clinic, Vanuatu

3.3.5. Measuring trends in maternal mortality is difficult in the Pacific given both the lack of proper registration and monitoring systems and the small population sizes of most countries; however, current estimates are that five Pacific women per day die of causes related to pregnancy or childbirth (New Zealand Parliamentarians' Group on Population and Development 2010). There are differences across and within PICTs; PNG registers a very high maternal mortality rate while mortality rates in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Kiribati and FSM are high but declining (see Table 8).

Table 8: Selected maternal, child and reproductive health indicators in PICTs, 1990s and 2000s

	Census year	Census population	Teen birth rate	% Births attended by SHP	CPR	MMR	IMR	U5MR	Antenatal care coverage
Fiji Islands	2007	837,271	43	99	43	58	19.6	22.4	-
New Caledonia	2004	230,789	20	-	-	-	6.1	-	-
Papua New Guinea	2000	5,190,786	70	39	24	328	64.0	88.0	-
Solomon Islands	1999	409,042	67	86	27	135	66.0	37.0	-
Vanuatu	1999	186,678	59	74	38	96	25.0	30.0	84.3
Federated States of Micronesia	2000	107,008	48	88	23	83	37.5	47.0	-
Guam	2000	154,805	57	-	-	-	11.7	-	-
Kiribati	2005	92,533	39	85	22	158	52.0	69.0	-
Marshall Islands	1999	50,840	138	94	42	74	37.0	46.0	94.8
Nauru	2006	9,233	69	97	25	-	45.8	38.0	94.5
Northern Mariana Islands	2000	69,221	69	-	-	-	7.3	-	-
Palau	2005	19,907	35	100	17	-	20.1	38.9	-
American Samoa	2000	57,291	54	-	-	-	11.7	-	-
Cook Islands	2006	19,569	68	98	-	-	15.3	26.1	-
French Polynesia	2007	259,706	51	-	-	-	6.8	-	-
Niue	2006	1,625	28	100	-	-	7.8	19.0	-
Pitcairn Islands	2007	66		-	-	-	-	-	-
Samoa	2006	180,741	45	-	43	-	20.4	24.7	-
Tokelau	2006	1,151	43	-	-	-	38.0	-	-
Tonga	2006	101,991	24	95	24	78	19.0	21.9	-
Tuvalu	2002	9,561	42	98	23	1 death	35.0	36.0	97.4
Wallis and Futuna	2008	14,231	12	-	-	-	4.9	-	-

SHP: Skilled health personnel **CPR:** Contraceptive prevalence rate **MMR:** Maternal mortality rate **IMR:** Infant mortality rate **U5MR:** Under 5 mortality rate

Note: Given the small populations of many PICTs there are problems with using standard ratios in the Pacific context, particularly in the case of MMR, and absolute numbers are often a better measure of status and progress.

Source: SPC 2009d

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3.3.6. Pacific fertility rates remain high: nine PICTs have rates of 4.0 or more births per woman. In addition, teenage pregnancy rates in Nauru, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, PNG, Kiribati and the Marshall Islands are amongst the highest in the world. In addition to putting women's health at risk, this situation raises concerns about population growth generally and in particular about providing for the needs of families. Factors that contribute to high fertility rates include: lack of sexual and reproductive health and rights information; lack of access to contraception; isolation; patriarchal family, community and institutional systems; and, in a few PICTs, early marriages. A study carried out in Tonga found that most teenage pregnancies were unintentional. Girls said they were unprepared or unable to deal with their pregnancy (UNFPA and SPC 2004). There was some evidence of coercion by older men and of alcohol use.

3.3.7. The high STI rates amongst Pacific teenagers has been linked to risky sexual behaviour, multiple sexual partners, lack of access to quality information, low condom use and conservative views about sexuality. Contraceptive prevalence rates are variable but generally low and stagnant. Stocks often run out, mostly due to logistical issues. Approximately 650,000 women have an unmet need for family planning in the Pacific.[18]

3.3.8. Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) are the cause of 75% of all Pacific deaths, and NCD-related mortality and morbidity are rising. Underlying causes include unhealthy lifestyles and environmental changes that make communities susceptible to tobacco and alcohol use, unhealthy diets and lack of physical activity. In turn, these behaviours give rise to risk factors for NCDs such as obesity, high blood pressure, elevated blood glucose and abnormal lipid profiles. The risk factors predispose individuals to the 'fatal four' – cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic respiratory disease and diabetes (WHO Western Pacific Region 2007). Customary attitudes, especially regarding the use of food in ceremonies and exchanges, are other contributing factors. The ability to plant strong, local subsistence gardens to reduce dependency on imported and introduced foods is key to addressing diet-related issues in many PICTs.

3.3.9. Over 60% of the populations of Cook Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa and Tonga are obese. The rate is particularly high amongst females (Gani 2008). In Fiji Islands, Kiribati and the Marshall Islands, approximately 8% of people aged 20 years and above suffer from diabetes. Smoking is a leading contributor to NCDs, and almost 40% of those aged 18 years and above in Fiji Islands, Nauru, PNG and Samoa report high levels of smoking. A significant number of this group are female.

3.3.10. Cervical cancer is a common type of cancer in Kiribati and Melanesian countries, and high rates of oral cancer have been noted in the betel nut chewing areas. The number of mammograms undertaken in PICTs could not be determined for this report, and at the time of writing, there are uncertainties as to whether facilities in Fiji Islands are in working order.

3.3.11. Malaria continues to be a major health issue in PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and is the main factor in mortality in PNG. Malaria during pregnancy contributes to maternal anaemia, foetal loss, premature delivery and low birth-weight.

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18. *Personal Communication. Geoffrey Hayes. UNFPA Pacific Sub Regional Office, Suva, November 2009.*

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A. Examples of successful policies, legislative changes and programmes and projects by governments or other actors

3.3.12. SPC noted 50,000 fewer cases of malaria in Solomon Islands in 2008 compared with 2003 figures. It attributed this reduction to a programme that involved the distribution of insecticide-treated bednets (over 450,000 to Port Vila and Honiara), indoor residual spraying, early diagnosis and treatment, and active case detection. The importance of the bednet programme for children and pregnant women was stressed (SPC 2010b).

3.3.13. The Women's Sexual and Reproductive Risk Index (RRI) for the Pacific, developed in 2009 (Family Planning International 2009), is a significant step in reframing issues and solutions concerning women's sexual and reproductive health. The RRI is a composite index that combines 10 cross-cutting indicators to assess women's reproductive risk, using the categories of very high, high, moderate and low risk.[19] The indicators are: chlamydia prevalence rate, adolescent fertility rate, median age at marriage for women, female secondary school enrolment, antenatal care coverage, use of modern contraceptives, births attended by skilled health personnel, abortion policies, maternal mortality rate and infant mortality rate. The RRI highlights the relationships among these influencing factors, revealing information that is not seen in the individual indicators. It is a significant tool to help governments and gender and health advocates achieve the MDG, BPA and RPPA objectives, as well as those under other frameworks such as the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

3.3.14. Pacific governments recently committed to address maternal health through the 2009 Madang Commitment relating to maternal health, reducing maternal mortality and the achievement of MDG5 and the 2008 Pacific Policy Framework for Achieving Universal Access to Reproductive Health Services and Commodities.

3.3.15. Samoa's Healthcare Professional Registration and Standards Act 2007 recognises women's knowledge in traditional healing and birthing. Samoa's traditional birth attendants will now be able to share their knowledge, learn new techniques and technologies around birthing practices and gain a qualification which they can build on should they wish. This provision increases the chances that rural women especially will be supported in childbirth, and supports the drive for women working for women's health. However, traditional birth attendants play a predominantly social role and their training should not be construed as elevation to becoming a skilled birth attendant.

3.3.16. Women are researching and documenting their traditional medicines and crops. In the Marshall Islands, for example, their work has been published in English and Marshallese (Taafaki et al. 2006), giving women access to this knowledge. Protecting women's knowledge is vital given recent acts of bio-piracy as the commercial potential of traditional medicines is recognised globally. National legal processes and statutes are being put in place to protect this knowledge (Peteru 2007), and these processes are also supported by legal processes and policies at the regional level.[20] Pacific women are also questioning the ethics of new technologies that science is making possible, including the use of pig cells in cancer research and genetic modification (Mead and Ratuva 2007). Quality control systems and marketing support will address the potential for traditional remedies in local, regional and global markets as appropriate.

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19. *Eleven out of 21 PICTs were found to be in the very high or high reproductive risk categories at present.*
20. *Work by UNESCO and SPC in building legal and policy frameworks for traditional knowledge includes: a policy map developing a legal and policy framework for traditional knowledge: Pacific Regional Model Law on Traditional Biological Knowledge, Innovation and Practice; guidelines for developing national legislation for the protection of traditional knowledge and expressions of cultures based on the Pacific model law; and a regional framework for the protection of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture.*

3.3.17. Gender-sensitive projects are bringing discussions on STIs and other sexual and reproductive health issues into the public domain. An example is the Pacific Adolescent Reproductive Health (ARH) Programme, which provides a safe environment for youth to discuss reproductive and sexual health concerns. ARH programmes build on existing networks of health providers, such as village demonstration workers, with the aims of making projects sustainable and involving youth at each stage of project design, implementation and evaluation. In 2009 this project, involving SPC, UNFPA and UNICEF, has been targeting the most at-risk adolescents in the five project countries with information and skills on HIV prevention. Training packages have been prepared and 10 master trainers trained in Kiribati and 40 in Solomon Islands. Over 200 groups of adolescents in these two countries have participated in these ARH programmes.

3.3.18. In some PICTs, schools now include reproductive health education in curricula for senior male and female students, such as the Life and Living Skills curriculum. Training for teachers and youth leaders in the new curriculum and delivery methods have been carried out in Fiji Islands, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. In these same countries, peer educators have conducted life skills training for 3000 adolescents. In Samoa, curriculum writers are working on incorporating reproductive health education in the curricula for Years 7 and 8, after which teachers will undergo training to deliver the lessons.

3.3.19. More detailed sets of health-related, sex-disaggregated data are becoming available to inform national policy and programme planning. The surveys conducted to gather such data include: the demographic and health surveys carried out in PNG (1996 and 2006), Solomon Islands (2006–2007), Tuvalu (2007), Nauru (2007) and the Marshall Islands (2007); the gender-based violence surveys completed in Samoa (2001), Solomon Islands (2009), Kiribati (2010) and Vanuatu (in progress); and a variety of national household income and expenditure surveys. Many of these projects have provided training in participatory research for significant numbers of women and girls. Another gain is that these projects have been collaborative efforts involving women's ministries, NGOs and national statistics offices. Factoring this information into health planning for women is the vital next step.

3.3.20. The Pacific Framework for the prevention of NCDs now includes the preparation of national NCD plans and strategies and the integration of NCD policies on tobacco, nutrition, physical activity, alcohol, diabetes and cancer into national programmes.

B.   Examples of obstacles encountered and remaining gaps and challenges

3.3.21. NWMs report that health systems do not focus on needs or research related to women's health.

3.3.22. There is inequitable access to health care. Health facilities in all Pacific capital cities and urban environments are significantly better staffed and equipped than in the rural areas where 77% of people live, and where women are predominant. Delivering quality health care is especially difficult in the PICTs with widely scattered island groups such as French Polynesia, Marshall Islands, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands. The opening of private health facilities has accentuated the differences in access between those who can afford services and those who cannot. Women and children living in urban squatter settlements are another high-risk health group. In most cases, these families have limited access to fishing grounds, to land for gardens, and to forest areas for fuel and medicinal crops. Housing is likely to be substandard and overcrowded, and water supplies vulnerable to infection and sewage pollution. Unemployment and underemployment rates are high in these areas.

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3.3.23. There are still large gaps in research and data on the Pacific that need to be filled. For example, globally as much as 13% of maternal mortality is attributable to unsafe abortions, yet there are no reliable Pacific data on unsafe abortions. Women's access to safe and legal abortion is an area on which significantly more research and open dialogue are needed.

3.3.24. The Pacific region experiences a higher burden of mental and neurological disorder compared with other parts of the world (WHO 2005). However, mental health is not yet considered to be a major health priority, as governments address what are seen to be other, more pressing health needs.

3.3.25. Health messages in the vernacular and the repackaging of reports/health messages for specific target groups such as rural women, squatter communities and youth are essential and could be supported and reinforced through radio programmes in the vernacular and community-based training. The existing health networks (e.g. the Cancer Coalition American Samoa) and food security networks (under the Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO]) could be supported by the use of PacRICS, for example. This Internet service now reaches nearly 100 active sites including medical centres.

3.3.26. Scholarship and training opportunities for women in health care, research and decision-making are vital to increase women's participation as doctors, health planners and health board members.

3.3.27. The loss of health professionals due to out-migration presents a continual drain on national resources and services. Connell (2009) has noted that wards have been closed, and waiting lists and times lengthened, and that health examinations have become more cursory, or complicated by new cultural differences. Training in new fields is also needed, such as clinical training for counsellors and training for mental health workers and for those working with youth.

3.3.28. The range of health needs has increased, but national budgets remain low. There is a heavy reliance on donors, and donor preferences influence planning and resourcing.

Woman and child

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3.3.29.	Factors integral to improving women's sexual and reproductive health as well as their general health include: the social, economic, cultural, political, environmental and legal causes of poor health; women's social and cultural subordination; gender-based violence; lack of equality in the household; lack of access to information and health services; lack of legal and human rights protection for sexual and reproductive health; food insecurity and poor nutrition; and increasing workloads, especially for rural women (SPC 2009d).

3.3.30.	The importance of holistic and multi-pronged approaches to understanding women's health is illustrated by the women's Sexual and Reproductive Risk Index. This tool highlights the important relationship between different variables that contribute to women's reproductive health outcomes, including social determinants.
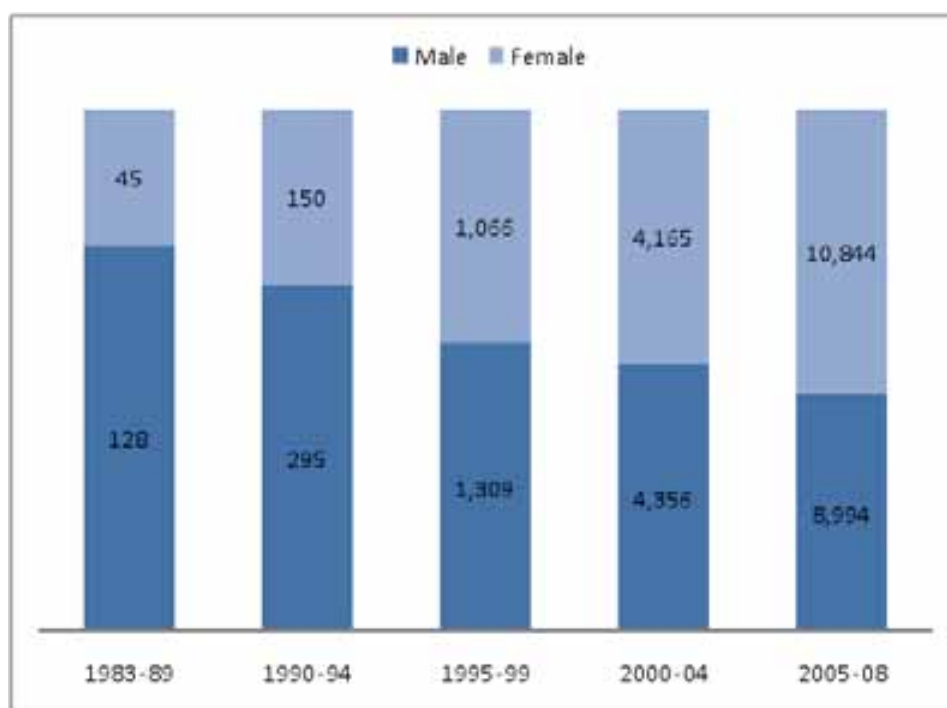
HIV and AIDS

3.3.31.	Pacific HIV infection rates vary. PNG has a generalised epidemic; the French territories and Guam are classified as having moderate, cumulative incidence rates; and the remainder of the region has a generally low prevalence rate. The existence of numerous risk factors draws attention to the potential for a rapid spread of the virus. These risk factors include high rates of other STIs, gender-based violence, gender inequality, stigma and discrimination, homophobia, and limited access to prevention, counselling and treatment services.

Safe Festival Campaign, Pacific Arts Festival, American Samoa

3.3.32.	Graph 1 illustrates the sex disaggregated total number of reported cases of HIV across the region from 1983 to 2008, though 95.5% of these cases are in PNG. The PNG MDG report noted an exponential increase in the number of people newly diagnosed with HIV infection, and the high prevalence of HIV infection amongst antenatal women attending the Port Moresby General Hospital was noted. However, the increase in new cases reported is due in part to the increasing number of people, and particularly women, getting tested for HIV, and caution is needed in interpreting this rise. Most cases were diagnosed following routine testing at women's antenatal visits. Routine surveillance data also showed that young women aged between 20 and 24 years have the highest proportion of positive HIV diagnoses among new infections detected among women in 2008. Among males, the largest proportion of new HIV infections diagnosed was in the 25–29 year age group. An HIV and AIDS Policy for the National Education System (2005) now targets schools and teachers.

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Graph 1: Distribution of reported male and female HIV cases, all PICTs, 1983-2008

A.   Examples of successful policies, legislative changes and programmes and projects by governments or other actors

3.3.33. UNICEF's focus in the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT) is maternal and child health services and prevention initiatives for those most at risk, especially vulnerable adolescents. One in five pregnant women (22%) is now receiving HIV counselling during their antenatal care. Eighty-two per cent of women were knowledgeable about HIV transmission by breastfeeding compared with 70% of males, and 34% of women and 38% of men knew that the risk of mother-to-child transmission could be reduced by mothers taking special drugs during pregnancy (Tuvalu 2007).

3.3.34. The Pacific Regional Strategy on HIV and AIDS, recently extended to 2013, has been endorsed by the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders as the overarching framework for the delivery of services. A focus on emerging trends such as increased incidence of other STIs has been added.

3.3.35. The need to understand and address the gender dimensions of HIV and AIDS has now been recognised Pacific-wide. PNG's HIV and AIDS National Strategic Plan (2006–2010) recognises that gender shapes both the epidemic and the national response to tackling it, and accordingly is accompanied by a National Gender Policy and Plan on HIV and AIDS (2006–2010). UNAIDS is focusing on the increasing spread of HIV among women who are not sex workers, gender equality in all aspects of Pacific life and gender-based violence. The Report of the Commission on AIDS in the Pacific promotes achieving gender equality in access to prevention, treatment and care; strengthening the leadership of women; and improving youth leadership (UNAIDS 2009; UNAIDS Pacific Region 2009).

3.3.36. The Pacific Islands HIV and STI Response Fund, established in 2009, provides funding for governments, civil society organisations, and regional and international organisations from 11 Pacific Island countries for programmes that align with the revised Pacific Regional Strategy on HIV and other STIs and relevant national strategic plans. Its purpose is to ensure efforts are coordinated and to improve service delivery. SPC was awarded a grant in 2009 to carry out a gender audit of the Pacific Regional Strategy Implementation Plan (PRISP II, 2009–2013) and to assist three countries[21] to integrate gender into existing or planned national HIV strategies.

3.3.37. Several toolkits have been developed for use in supporting government efforts. A joint report on Gender and HIV (UNIFEM, UNDP and SPC 2009) produced a set of substantiated policy and programmatic recommendations that the Pacific Ministers of Health endorsed to serve as a basis for more gender-responsive interventions. Drafting instructions for human rights-based legislative reform have been developed for the Pacific by the UNDP Pacific Centre and UNAIDS in close collaboration with SPC's RRRT. These drafting instructions are based on legal reviews of 15 Pacific Island countries. They provide options and examples of various legislative initiatives for the prevention and management of HIV, for the protection of those already infected, and for ensuring that people living with HIV can continue to live useful and productive lives. A toolkit on understanding and mainstreaming key gender issues in all aspects of HIV and AIDS programming has been developed by UNIFEM and is being tested widely across the region with a range of partners and programmes. Through a partnership of the European Commission and UN, a pilot programme on gender and HIV in PNG is being supported. UNIFEM is working with the government, the National AIDS Council, CSOs and faith-based organisations to mainstream gender in local and national responses.

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21. *Tonga, RMI and Kiribati.*

Safe Festival Campaign, Pacific Youth Festival, Fiji

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B. Examples of obstacles encountered and remaining gaps and challenges

3.3.38. Challenges include: the social stigma associated with HIV and STIs; the prevalence of people with multiple sexual partners and high-risk sexual intercourse; women's inequality; and the limited engagement of marginalised populations, people living with HIV and CSOs in national planning. National strategic plans are often sound but they are not costed. Few integrate gender adequately beyond the situation analysis section, a problem that should be addressed in part through SPC's Response Fund grant mentioned above. Most PICTs also have inappropriate legal frameworks to comprehensively address HIV. There are a few exceptions such as PNG, Pohnpei state in FSM, and more recently Fiji Islands, which is developing a human-rights-based HIV law.

3.3.39. Despite the recent advances, gender is still not adequately or systematically addressed in HIV and AIDS discourse in the Pacific. When it is addressed, services are seen as severely limited and mainly directed towards women-oriented programmes.

3.3.40. There is a lack of human and financial capacity, particularly in small island states. In most PICTs, HIV and STI monitoring and surveillance systems are inappropriate, and existing health systems have a weak capacity to deliver counselling, testing and care for HIV and STIs. Only a few NGOs have sufficient capacity in HIV and AIDS (see UNAIDS 2009; UNAIDS Pacific Region 2009). Implementing the Regional Strategy will be difficult given the varying socio-economic conditions and levels of political commitment among PICTs.

C. Lessons learned

3.3.41. It is critical that government officials have education on HIV and AIDS issues and receive the training and tools for advocacy. For example, a national consultation and training on HIV, human rights and the law was facilitated for high-level government officials by the Palau Ministry of Health supported by SPC's RRRT (November 2009). Thereafter the Minister of Health highlighted Palau's commitment to addressing HIV-related stigma and discrimination and developing 'human rights-compliant' preventative legislation.

3.3.42. Collaboration and a multi-sectoral approach to addressing HIV and AIDS are also important. For example, in PNG, UNAIDS is working with the Joint UN Task Team on Gender and HIV by conducting gender and HIV research including on women's caregiving burden, providing training on drafting legislation on gender-based violence and HIV and women's inheritance and property rights, and participating in the joint UN theme group on gender-based violence in PNG and Solomon Islands. UNAIDS is also working with the Pacific Sexual Diversity Network on sexual minorities in Fiji Islands, Samoa and Tonga and sees gender and sexuality as a core issue in HIV and AIDS strategies.

3.3.43. Regional partnerships in addressing HIV are also essential. UN agencies, the World Council of Churches Pacific Office, the Pacific Islands AIDS Foundation and SPC's Public Health Division are working together on the implementation of the Regional Strategy on HIV and STIs.

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Key Actions

Governments

▶ Review national health sector policies and strategies alongside the BPA and RPPA strategic objectives on Women and Health to ensure they are aligned.

▶ Prepare and disseminate information packages on women's priority health issues and rights in vernacular languages.

▶ Prioritise and strengthen sexual and reproductive health services including by increasing the number of skilled birth attendants for all communities and improving access by men, women and young people to modern forms of contraception, emergency obstetric care and sexual and reproductive health information.

▶ Ensure all health-related data are sex disaggregated, systematically reported and widely disseminated within the health sector and the NWM as well as through public media.

▶ Support gender and health training through the provision of scholarships and specific short courses for health practitioners.

Donors and development partners

▶ Capitalise on and expand existing tools such as the Sexual and Reproductive Risk Index to support improved national planning, programming and capacity building on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Civil society

▶ Strengthen networks and partnerships with the aim of engaging governments and development partners to focus more directly on women's priority health issues.

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3.4. Critical Area D: Violence against women

> See the BPA Diagnosis and Strategic Objectives on Violence against Women at
> http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/violence.htm

3.4.1. Every PICT rates eliminating violence against women (VAW) as a high priority. NGOs and NWMs have advocated passionately against VAW for many years. Legal literacy and human rights programmes have been run in rural as well as urban areas and have been well supported by training and research programmes and the Pacific Women's Network against Violence coordinated by FWCC. National groups such as Vanuatu's Won Smol Bag continue to pioneer community education discussions on domestic violence within a human rights framework, through radio, live theatre, television and film.

3.4.2. In 2009 the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders recognised the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in PICTs and committed to eradicating it and ensuring that women enjoy equal protection of the law and equal access to justice (see Appendix 2). Although there is still a very long way to go at both political and community levels, there is increasing recognition that VAW is not a 'women's issue' or an 'NGO issue' but a national development issue and one to be addressed by national collaborative action.

3.4.3. Working to change attitudes about VAW will be a long-term process given the persisting view (often held by females as well as males) that domestic violence is a family matter to be dealt with within the extended family and/or church structures. The low status of women in many PICTs also contributes significantly to the prevalence and persistence of VAW (SPC 2010a). Domestic violence has additional significance because of the central place of the family in PICTs and its link with status, land, resource rights and customary laws. In some PICTs, if a woman leaves her husband for any reason, she loses claim not only to her material goods but also to her children.

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A. **Examples of successful policies, legislative changes and programmes and projects by governments or other actors**

3.4.4.   The Cairns Communiqué is generating considerable discussion on domestic violence issues including the need for more serious examination of the necessary legislative and policy changes. In Kiribati, this high-level statement was labelled the 'green light' for legislative changes, with public commentary that 'in the past, women NGOs had to do it in the cultural way, sit and wait for what will come next'.[22] Similar responses were seen in Nauru and Cook Islands, where calls for zero tolerance of VAW were made.

3.4.5.   A few PICTs have made significant progress in collecting data on VAW. Samoa, Kiribati and Solomon Islands have conducted nationally representative research on VAW, following the methodology of the WHO Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women. This research and a similar study currently underway in Vanuatu document the extent and nature of sexual, physical and emotional violence against women and girls, as well as some of the contributing factors including customary attitudes to male/female roles, jealousy, women's increasing visibility in education and public sector posts, and the role of alcohol. Smaller studies have been conducted in several other PICTs. This research provides the necessary data to inform awareness campaigns, legislation, policy and practices around eliminating VAW (see Table 9).

3.4.6.   Local research has also proven to be empowering for the women involved. The Vanuatu study on Women's Lives and Family Relationships (2009–2010) involved the training of 52 research assistants, who carried out interviews in 3750 households covering eight provinces (FWCC 2009). This research process continues to be an empowering experience for the research team as well as for the participating communities. Similarly, many women surveyed in Solomon Islands and Kiribati were being asked about their experience of violence – and having someone care about it – for the first time:

> *'I feel very good after this survey. Earlier things were unspoken and now I feel relieved after talking about them.'*
>
> *'For the first time I knew that there were people who would listen and help people like me and I am very glad.'*

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22.   *Discussion on Pacwin online forum, 5 December 2009.*

Table 9: Violence against women data, 1990s and 2000s

Country/ territory	Date	Data (Note: Data may not be directly comparable between PICTs due to differing methodologies.)	Methodology	Source
Cook Islands	2009	179 cases of family violence	Cases reported	Cook Islands Government, Gender and Development Division
Fiji Islands	1999	66% of women reported being beaten at least once by their husband.	Sample survey (1575 women)	Fiji Women's Crisis Centre Study
French Polynesia	2002	17% of women reported cases of physical violence and 7% reported cases of sexual violence by their partner in the last 12 months. 36% of respondents reported having endured psychological pressures (including harassment). 21% reported verbal attacks from partner in the last 12 months.	National survey (sample of 1001 women aged 18–60) following the ENVEF (Enquêtes Nationales sur les Violences faites aux Femmes) methodology	Enquête Quantitative: Les violences faites aux femmes en Polynésie française, Ministère de la Santé, de la Fonction Publique, de la Rénovation de l'Administration de Polynésie française
Kiribati	2010	More than 2 in 3 (68%) ever partnered women reported experiencing physical or sexual violence, or both, by an intimate partner; 11% reported experiencing physical violence by someone other than an intimate partner since the age of 15; 10% reported experiencing sexual violence by a non-partner since the age of 15; 19% had been sexually abused before the age of 15, mainly by male family members and male acquaintances. For 20%, their first sexual experience was coerced or forced. The younger the girl at first sexual experience, the more likely sex was forced.	National representative survey following the WHO multi-country study methodology (valid and reliable sample women aged 15–49 years)	Kiribati Family Health and Support Study: A study on violence against women and children, Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, National Statistics Office, SPC
Nauru	2008	31 cases including women and children	Cases reported	Nauru response to UN Beijing+15 questionnaire
New Caledonia	2003	19% of women reported cases of physical violence and 7% reported cases of sexual violence by their partner in the last 12 months. 41% of respondents reported having endured psychological pressures (including harassment). 28% reported verbal attacks from partner in the last 12 months.	INSERM (Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale) survey (sample of 1012 women aged 18–54), following the French ENVEF methodology	Enquête Santé, Conditions de Vie et de Sécurité des Femmes Calédoniennes, INSERM
PNG	2006–2008	Total assault cases 1490, of which 20% were sexual assault; 32% physical assault; 48% non-physical assault	Cases reported to the centre	Source: Rural/ Urban Family support centre (FSVAC) Eastern Highlands.
	1999	67% of women reported physical assault by a male partner	Unknown	ESCAP Social and Economic Survey 2007

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Table 9: Violence against women data, 1990s and 2000s (continued)

Country/ territory	Date	Data (Note: Data may not be directly comparable between PICTs due to differing methodologies.)	Methodology	Source
RMI	2007	22% of women experienced physical violence at hands of their husband or partner (ever); of this group 93% had experienced this violence in the 12 months preceding the survey.	Demographic and health survey	RMI Demographic and Health Survey 2007
Samoa	2001	46% of women experienced some form of partner abuse (38% physical, 19% emotional, 20% sexual)	Nationally representative survey following the WHO multi-country study methodology (sample size 1646 women aged 15–49)	Government of Samoa multi-site study, Ministry of Women, SPC and UNFPA
Solomon Islands	2009	64% of women who have ever been in a relationship reported experiencing physical or sexual violence, or both, from an intimate partner. More than 90% of such women who had ever been pregnant reported intimate partner violence during their last pregnancy.	Nationally representative survey following the WHO multi-country study methodology (sample size: 3000 women aged 15–49)	Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study, Ministry of Women Youth and Children Affairs, National Statistics Office, SPC
Tonga	2007	Estimated 5–6 cases reported to police per week, of which one or two in rural areas	Reported cases	PPDVP
Tuvalu	2007	*Violence against women*: 37% of women had experienced physical violence since the age of 15; 25% reported having experienced physical violence in the 12 months preceding the survey; 1% frequently experienced physical violence and 23% sometimes. *Violence against men*: 10% of ever married women reported that they had initiated physical violence against their current or most recent husband.	Demographic and health survey with 501 women (aged 15–49) interviewed	Tuvalu Demographic and Health Survey 2007, Tuvalu Central Statistics Division, SPC, ADB
Vanuatu	2009	296 domestic violence or assault cases reported to police	Police records Note: A nationally representative survey following the WHO multi-country study methodology is also in progress.	PPDVP

Note: Surveys in the region have shown that most violence against women never gets reported, so data – particularly those based on reporting records – are likely to be significantly lower than the actual incidence of violence against women.

3.4.7. Some legislation and policies to eliminate VAW have been advanced successfully, though typically through a piecemeal rather than a comprehensive approach. The following are some of the legislative and policy measures that have been undertaken or are in progress:

Fiji Islands[23]   The Domestic Violence Decree came into effect in 2009.

The Crimes Decree 2010 includes crimes against humanity and genocide, which may be committed by acts of rape, sexual servitude and sexual slavery. It also includes offences of trafficking in women and children and puts in place harsher penalties (12–25 years' imprisonment) for such offences.

Vanuatu   The Family Protection Act 2009 is the only stand-alone domestic violence legislation that exists in any PICT. The government is currently implementing the Act, and so far at least one woman has received a family protection order under it.

Samoa   The Family Safety Bill 2009 is ready for submission to Cabinet. The Bill proposes a definition of domestic violence, imposes legal duties on police officers to prevent domestic violence and provides for the court to issue protection orders. Consultations on a Care and Protection Discussion Paper were conducted in February 2010. A review of the Crimes Ordinance has also begun.

Cook Islands   Family law consultations are underway including in regard to the integration of domestic violence in the Family Law Bill (February 2010). Currently Cook Islands has one specific domestic violence provision in its criminal law legislation.

Solomon Islands   Cabinet approved a new VAW policy in February 2010.

FSM   A national VAW policy is currently being drafted

3.4.8. In addition, a few PICTs have made positive changes in the areas of evidentiary law. For example, the new Solomon Islands Evidence Act 2009 changes four discriminatory legal practices. First, it removes the corroboration rule that treated as suspicious the evidence of a person who claimed to have been sexually assaulted, and second, it prevents courts from drawing an inference that a woman who delayed reporting her sexual assault must be lying. Third, it requires judicial permission before a complainant can be questioned about her past sexual history with other men, on the basis that such matters are generally irrelevant to the issues in the case. Finally, the Act gives the court discretion to permit the complainant and other vulnerable witnesses to testify without facing the assailant, by using modern technology. Such a provision is particularly important for child survivors. PNG and Marshall Islands have also made amendments to their sexual assault regimes by removing legal discrimination against women in sexual offences law and practice, and Kiribati has amended its criminal law to outlaw the discriminatory corroboration warning.

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23. *The provisions in these decrees have long been advocated by women's organisations; however, some women's organisations, while agreeing in principle to the provisions, are not supportive of the processes in that they were decreed rather than passed by Parliament.*

3.4.9. The Truth and Reconciliation Act 2008 of Solomon Islands establishes a commission to examine 'the nature, antecedents, root causes, accountability or responsibility for and the extent of the impact on human rights violations or abuses which occurred between 1st January 1998 and 23rd July 2003' (Part III, 5(1)(b)) and 'to work to help restore the human dignity of victims and promote reconciliation by providing an opportunity for victims to give an account of the violations and abuses suffered … giving special attention to the subject of sexual abuses and to the experiences of children within the armed conflict' (Part III, 5(2)(c)).

3.4.10. The Solomon Islands Law Reform Commission also recently published a large consultation document on a review of the Penal Code. It covers a significant number of major women's and children's rights issues, among them marital rape, rape of male children, sexual assault of women, domestic violence, and increasing the legal age of marriage for girls and boys. The commission is engaged in a large public education and consultation process; however, to move ahead the reforms will need to be considered a priority by the all-male Parliament.

Supporting the elimination of violence against women, Fiji, courtesy of FWCC

3.4.11. Parliamentary debates on eliminating VAW are also starting in other PICTs in the region. On 4 December 2009 the Kiribati Parliament passed a motion that 'This House fully gives support to the enactment of laws that support elimination of domestic violence.' It was the first time in the history of the Kiribati Parliament that such an issue had been debated, and was the direct result of the national VAW survey conducted in Kiribati and the advocacy surrounding it. In the Parliament of Nauru, the Hon. Aloysins Amwano MP, and in the Cook Islands Parliament, the Hon. Nandi Glassie MP, led debates calling for zero tolerance for domestic violence.

3.4.12. Fiji Islands, Samoa and Pohnpei state (FSM) have adopted a no-drop policy.

3.4.13. Programmes to eliminate VAW all feature a collaborative approach involving NGOs, government agencies (NWMs, health ministries, justice and legal sector, police and state-owned media), education institutes, community groups, survivors and perpetrators of abuse. Men and boys have been engaged in addressing the issue in most PICTs in a variety of ways (see Section 2.11). CEDAW and VAW issues are also being discussed in forums with traditional chiefs and leaders, health professionals, teachers and community groups.

Commemorating 16 days of activism to eliminate violence against women, Fiji, courtesy of FWCC

3.4.14. Research under the Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence Programme (PPDVP) in Cook Islands, Kiribati, Tonga, Samoa and Vanuatu has been exploring how police respond to domestic violence calls, the systems in place to ensure women receive a proper response to their complaints (from the front-line policing desks through to the justice systems), and the capacity of police officers to work with other government agencies, NGOs and communities to prevent VAW.

Training of police officers from seven PICTs on domestic violence case handling, Auckland 2007, courtesy of PPDVP

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The PPDVP has focused on putting in place a range of supporting measures such as:

▶ establishment of VAW units in police stations in the following countries to date (note the different naming of these units):

Vanuatu:	Family Protection Unit
Kiribati:	Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences Unit
Tonga:	Domestic Violence Unit (DVU)
Samoa:	DVU
Solomon Islands:	DVU
Nauru:	DVU;

▶ designated domestic violence coordinators in Cook Islands, Tuvalu and Niue, and in FSM at the Pohnpei State Police Department;

▶ VAW interview rooms at police stations, so that complainants do not wait at the public complaints desk;

▶ computerised record systems to document and track cases and to counter many incidents of misplaced notes (e.g. AusAID ISP Samoa);

▶ specialised training for officers in the VAW units;

▶ inclusion of VAW and of child abuse and neglect in training curricula for police officers and refresher course materials (e.g. AusAID Police Project);

▶ partnerships with NGOs to ensure the appropriateness and relevance of these materials to the local context (e.g. AusAID Police Project, Vanuatu); and

▶ recruitment of female police officers and support to advance women's career pathways in the police force.

3.4.15. Tokelau has also implemented a project to eliminate VAW, working closely with the police. Among other achievements, it has resulted in the recruitment of female police officers in all three villages in Tokelau. It is hoped this initiative will allow women to feel safer reporting instances of gender-based violence to the police. Nauru established its first ever women's safe house in August 2008 and appointed a counsellor for the safe house in February 2010.

3.4.16. Community outreach programmes are essential given that rural women in particular tend to rely on chiefs, family, community and church for support and guidance. Reports are that each of these largely male-dominated groups usually counsels women to resolve differences within the family system. The Vanuatu Women's Centre system of over 35 Community against VAW committees (CAVAWs) spread through most of Vanuatu's inhabited islands is a model that could be adapted for use in other PICTs. Committee members receive ongoing training in gender and VAW, research, management, data-keeping and counselling. Males, including police officers, participate in these committees. The counselling dial-in services of the Vanuatu Women's Centre are available on all the main islands. Mobile counselling units are also playing an important role in Vanuatu and Tonga. In Vanuatu, both males and females are starting to use these counselling and support systems.

3.4.17. For over a decade the UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions to End Violence Against Women has supported innovative community-based initiatives to eliminate violence, including programmes by FWCC, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the Women and Development Centre (WDC) in Fiji Islands, the Samoa AIDS Foundation, the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) working in PNG, the Department for Community Development in PNG, and SPC's RRRT. RRRT is also a recipient of the fund with the project 'Changing Laws, Protecting Women: lobbying for legislative change in violence against women/family law in order to enhance protective legislation for women and girls in six PICTs'. The project's approach is to implement quality campaigns for eliminating VAW and advocating family law reform. Its specific aim is to build a cadre of skilled legislative supporters and advocates specialising in VAW and family law legislation at the national level. Assistance will be provided through the provision of timely and individual technical assistance in advocacy, lobbying and law reform. Established networks of community paralegals, members of Parliament, lawyers, magistrates and civil society organisations will be used.

3.4.18. Except for FWCC and RRRT, Pacific organisations and governments have had difficulty accessing and managing large grants to end VAW. UNIFEM Pacific launched the Pacific Fund to End Violence against Women in 2009 to meet the need for more resources and capacity development opportunities. The fund provides more manageable small grants and capacity development through scholarships to FWCC and RRRT regional trainings, in support of government departments and CSOs. In 2009 approximately USD 1.2 million was disbursed among operations in five countries.

B. Examples of obstacles encountered and remaining gaps and challenges

3.4.19. CEDAW, the BPA, the RPPA and women's rights in general are not mentioned in the 2009 Forum Leaders communiqué. A positive step, however, was that the esteemed Pacific champion on eliminating VAW, Shamina Ali (FWCC), was invited to present at this forum. VAW is presented in the communiqué from the perspective that it is a 'risk to human security'. This perspective is in line with recent UN Security Council resolutions including SCR 1820 which acknowledges that sexual violence is a security issue and therefore requires a security response. At the same time, it is also a human rights, health and far-reaching gender equality issue. Some arguments have tended to focus on the economic costs of VAW, giving less prominence to the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual effects of violence on women and to the quality of life of children witnessing these acts (UNIFEM 2003). Despite the multiple perspectives that are critical to a full analysis of and response to VAW, in most PICTs today VAW is still more likely to be framed as a family issue (see AusAID 2009a; PPDVP and NZAID 2006).

3.4.20. Exacerbating this situation is the fact that while constitutional, justice and legal systems at the national level tend to be human rights-based, they also privilege traditional laws, many of which disadvantage women.

3.4.21. No country has adopted a comprehensive integrated approach to legislative reform in the area of VAW. Reform measures taken to date have been piecemeal changes to existing criminal and civil legislation, which do not address the full range of gender-based violence or the underlying systemic discrimination against women (Jalal 2008a).

3.4.22. Overall, there have been very few legislative changes in the region. In general, gender-based violence is not recognised as a specific crime. Moreover, far from insisting on effective punishment as a deterrence, emphasis is placed on reconciliation. There is continued impunity for offenders through the issuing of suspended sentences. It is also difficult to obtain and enforce non-molestation orders or protective injunctions.

3.4.23. The slow progress of Bills through the parliamentary system is a major problem. Vanuatu's Family Protection Act 2009 was first discussed in the 1990s. Delays in passing the legislation were reportedly due to customary attitudes regarding traditional family roles in Melanesian society and 'to the misconception and misunderstandings of the Bill by the general public, who think that the Bill is another one of the Women's Rights Movement charades designed to grant women more power to destabilise the status quo in Melanesian society'.[24]

3.4.24. Community attitudes regarding what constitutes domestic violence, customary taboos and what has been termed 'an acceptance' of physical violence in some PICTs are critical obstacles to the elimination of VAW. For example, as many as 70% of both women and men agree with at least one 'justification' for VAW in the home, indicative of the strong socialisation of inequality and of violence as a means to resolve disputes (SPC 2010a). Bible verses are often used to defend the use of violence.

3.4.25. VAW surveys show that very few women ever report incidents of violence. A serious gap in policy and practice is the provision of systems for women, particularly in rural areas, to report cases of violence and receive a fair and safe investigation by law enforcement authorities. In some PICTs, military barracks and police stations are known locations for VAW, including gang rape; in such cases, women may be completely without options for reporting an experience of violence or seeking protection from the legal system.

C. Lessons learned

3.4.26. Research is fundamental both to the generation of political will and to the development of informed policies and programmes. Research conducted to date is confirming the large numbers of women and girls who experience domestic violence, the extent of brutality of these attacks, the age groups involved, the intergenerational influences, and the prevalence of other forms of gender-based violence such as incest, sexual exploitation, violence for alleged witchcraft and human trafficking (UNFPA 2009). Research has also recorded an increase in reported acts of sexual violence, gang rape and rape in marriage, and child sexual abuse. Such research findings are now making it impossible for policy-makers to ignore the calls for action, as witnessed in the slow but growing attention that VAW is getting at the highest political levels.

3.4.27. Most of the VAW research conducted in the region has involved local women and communities, and partnerships between NGOs and government mechanisms including national statistics offices. Such partnerships were a key element of the studies in Kiribati, Samoa and Solomon Islands in particular, as these studies followed the WHO Multi-country Study methodology, which emphasises collaboration. Such collaborations have been key both to the success of the research and to its use and recognition nationally. For this reason the same approach should be emulated elsewhere.

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24. *The Ni Vanuatu, 26 August 2004.*

3.4.28. VAW is a multi-pronged issue that requires multi-faceted solutions, which is one reason why partnerships and other forms of collaboration are important as noted above. Encouragingly, partnerships are developing among government, NGOs and private sector agencies, and with chiefs, the church, community members, survivors, education and training agencies, the media and the police. This collaboration will be a key to addressing VAW effectively. Certain areas still need better coordination, including among police, the health sector and crisis centres, so that there is a clear step-by-step plan for actions to be taken when dealing with VAW cases. Currently responses tend to occur on an ad hoc basis.

3.4.29. Regional partnerships among development partners have also added value to efforts to eliminate VAW. For example, SPC-RRRT, SPC-HDP, PPDVP, FWCC, PIFS and other regional programmes have established partnerships in which they inform and support each other. The effectiveness of this approach is evidenced in the cross-fertilisation and joint support of each other's activities particularly in the areas of policy and legislative change, where mutually reinforcing goals add to national lobbying and advocacy efforts with a range of actors from MPs to police and community groups. As much as possible, regional collaboration should continue and be strengthened across the full range of gender equality work.

Key Actions

Governments

- ▶ Review national policies and strategies relating to health, law and justice, community development and national development alongside the BPA and RPPA strategic objectives on VAW to ensure they are aligned.

- ▶ Support the preparation of comprehensive VAW legislation and facilitate its passage through executive and parliamentary decision-making processes.

- ▶ Prioritise the initiation of national VAW surveys if none have been conducted to date or if existing data are outdated; or, where up-to-date data exist, disseminate these findings widely particularly to communities, traditional and religious leaders, schools and educational institutions, law enforcement officials, the health sector and the media.

- ▶ Support ongoing training for police officers and judicial and legislative staff.

- ▶ Create public awareness on VAW and its long-term harm to women, families and communities, through youth and community discussions about gender-based violence and the role of culture and tradition in ensuring safe communities.

Donor and development partners

- ▶ Continue supporting research, programmes and campaigns on the elimination of VAW, to entrench a long-term and sustained approach to the issue.

- ▶ Ensure regional and international agencies integrate the elimination of VAW into their sectoral work, including all work within the health, law and justice, education and community development sectors.

Civil society

- ▶ Strengthen networks and partnerships to build community understanding and participation in strategies and initiatives to eliminate VAW.

- ▶ Intensify efforts to lobby for comprehensive VAW legislation, and to lobby for and monitor law enforcement

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3.5. Critical Area E: Women and armed conflict

> See the BPA Diagnosis and Strategic Objectives on Women in Armed Conflict at
> http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/armed.htm

3.5.1.   Although armed conflict in PICTs has been relatively rare, some have witnessed an increase in political crises, social unrest and violent conflict in recent years. Fiji's most recent coup d'état occurred in December 2006. Major conflicts occurred in Bougainville from 1960 through to the 1990s and in Solomon Islands from 1998–2003 and again in 2006.

3.5.2.   Historically Pacific women played an important role in conflict resolution and peacekeeping, though their roles were eventually eroded by the patriarchal influences of colonialists and missionaries. More recently women have been instrumental in brokering peace during the crises in Bougainville, Solomon Islands and Fiji Islands, and they continue to play a vital role in peace-building.

3.5.3.   UN Security Council Resolution 1325, passed in 2000, was the first resolution specifically addressing the impact of war on women and recognising women's contributions to conflict resolution and sustainable peace. It calls for the involvement of greater numbers of women in both peace-making and peace-building activities. In 2008 SCR 1820, which addressed sexual violence in conflict and the growing UN concern with VAW, called for greater United Nations reporting on and attention to this issue (Bhagwan Rolls 2009b).

A.   Examples of successful policies, legislative changes and programmes and projects by governments or other actors

3.5.4.   Through advocacy and awareness raising, women and women's organisations such as femLINKpacific, Women for Peace (Solomon Islands), YWCA, National Councils of Women, Women United Together Marshall Islands and others have advised and informed security policy-makers – internationally, regionally and nationally – and the public on issues related to gender and security. Examples of key initiatives are set out in Box 2.

Box 2: Examples of women's contributions to peace and security in the Pacific

Pacific women and women's organisations have:

▶   initiated and taken leadership roles in the anti-nuclear movement in the Pacific;

▶   influenced the bringing of the WHO World Court Case on the legitimacy of nuclear testing;

▶   negotiated between the warring groups in Bougainville and in Solomon Islands;

▶   participated in weapons disposal programmes, in particular in Bougainville and Solomon Islands, and continued to advocate on issues related to small arms and light weapons;

▶   taken part in peace interventions and mediation in particular during and since the political crisis / civilian coup in Fiji Islands in 2000 including with the Great Council of Chiefs and Military Council;

▶   provided substantive input into the 2003 National Security Defence Review and matters relating to security sector governance in Fiji Islands; and

▶   conducted pre-deployment training of military and police personnel in particular on human rights standards and practices, and provided trauma counselling, for example FWCC training of Fiji military and police prior to 2006.

3.5.5. A Pacific media and policy network led by femLINKpacific has rallied and gained some traction in bringing attention to women's peace and security issues using SCR 1325 and related resolutions. Notably, at the recent meetings of the Forum Regional Security Committee, a 'Track II Dialogue' on Women, Peace and Human Security ran alongside the FRSC to provide an opening for CSOs, gender experts and academics to feed their discussions on the gender dimensions of security into the FRSC.

3.5.6. The regional women's community media network of femLINKpacific also links Pacific Peacewomen in Fiji Islands, Bougainville, Solomon Islands and Tonga, using media initiatives as a platform for collective policy advocacy for the advancement of the UN Security Council's women, peace and security resolutions. In 2005, through this regional network, the Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency in Bougainville was able to identify early warning indicators of the potential for renewed violence. The agency undertakes SCR 1325 awareness-training workshops in village communities, as well as documenting women's stories, while continuing to take an active role in raising awareness on women's issues, human rights and gender equality. The organisation continues to speak out against violence through a local radio network as well as carrying out awareness campaigns and workshops on issues affecting women and children in villages.

3.5.7. Some senior positions are held by women. For example, the current permanent secretary for the Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace in Solomon Islands is a woman, and one woman was appointed to the Solomon Islands Truth and Reconciliation Commission working on settlement of cases from the 1998–2003 ethnic tensions. Ministers with responsibilities for the Department of Women in Fiji Islands have been appointed to the National Security Council, and women are represented at divisional and district levels in Fiji Islands by Divisional and Women's Interests Assistants. However, in all of these instances it is the office bearer that is the target for inclusion in peace negotiations rather than women's interests more broadly.

Photo: Chris Palethorpe

Mrs Joy Kere, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation & Peace, Solomon Islands

3.5.8. The Solomon Islands Government has committed to implementing initiatives that can enhance its National Peace and Reconciliation Programmes, and civil society groups are being urged to strengthen their partnerships for peace. In December 2009 the Solomon Islands Government announced that it would develop a National Plan on SCR 1325 as part of its peace and reconciliation efforts following the ethnic tensions.

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3.5.9. Pacific women are participating in and contributing to the annual Global Week of Action against Gun Violence. Women have also spoken out against the (re-)arming of police personnel. Women work with the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), the global movement against gun violence that comprises a network of 700 CSOs working in 100 countries to stop the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. An example of how Pacific women are involved in this work comes from the women on Malaita (Solomon Islands), who have made submissions to the Peace and Reconciliation Commission on small arms that are still in communities.

3.5.10. The Pan-Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association has been active in the region for over 80 years, working to promote peace through understanding and friendship, including through the promotion of the Peace Garden Initiative. In Fiji Islands, the Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy has been active in working with young people on conflict analysis, trauma awareness and peace-building practices. The Save the Children Fund has also been active in the Pacific, promoting essay and poster competitions on themes of peace and justice.

3.5.11. In Solomon Islands, Vois Blong Mere is distributing copies of femLINKpacific's regional 2008 publication, 'Policy Responses on Women, Peace and Security', to government officials and women in communities. Their aim is to provide these individuals with a resource that will assist in their participation in provincial peace summits being facilitated by the Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace and provincial peace officers. Vois Blong Mere has made presentations in Solomon Islands using adaptations of the recommendations from the policy book to fit the local context (Bhagwan Rolls 2009b).

B. Examples of obstacles encountered and remaining gaps and challenges

3.5.12. Much of the effort of Pacific peace-women has been outside the radar of official peace and security policy spaces. Were it not for the support of and partnership with international development partners and agencies, which have either documented or supported women's documentation of their peace initiatives, much of this work would remain invisible. Women were completely omitted from the peace talks immediately following the Solomon Islands crisis, despite the pivotal role they had played – on their own initiative – in bringing about the truce that began the peace process and despite the enormous contribution women have made elsewhere, such as in the Bougainville peace talks.

3.5.13. In some PICTs, for example Solomon Islands and PNG, the security of women has often been under threat from the use of firearms by those licensed to carry small arms. The illicit transfer of small arms across borders and the making of small arms from discarded remnants of the Second World War in the Pacific have also contributed to armed crime and violence. There is no research on the number of firearms in the region, and no legislation to control firearms.

3.5.14. Women soldiers in the New Zealand Defence Force serving with the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI)[25] have reported that in a number of places, local women will only speak with women soldiers. The common themes of these communications are domestic violence, youth drinking, and other anti-social behaviour. Increasing women's presence in security forces throughout the region is critical to addressing women's unique security concerns, and needs to be a central feature of security dialogue in the future.

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25. *Security concerns meant that RAMSI was unable to provide the number or proportion of women who have served in RAMSI, and their country of origin. It appears that they have probably numbered in excess of 20% of New Zealand's Defence Force.*

3.5.15. With a few rare exceptions, there remains little evidence of serious attempts being made to significantly increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and to protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts. For example, no Eminent Persons Groups (EPG) formed by the Pacific Islands Forum to address peace and security issues in the Pacific have ever included a female member. Occasionally, EPG missions have included a reference to gender in the terms of reference, or have involved consultations with women's groups. While providing some avenues for advocacy on the gender dimensions of peace and security, this limited approach perpetuates the notion that women are a mere interest group rather than half the population with an equal voice and contribution at all levels of peace and security dialogue.

3.5.16. SCR 1325 is relevant for member states who are Troop Contributing Countries as it mandates gender perspectives and training in peacekeeping. Member states should ensure that their participants in such forces are trained on the protection, rights and needs of women, and the importance of involving women in peacekeeping missions; and that all UN civilian personnel on peacekeeping operations receive similar training. The resolution requests that member states include HIV and AIDS awareness training in programmes for military and civilian police in preparation for deployment. There is little evidence that PICTs contributing to UN peacekeeping missions have complied with this requirement, although in Samoa such training is conducted before and after officers go on overseas missions. It appears that not all forces contributing to RAMSI, nor all civilian personnel, were given this training.

3.5.17. SCR 1325 also calls on all actors in negotiations and peace processes to adopt a gender perspective including measures that protect and respect the human rights of women and girls, especially those relating to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary. No PICTs have acted in accordance with this resolution in these matters. Pacific women have expressed a need for the UN system to be more accountable and more responsive to Pacific countries, and to assist governments in understanding SCR 1325, the BPA and CEDAW and how they fit into national development plans. Pacific Islander Sharon Bhagwan Rolls is a member of the UN Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) on SCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security established to provide advice to UN Deputy Secretary General Dr Asha Rose Migiri and the High Level Steering Committee of all the heads of relevant UN agencies and entities. The CSAG's principal role is to help translate adopted policies and resolutions into on the ground actions to protect women in the context of armed conflict and empower their full participation in peace processes, post conflict governance and reconstruction.

3.5.18. Reports from women in Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Fiji Islands are that an increasing use of Pacific men as peacekeepers and guards in areas of armed conflict around the world has negatively impacted family life. Lack of post trauma counselling services for returning soldiers and police officers has resulted in a higher incidence of domestic violence in these households. There is also a lack of appreciation of the need for counselling services for the Pacific women and girls who have been held at gunpoint in coups or raped, abused and threatened in conflict.

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3.5.19. Pacific women's historical role in conflict resolution and peacekeeping needs to be examined more closely so that this role can be better respected and strengthened in the modern context. Women clearly have enormous contributions to make both in avoiding and resolving conflict, and these contributions need to be leveraged for the benefit of whole societies.

Key Actions

Governments

▶ Review national security policies and strategies alongside the BPA and RPPA strategic objectives on Women and Armed Conflict to ensure they are aligned.

▶ Ensure women participate equally with men in all regional and national security and conflict resolution processes and decision-making structures, including in the military, police and security services.

▶ Include women and gender experts fully in the mainstream peace and security discussions rather than in parallel forums.

▶ Consider the lessons that can be learned from Pacific women's traditional roles in conflict resolution, and strengthen and support this role in modern contexts.

Donors and development partners

▶ Mainstream gender in all programmes in support of peace and security in the Pacific and include gender and security concerns as a primary goal.

▶ Ensure women are appointed to high level bodies such as Eminent Persons Groups mandated to assess and advise on conflict resolution processes in the region.

Civil society

▶ Support and join ongoing gender, peace and security efforts in the region from local through to international levels.

▶ Strengthen networks and partnerships to ensure that women's participation and gender equality issues are integrated more broadly into peace and security initiatives.

3.6. Critical Area F: Women and the economy

See the BPA Diagnosis and Strategic Objectives on Women and the Economy at
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/economy.htm

3.6.1. Most PICTs are semi-subsistence economies, with both men and women involved in a variety of fishing and agriculture activities. Typically the main objective of such activities is subsistence, although women are more likely than men to be producing for subsistence (see Table 10).

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Table 10: Objective of finfishing for fisherwomen and fishermen, 2009

Country/territory	Fisherwomen (%)			Fishermen (%)		
	Gift	Sale	Subsistence	Gift	Sale	Subsistence
Cook Islands	42	9	49	33	22	45
Fiji Islands	4	14	82	9	55	36
French Polynesia	20	22	58	27	45	29
FSM	5	35	60	14	51	35
Kiribati	33	42	25	7	65	28
Nauru	15	6	78	19	12	69
New Caledonia	35	9	56	30	31	40
Niue	17	2	81	27	16	56
Palau	41	22	37	32	44	23
PNG	16	53	31	17	67	16
RMI	0	6	94	10	33	57
Samoa	11	12	77	11	44	45
Solomon Islands	12	6	82	10	39	52
Tonga				14	65	21
Tuvalu	12	0	88	11	27	62
Vanuatu	28	27	45	22	52	26
Wallis and Futuna	38	1	61	19	40	42

Source: SPC PROC Fish Programme, Pacific Regional Oceanic and Coastal Fisheries Programme (2009)

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3.6.2. Women are significantly under-represented in the formal labour market throughout the region (see Table 11). In a number of PICTs the public sector is the largest employer and dominates the wage economy. The majority of women in this sector are employed at lower levels, in particular in clerical work, although an increasing number of women in some countries and territories are holding mid-level and senior public service positions. Similarly women in the private sector are often confined to areas considered to be 'women's work'.

3.6.3. Overall Pacific governments have done very little address the BPA goals with respect to women and the economy. To the extent work is starting to be done, it is largely through CSOs and the private sector.

Table 11: Labour force participation rate, number of wage and salary earners and percentage of subsistence workers, female and male, 1990s and 2000s

Country/ territory	Year	Labour force participation rate			Number of wage and salary earners			% subsistence workers		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
American Samoa	2000	…	…	52.0	…	…	16,718	…	…	…
CNMI	2000	84.8	78.4	81.3	…	…	…	…	…	…
Cook Islands	2006*	76.1	64.2	70.2	3,386	2,542	5,928	1.4	1.3	1.4
Fiji Islands	2007	72.0	37.6	55.0	181,691	70,708	252,399	10.5	26.2	15.6
French Polynesia	2007			56.2			95,258			
FSM	2000	58.5	39.9	49.2	9,286	4,514	13,800	28.6	47.6	36.6
Guam	2002	62.0	50.0	62.0	…	…	54,760	…	…	…
Kiribati	2005	71.5	56.3	63.6	8,095	5,038	13,133	57.1	68.2	62.2
Nauru	2006	85.6	71.9	78.7	1,209	872	2,081	0.7	0.1	0.8
New Caledonia	2004	65.0	49.0	57.0	46,825	33,860	80,685			
Niue	2006	85.0	71.0	78.0	408	347	775	13.2	4.3	9.5
Palau	2005	76.9	59.7	69.1	5,982	3,795	,777	..	..	11.8
PNG	2000	74.1	71.8	73.0	1,203,233	1,141,501	2,344,734	60.8	74.3	67.4
RMI	1999	66.3	35.4	51.1	7,008	3,133	10,141	…	…	…
Samoa	2006	67.5	73.0	50.0	17,714	10,465	28,179	28.3	30.5	29.0
Solomon Islands	1999	72.2	60.4	66.4	39,761	17,711	57,472	58.1	76.2	66.1
Tokelau	2006	…	…	70.0	…	…	362	…	…	…
Tonga	2006	64.2	49.0	56.6	14,273	9,165	23,438	27.6	39.1	32.6
Tuvalu	2002	69.6	47.9	58.2	…	…	…	69.3	…	…
Vanuatu	1999	85.5	70.9	78.2	41,236	33,874	75,110	38.1	74.1	56.1
Wallis & Futuna	2003	38.6	27.2	32.6	…	…	3,104	…	…	…

*Data on the number of wage and salary earners and % subsistence workers for Cook Islands is from 2001.

Source: PRISM (2009d)

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A. Examples of successful policies, legislative changes and programmes and projects by governments or other actors

3.6.4. There have been a number of programmes on business and financial training for women. For example, women have participated (50%+) in the Tonga Entrepreneurs business training programme, learning about cash flow, taxation forms and other business compliance processes, as well as competition in the market from offshore business owners.

3.6.5. From Samoa comes a compelling economic success story of Women in Business Development Inc. (WIBDI), which provides a model for working with rural women and their families to identify a need and to research and test possible solutions. In its search for viable family-produced niche crops, WIBDI began considering the potential of organic farming and eventually became the lead agency for organic farming certification in partnership with Samoa's Ministry of Agriculture. Next, WIBDI began playing a key role in the lobbying process for the first Pacific Regional Organic Standard, agreed in September 2008. The sale of women's village-produced coconut oil to the international Body Shop Company (2008) again demonstrated the WIBDI members' success in exploring market options to enhance Samoan women's qualify of life. WIBDI began with research into the profits women were making from handmade coconut oil. This led to the introduction of direct micro expelling oil production machines into a number of villages, training in pricing and marketing options (such as coconut oil-based sprays, perfumes and cooking oils), and setting up a marketing arm for women's products.[26]

3.6.6. The Women Entrepreneurs Nauru Association (WENA) is a newly formed body for women in business. WENA was formed by the 27 women who attended the National Competency-based Economies through the Formation of Entrepreneurs (CEFE) workshop for small and medium enterprises (co-sponsored by the Commonwealth Secretariat and SPC) (Nauru Ministry of Home Affairs 2009, p. 4).

3.6.7. The International Finance Corporation, part of the World Bank Group, recently profiled 52 Pacific business women in 30 case studies as a way of sharing their stories of overcoming obstacles and seizing opportunities (International Finance Corporation 2010). It also conducted 'Gender and Investment Climate Reform Assessments' in PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu, which looked into: investment climates and in particular public private dialogue; starting and licensing a business; access to justice, the courts and mediation; and access to and enforcement of rights over registered land; and made recommendations for addressing gender barriers in these areas (Hedditch and Manuel 2010).

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26. *The Pure Virgin Coconut Oil Company.*

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3.6.8. UNIFEM Pacific is working to strengthen Pacific women's economic security and rights with a focus on women in the informal economy, including women vendors in traditional and emerging markets, trade and micro-businesses. It addresses women's livelihood options, independent incomes and savings, human rights and gender issues in the informal economy, and strengthening of organisations to enable women to dialogue effectively with local government to influence plans, policies, bylaws and budgets. UNIFEM is currently building its Partnerships to Improve Markets Project in Vanuatu, PNG, Solomon Islands and Fiji Islands. This project aims to contribute to the improvement of social, economic and physical conditions of women market vendors, and to ensure that local government (along with other bodies that manage markets) is more sensitive and responsive to the key gender issues in marketplace planning, operations and governance.

Photo: Chris Palethorpe

Woman market vendor, Solomon Islands

3.6.9. In Vanuatu, the Shefa provincial government has led the way in handing over the management of rural markets to the women who sell in them. This means that women are better able to decide how the markets should be run and what to prioritise in relation to changes or improvements to the markets. The national government and Port Vila municipality, with the help of UNIFEM's Partnerships to Improve Markets Project, have also taken onboard the need to include women market vendors in decisions concerning the markets, and are beginning to recognise the important role that women market vendors and those in the informal sector play in the economy as a whole.

B.   Examples of obstacles encountered and remaining gaps and challenges

3.6.10. Overall there is limited legislative protection for women workers. Legislation is inadequate, and even where it exists enforcement is weak. Women are predominant in the informal sector, where they have limited protection in terms of their conditions of work. Most PICTs do not have specific prohibitions on sex or gender discrimination in the area of employment, although many have general constitutional safeguards against sex discrimination.

3.6.11. Most PICTs provide for paid maternity leave; however, in many cases such leave is enjoyed only by female civil servants and female workers covered by negotiated maternity leave union agreements. Moreover, in no Pacific Island country does it meet the standard of 14 weeks recommended by CEDAW and the International Labour Organization (ILO). As noted in Section 2.3, some advances have been made in parental leave legislation, but there is still a long way to go in terms of having both maternity and paternity leave, in having a reasonable leave period, and in making such leave available to people outside the public sector. In all PICTs other than Marshall Islands and FSM, legal protection from dismissal ends upon the completion of the approved maternity leave period. With a few exceptions such as Marshall Islands, FSM and Samoa, most PICTs provide breastfeeding mothers with half-hour breaks twice daily by law. No PICT has a state-funded child care facility.

3.6.12. Similarly there is little legislation preventing wage discrimination.

3.6.13. Most PICTs have no sexual harassment legislation. One exception is Fiji Islands, which has human rights legislation that makes sexual harassment a civil offence, and a new employment relations law effective as of April 2009 under which sexual harassment in the workplace is a specific ground of complaint. In addition, PNG has a provision for dismissal on grounds of sexual harassment that applies only to government civil servants.

3.6.14. There is insufficient gender data in the Pacific, including on wage/income disparities and time use. Regional and national statistics producers need to move beyond mere sex disaggregation of existing labour force data and integrate broader gender analysis into economic data collection. NWMs, CSOs and other data users should encourage this through direct requests to data providers, since such requests often drive changes in data collection priorities.

3.6.15. Most of the government ministries in the Pacific lack training in economics and the economic systems of the Pacific, which do not mirror those of other regions. Most also lack capacity in basic cost–benefit analyses when figures have to be estimated or imputed, in understanding the language and being able to debate with the foreign multilateral advisers, in understanding what is really happening economically, and in how to interpret economic information. There is also a lack of appropriate technical expertise to conduct gender auditing of policies and gender impact analyses of economic partnership agreements and the economic reforms now being introduced by Pacific governments. Women in government agencies need to be upskilled to fill this gap.

3.6.16. The Forum Economic Ministers Meeting (FEMM), the major regional meeting for economic management and development which provides advice to Forum Leaders on national economic development strategies through improving regional and sub-regional strategies, has done little to analyse gender and the economy or to support women's economic rights. Lobbying for the inclusion of these issues into national and regional economic forums is needed.

3.6.17. As discussed in Section 3.1, women's contribution to the economy through subsistence production remains invisible in systems of national accounts. Moreover, governments and donors do not use international rules on national income accounting as a baseline for economic planning.

3.6.18. The cost of living has rapidly risen while opportunities for employment have contracted in many areas, especially in the civil service. There is a lack of community training in utilising resources available to women within their environment to develop income-generating activities, because of poor and very limited services targeted specifically at women.

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3.6.19. In 2006 a World Bank report identified that many Pacific Island nations – but particularly Melanesian countries – had high population growth, low employment, low incomes, major difficulties in developing local industries and few migration outlets (Luthria 2006). Where labour mobility is possible, it is generally skewed in favour of highly skilled workers. Luthria (2006) suggested that greater labour mobility would expand the employment options available to Pacific Islanders. The study was influential in supporting the development of New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme and Australia's horticultural pilot scheme announced in late 2008. However, both selecting countries and New Zealand businesses owners predominantly select male workers. Occasionally women are selected for tasks such as cooking to support men who go to work in the fields, which disregards the expertise of women in crop management from years of work in their own agricultural production.

3.6.20. In the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, garment companies have brought in women from Asia as guest workers, leading to breaches of labour laws and ILO conventions on the rights of migrant workers (Minority Rights Group International 2007). Similarly, 26% of the Palauan population is comprised of non-Palauans, primarily Asians working as labourers and domestic workers (Nelson 2008).

C.   Lessons learned

3.6.21. The absence of efforts to implement the BPA and of successful interventions in this critical area reflects the low level of commitment and political will displayed by PICT governments. Lobbying, advocacy and technical and financial support need to be significantly strengthened in this area through sustained partnerships, in the same way that VAW is being collaboratively addressed to great effect. Part of the required approach is ensuring national and regional economic dialogue and forums have women and the economy on the agenda.

3.6.22. Recent findings under UNIFEM's Market Project show that women selling at the markets are key players in the informal economy and confirm a set of gender-related problems for women market vendors which in turn contribute to the lack of development and lost opportunities for social and economic development. Governments and other stakeholders need to focus on both the formal and informal sectors of the economy to address women's needs and potential, for the benefit of whole economies.

3.6.23. Targeting women specifically in small business enterprises, such as viable family-produced niche crops, can be successful, provided coordinating marketing support is in place.

Key Actions

Governments

▶ Review policies and strategies regarding national development and economic growth alongside the BPA and RPPA strategic objectives on Women and the Economy to ensure they are aligned.

▶ Ensure the labour and economic development sectors work closely with the NWM and gender experts to better integrate and support women in the formal and informal sectors of the economy.

▶ Support the development of legislation and policies to protect women's employment rights, including in the areas of equal pay, fair and safe conditions of work including in the informal sector, parental leave and benefits, equal sharing of unpaid labour between women and men, and sexual harassment.

▶ Provide specific and targeted opportunities for women in the informal and formal sectors to access training, business assistance, regional and international marketing opportunities, and credit facilities.

▶ Prioritise and provide better gender data, such as wage gap statistics and time use surveys, to allow for proper gender analysis of the economy.

Donors and development partners

▶ Ensure the equal participation of women and gender experts, and the integration of women's economic participation and rights, as priority areas in regional research, processes and forums on economic development and growth.

▶ Strengthen statistical support systems to ensure that gender data, such as wage gap statistics and time use surveys, are given the same importance as traditional economic data.

Civil society

▶ Lobby for, support and participate in efforts to promote greater participation of women in both the formal and informal economy and for better data on women and the economy from statistical producers.

3.7. Critical Area G: Women in power and decision-making

See the BPA Diagnosis and Strategic Objectives on Women in Power and Decision Making at
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/decision.htm

3.7.1.   The Pacific Islands region has one of the worst records in the world for the proportion of women in national legislatures (see Table 12). If all PICTs are included (except Pitcairn), the latest average for total seats held by women, including in territorial assemblies or congresses and in all single, lower and upper houses of Parliament, is 12.3%. This average is skewed upwards by the French territories where laws are in place to promote gender balance in elected office. If those territories are removed, the average drops to 6.4%.[27] Only Guam and Niue have managed to achieve at least 20% female representation in the absence of special measures. At the other end of the spectrum Nauru, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and FSM have no women in Parliament. FSM remains one of only three nations globally never to have elected a woman to national political office.

Hon. Dame Carol Kidu DBE MP, Minister for Community Development, Religion & Sports, is the only female MP in PNG's 109 seat legislature (photo courtesy of PIFS)

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27.   *In both cases these averages use the 2006 pre-coup figures for Fiji Islands.*

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Table 12: Women in PICT parliaments, 2000s*

Country/territory	Year	Total number of seats in Parliament	Female members of Parliament	% Female	Number of female government ministers
American Samoa	2009	39	2	5.1	0
CNMI	2009	20	2	10	-
Cook Islands[1]	2007	24	3	12.5	1
Fiji Islands[2]	2006	103	13	12.6	4
French Polynesia	2009	57	30	52.6	1
FSM	2008	14	0	0	0
Guam	2009	15	4	26.7	-
Kiribati[3]	2008	46	3	6.5	1
Nauru[4]	2010	18	0	0	0
New Caledonia	2009	54	23	42.6	2
Niue	2007	20	4	20.0	1
Palau[5]	2008	29	2	6.9	0
PNG[6]	2007	109	1	0.9	1
RMI	2007	33	1	3.0	0
Samoa	2008	49	4	8.2	3
Solomon Islands	2008	50	0	0	0
Tokelau	2008	20	3	15.0	0
Tonga[7]	2009	33	1	3.1	1
Tuvalu	2008	15	0	0	0
Vanuatu	2008	52	1	1.9	0
Wallis and Futuna	2009	20	4	20.0	0
TOTAL		**820**	**101**	**12.3**	**15**

Notes:
*Includes, in the case of the territories, territorial law-making bodies.
1.   One of the Cook Islands women MPs is also the Deputy Speaker.
2.   Pre-coup Fiji Islands had 13 women in Parliament: 8 in the 71 member elected lower house and 5 in the 32 appointed-member Senate.
3.   Kiribati has a female Vice President.
4.   Nauru's Ambassador to the UN is a woman and the Chief Secretary (Head of Public Service) is also a woman.
5.   No women were elected to the 16-member House of Representatives, but 2 women were elected to the Senate.
6.   In Bougainville of the three women elected; one is Deputy Speaker and one is a Cabinet Minister.
7.   No women were elected to the Assembly, but one woman was appointed to Cabinet: Ministers sit in parliament and have a vote on all legislation and are therefore considered as MPs for the purposes of this table.

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (2010); PRISM (2009e); and information provided to SPC from government country focal points.

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3.7.2. Elections in local government offer a greater number of opportunities for women simply because of the greater number of elected bodies and positions. If elected and appointed positions in local government are combined across the region (excluding the territories), there are over 7000 positions, an estimated 7.5% of which are held by women, or over 900 excluding PNG, of which an estimated 5.9% are held by women (CLGF 2008–2009). In many Pacific Island countries, local level governments are significant employers at the community level and have responsibility for basic service delivery including public infrastructure, transportation, local economic development, physical planning, water and sanitation. The level of government closest to the community is well placed to raise awareness of gender issues, to involve women in making decisions concerning their basic living conditions, and to make use of their knowledge and capabilities.

3.7.3. Local government in some countries has a higher representation of women in elected and appointed decision-making positions than at the national level. For example in Fiji Islands in 2006, women held 14% of elected positions at the municipal council level (see Table 13) compared with 11.3% at the national level (see Table 12). In Tuvalu, women constituted 8.3% of elected members at the Kaupule or council level whereas there were no women elected at the national level in 2008. In Solomon Islands, women have been elected to the provincial governments in Isabel (2), Rennell and Bellona (1), Makira (1) and Western (1), again with no women in the national Parliament. Although these are still token numbers and women are grossly under-represented even in local government, it is important for any discussion of political participation to include and consider these sub-national levels and to analyse the differences and relative impacts they may have.

3.7.4. While better and more regular data is required for proper analysis, anecdotal evidence shows that women in some PICTs are increasingly holding senior posts in the public service. For example, Palau has 17 women Directors of Bureaus or Permanent Secretaries of the Executive Branch. Out of the 16 State Governors, four are women. In the Tokelau public service, 81% of senior management positions are held by women. In Cook Islands, women hold between 30 and 50% of directorships on government boards and committees. In Tuvalu, women's representation in the senior public service and statutory boards is approximately 20%. Better data is also required on the composition of public boards. In Fiji Islands an ongoing target of 30% of women on all public boards and committees has not been met.

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Table 13: Women in local government in Fiji Islands, 1999–2005

Area name	Town/city council	1999		2002		2005	
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Ba	Town	2	13	2	13	2	13
Labasa	Town	0	12	0	12	1	11
Lami	Town	2	10	3	9	2	10
Lautoka	City	1	15	2	14	3	13
Levuka	Town	3	5	1	7	4	4
Nadi	Town	2	13	1	14	3	11
Nasinu	Town[1]	n/a	n/a	1	20	4	17
Nausori	Town	0	12	0	12	0	12
Savusavu	Town	0	9	0	9	1	8
Sigatoka	Town[2]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	10
Suva	City (Capital)	3	17	2	18	3	17
Tavua	Town	0	9	0	9	0	9
Total		**13**	**115**	**12**	**137**	**23**	**135**
% of councillors women		**10.1%**		**8.0%**		**14.5%**	

Notes:
1. Nasinu was established in 2003.
2. Sigatoka Town Council was dissolved in 1999 following a Commission of Inquiry. An administrator was appointed to manage the affairs of the council until 2002 when a Town Clerk was appointed and thereafter elections were conducted.

Source: Personal communication, Commonwealth Local Government Forum Pacific Project.

Déwé Gorodey, member of the Government of New Caledonia

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A. Examples of successful policies, legislative changes and programmes and projects by governments or other actors

3.7.5. The 2000 French parity law requires all political parties to have 50% of each sex on their lists of electoral candidates, alternating the names of males and females. This law was applied in the territorial assembly/congress elections in the French territories. In New Caledonia some indigenous Kanak men opposed the law, claiming that there was an insufficient number of qualified women candidates and that it undermined Kanak custom. Women united across ethnic lines and in the 2004 election women's representation in Congress rose from 17% to 46%. In the Assembly of French Polynesia, representation went from 12% to 48%. As Table 12 demonstrates, as of 2009 women held 30 out of 57 seats in French Polynesia (53%) and 23 out of 54 seats in New Caledonia (43%). These figures are unprecedented in the Pacific and most of the world. Studies showed that the increased presence of women in politics transformed certain political practices in those territories. Women seek to improve effectiveness including in the management of public finances and the work of committees. They often reframe debates and call for moderation in the positions taken by the different political parties. Women legislators have also increased the attention given to social issues and women's rights at the political level, strengthening the focus on topics such as health, education, culture and gender-based violence (Bargel et al. 2010).

3.7.6. In Bougainville, temporary special measures are also being implemented. Following the end of a 20-year conflict, a new constitution and electoral system were devised for the newly autonomous region. After much consideration, it was decided that three seats in the new legislature would be reserved for women (and three seats for ex-combatants). It was further decided that the seats would be elected directly by the people. Both women and men are allowed to vote for all seats. Bougainville has 33 constituencies to elect ordinary members. The province is also divided into three bigger constituencies – North, Central and South – and these same divisions are used for the three seats reserved for women and the three seats reserved for ex-combatants. Prior to the dissolution of Parliament in 2010, one of the women MPs was Deputy Speaker and one was a Minister.

3.7.7. Although the entire region outside the French territories has yet to achieve more gender-balanced parliaments, advocacy and lobbying have intensified significantly over the past few years and are building momentum. Given how deeply entrenched male power structures are in the region, these efforts are themselves success stories as they exhibit the increasing knowledge, ability and empowerment of Pacific women to challenge the patriarchal past and present new pathways to progress.

3.7.8. In March 2009 the Papua New Guinea Government tabled a motion in Parliament to use an existing constitutional provision that allowed the appointment of three members to the national Parliament, as a mechanism to appoint three women to Parliament. The motion was defeated, with the government opposition unwilling to support the appointment of women to reserved seats. Subsequently the PNG National Leaders' Summit agreed to a proposal by the Government and Administrative Reforms Task Force to introduce elected reserved seats for women in Parliament. PNG's 21 Provincial Governors agreed that there should be an additional seat in each province for women alone to contest, plus a seat representing the National Capital District. Together these changes would result in 22 reserved seats for women. In early 2010 the National Executive Council approved a Bill to reserve 22 elected seats for women and the Bill was then tabled in Parliament. The Bill will need to be approved by a two-thirds majority since it will involve a constitutional amendment to increase the number of parliamentarians from 109 to 131.[28] If successful, it would ensure a minimum of almost 17% female representation and would be an enormous step not only for PNG but for the entire Pacific region.

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28. *The Constitution currently limits the number of seats to 120.*

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3.7.9.   In November 2008 the Speaker and Vice Speaker of the Congress of FSM sponsored a bill to designate reserved seats for women. The Bill proposed the creation of an additional four 'at large' seats reserved for women, one for each state of FSM. The Bill was not passed, and the 2009 election returned another all-male slate for the FSM Congress. The Bill was tabled again in the 2009 Congress and has been referred to a congressional committee for review. Enactment of the Bill would require a constitutional amendment, which would mean that 75% of the people in three of FSM's four states would need to approve it by referendum before it could become law.

3.7.10. In Solomon Islands a temporary special measures taskforce worked on introducing 10 reserved seats for women for the 2010 elections. However, the Prime Minister claimed that he did not have the numbers in his Cabinet or Parliament to pass the legislation. There was no political leadership exercised on the issue by any of the all-male Parliament.

3.7.11. In Cook Islands, a temporary special measures working group was set up in 2009 to raise the number of women in Parliament to 30% by 2014. Work and discussions on the technical needs and approaches to achieve this goal are ongoing.

3.7.12. In Tonga in 2009, the newly formed NGO 'Tongan Women's National Congress' developed a submission for reserved seats for women in Parliament, which it submitted to the Constitutional and Electoral Commission considering reform of the Constitution and electoral laws. The final report of the commission, however, did not include a recommendation for reserved seats.

3.7.13. Strong development partner support is assisting in these national efforts. For example, PIFS and UNDP are leading work on temporary special measures including through developing an options guide to such measures and hosting stakeholder workshops. In addition, the Gender Equality in Political Governance Programme (GEPG), led by UNIFEM and AusAID, had established offices in Fiji Islands, PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu by late 2009 specifically to address the lack of electoral information and education about the principles of political governance, which is a gap found both among political decision-makers at national and sub-national levels and among the rural population, especially women. The programme aims to engage in long-term capacity building of electoral stakeholders and NGOs in order to improve the understanding of all stakeholders and build their support for increasing women's political participation in Pacific Island countries. In 2009 GEPG partnered with USP to run a Train the Facilitator Workshop in Suva, Fiji Islands for 20 participants from 12 countries. It improves the skills, knowledge and confidence of both elections professionals and key stakeholders in the electoral process including members of the media, political parties, women's organisations and electoral observers.

3.7.14. Special measures exist at the local government level in several countries. In PNG, the Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local-level Governments provides for the appointment of one woman representative for each urban local-level government and provincial council, and for two women representatives for each rural local-level government. In the capital Port Moresby, the Governor appointed 50% women councillors in an effort to increase women's political representation. In Tuvalu, the Falekaupule Act provides for the appointment of a 'Women's Community Worker' as a permanent office in the Kaupule or council. In Samoa, the government legislated the appointment of one women's representative or 'women liaison officer' for each village in 2004. In Solomon Islands, the Honiara City Council has provision for a single appointed women's representative. The Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) Pacific Project provides support for institutional and leadership development initiatives at the local government level. A particular focus is on raising awareness of the role of local government in achieving gender equality through addressing the information gap on the status of women in local government and supporting initiatives to increase the participation of women in management and leadership roles within local government.

3.7.15. The Pacific Judicial Development Programme, jointly funded by AusAID and NZAID, provides a range of training, technical assistance and institutional strengthening support to Pacific judiciaries. Two significant areas of activity lie in building the capacity of judges and magistrates, especially at the lower levels, in human rights including gender equality issues and enhancing access to effective justice for those most marginalised in society.

3.7.16. The Pacific Leadership Development Programme provides support for leadership development initiatives, with a particular focus on those targeting women and youth. Under this programme NZAID funds an annual Prime Minister's Fellowship for Emerging Pacific Women Leaders, which enables six Pacific women to attend the highly recognised Women in Public Policy Program, Harvard University to develop their leadership skills (SPC 2006). AusAID's Pacific Leadership Programme, established in 2008, aims to strengthen leaders, emerging leaders and leadership practice in Solomon Islands, PNG, Vanuatu, Samoa and Tonga. The focus is beyond state leadership, with the Programme working in a range of sectors – including youth, church, private sector and civil society – which were chosen for their influence in Pacific society and for their role in nurturing and modelling leadership. The Programme maintains a strong focus on gender across these sectors. It will be critical for the Programme to collect sex-disaggregated data and to measure its specific impact in improving women's participation and influence in decision-making roles across all sectors. Other leadership programmes that offer opportunities for women to get leadership training and exposure include the USP School of Government, Development and International Affairs Leadership Programme and the Emerging Pacific Leaders Dialogue Programme (EPLD), a regional leadership development programme that is staged every four years under the auspices of the Commonwealth study tours programme. The aim of the programme is to identify emerging leaders from the Pacific and help them deepen their appreciation of regional issues while challenging their understanding of what it means to be a leader. Women and men from the private sector, government and civil society have participated in this important initiative over the past four years.

3.7.17. Samoa's Women's Appointment File is available for the government to consult when looking for suitable women appointees to boards and commissions. In 2010 in Solomon Islands, a file containing over 100 curricula vitae of women who have been trained in basic skills for sitting on boards and commissions will be presented to the Prime Minister, the Speaker, the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children's Affairs and the National Council of Women. As a consequence, the government will no longer be able to claim that so few women are appointed to boards and commissions because the number of women qualified for such positions is insufficient.

B.   Examples of obstacles encountered and remaining gaps and challenges

3.7.18. There are no express legal restrictions on women seeking parliamentary seats anywhere in the Pacific, but there are some significant customary restrictions. For example, in Samoa parliamentary candidates must be matai (customary leaders), and some village customs prevent women from being matai (PPSEAWA et al. 2004). In Tonga, nine seats are reserved for nobles, a title only men are allowed to hold, and until recently only nine seats were open for election; the King then appoints Ministers (who also have parliamentary votes), of whom there were 15 in 2009. In 2010 new electoral laws increased the number of 'People's Representatives' from 9 to 17. Although this change will increase the proportion of parliamentary seats open to women candidates, the MPs will come from single-seat electorates rather than the current multi-member electorates, which may reduce women's chances of getting elected.

3.7.19. The electoral systems common to the Pacific also have had an adverse impact on the number of women elected into parliaments. Many Pacific Island countries have opted for 'winner takes all' majority vote systems, where only one person is elected per constituency. Under such a system, voters may only choose one candidate, a choice that often results in support for traditional male leaders. In proportional representation systems, multiple candidates may be elected per constituency, giving greater recognition to candidates who may be preferred 'second' by voters. Experience has shown that women have fared better in getting elected under proportional representation.

3.7.20. In most of the region, women face entrenched discrimination from chiefs and other traditional power systems, lack of support from mainstream political parties (where they exist), and sometimes a lack of trust or confidence from the general population. In addition, with so few women in leadership positions it can be difficult for women to find mentors and role models to help them navigate the political system. Raising campaign funds and developing campaign strategies can also be disproportionately challenging for potential women candidates. As the Cook Islands CEDAW country report succinctly notes, there is a lack of mechanisms and measures in place to ensure that women candidates are supported in their campaign. The multiple burdens of taking care of a family, holding a paid job and campaigning can be another significant barrier to running for political office (Cook Islands Government 2006).

3.7.21. There is a need for effective education for voters – both women and men – to correct misconceptions, attitudes and perceptions about women's leadership. Training of candidates, male and female, in gender analysis of development issues and government policies and plans is also needed (Nelson 2008).

3.7.22. There is a lack of financial support to effectively mobilise women and sustain efforts to increase women's participation in decision-making. In some parliaments, individual parliamentarians receive large amounts of money annually as constituency development funds; the money is ostensibly for their constituencies but is often used to support vote buying. Where male MPs and candidates have access to large amounts of financial and other resources, coupled with kinship ties and traditional tendencies towards male leadership, women may be unable to compete in elections in any realistic sense. Some capable women leaders are also reluctant to leave well-paid, secure jobs to run for elections.

3.7.23. Over the years there have been attempts to establish regional networks (e.g. Pacific Women in Politics – PACWIP), but these have not flourished. There is a strong need for more regular and consistent support to these networks not only at election time but in between election years.

3.7.24. Despite the special measures in place for women to hold posts in local governments, anecdotal evidence suggests these measures are neither well known nor implemented. Furthermore, in some places, appointed or nominated positions have unequal representation in terms of voting powers compared with elected positions. Therefore, these measures appear as token efforts to include women (CLGF 2008–2009). Moreover, despite the opportunities available it remains a challenge for women to function effectively because their male colleagues do not yet fully accept their participation, with the effect that they face considerable resistance in carrying out functions and exercising authority.

3.7.25. Gender strategies and plans are also absent at the local level. Although it is possible to identify some women-specific activities, especially where women councillors have been present, there are no discernible attempts to integrate gender into the work of local government. Furthermore, even if efforts are being made there are few tangible records, apart from some of the personal and official accounts of women councillors that come from research undertaken by the CLGF Pacific Project in Fiji Islands.

3.7.26. Throughout the region, lawyers, judges and other senior personnel in the law and justice sectors are overwhelmingly male (New Zealand Law Commission 2006). There are some exceptions, such as in Solomon Islands where a woman chairs the Constitutional Review Committee and in Nauru where a woman was one of the three members of the Constitutional Review Commission. Community justice bodies are also overwhelmingly male, perpetuating male-centred interpretations of laws, and women are almost never called as expert witnesses to testify on custom, resulting in custom being applied as male leaders see it (Jalal 2009). New Zealand Law Commission hearings in the Pacific found that 'the evidence is compelling that custom law is substantially controlled by men and is often used to subordinate women. A common response is that custom is ancestral and therefore authoritative,

Photo: Chris Palethorpe

Esther Lelapitu,
Magistrate currently working at
the Central Magistrate's Court (Solomon Islands)

and that women's rights advocates are corrupted by Western thinking and alienated from their societies' (New Zealand Law Commission 2006, p. 99). These are key areas where major gender reform is needed.

C.   Lessons learned

3.7.27. The use of permanent legal measures such as full legal parity, as has been successfully introduced in the French territories, offers a means of achieving genuine equality of women and men in political participation. Temporary special measures such as reserved seats offer the opportunity for at least a minimum number of women to be represented in parliaments that are otherwise a male stronghold.

3.7.28. In Bougainville, the unintended result of reserving seats for women in the 2005 election was that female candidates only contested the reserved seats, leaving the 33 open constituency seats free for men. It is important therefore to ensure that measures for reserved seats do not inadvertently divert women from running for all available seats. In the current election in Bougainville, women are standing for both categories of seats. However, it is clear that more education and awareness raising are needed to help women understand how reserved seats work, and to support them to run in both reserved and open seats, according to their choice.

3.7.29. Although historically considerable resources have been spent on supporting the development of women's campaigning efforts, clearly more work needs to be done in this area. Lack of money to support campaigns is a commonly identified problem, indicating that it might be helpful to consider replicating innovative initiatives like EMILY's List in Australia and the USA (which raise money in support of women candidates) in the Pacific Islands region. Training to help women campaign and develop election platforms has also been identified as necessary.

3.7.30. Awareness-raising activities also need to target male leadership more strongly. Men still hold the considerable majority of power in terms of legislative decisions (including in respect of temporary special measures), leading political parties and choosing Cabinet ministers. Efforts are needed to build the commitment of men, both in political and community leadership positions, to support women in leadership. Existing male leaders who have been supportive of more women in Parliament, such as Prime Minister Micheal Somare in PNG and Speaker Isaac Figiir in FSM, can be used as role models in this respect.

Key Actions

Governments

▶ Review national development policies and strategies alongside the BPA and RPPA strategic objectives on Women in Power and Decision Making to ensure they are aligned.

▶ Support legislation that promotes and institutes gender balance in all electoral positions at national and sub-national levels; where such legislation exists, ensure it is widely known and enforced.

▶ Audit how members of Parliament represent women's interests in Parliament and provide support to fill gaps in technical expertise to enable them to enact laws promoting gender equality.

▶ Develop programmes, including in collaboration with the media and through voter education, to eliminate patriarchal attitudes to women and leadership and build support among political and community leaders as well as the public.

▶ Support training for women candidates.

Donor and development partners

▶ Develop and implement systems to help ensure that consultations and programmes with governments including all high-level meetings require the participation of women and gender experts.

▶ Support awareness raising programmes that target male leaders to become advocates for gender balance at all levels of decision-making.

Civil society

▶ Lobby for, support and participate in efforts to promote greater participation of women in politics and all levels of decision-making across the household, community, national and regional levels.

3.8. Critical Area H: Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

See the BPA Diagnosis and Strategic Objectives on Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/institu.htm, and further recommendations on Institutional Arrangements at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat2.htm

3.8.1. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women at the national level are covered in Section 4. This section thus provides an overview of regional institutional mechanisms only.

3.8.2. On 14 September 2009 the UN General Assembly expressed strong and unanimous support for adopting a resolution that will enable the creation of a new UN gender equality entity to be headed by a new Under-Secretary-General. The global Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) Campaign benefited from the participation of a Pacific focal point as well as engagement by regional inter-government agencies and Pacific UN missions. This Pacific presence has helped extend the growing links between the Pacific and international gender equality mechanisms.

3.8.3. Some progress has been made in strengthening gender mainstreaming and cohesion with the regional UN offices. The UN interagency gender group, which has been revitalised in recent years, has strengthened accountability for progressing gender equality and the empowerment of women through its adoption and administration of a UN Country Team Gender Equality Accountability Scorecard, based on a set of performance indicators. The group has prompted many UN agencies to recruit staff with a specialisation in gender and is facilitating more joint UN programming on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Further, in response to an internal evaluation, the UNDP Pacific Centre introduced three tools to strengthen gender mainstreaming work in its own programmes: (1) all senior management must have gender indicators in key results; (2) feedback from partners includes a focus on gender and human rights; and (3) there is a requirement to qualify budget allocations on gender.[29]

3.8.4. As discussed in various thematic areas throughout this report, there are some encouraging examples of gender being mainstreamed in some parts of the multi-sectoral work of agencies belonging to the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) such as SPC and SOPAC. Overall, however, gender equality is still not prioritised in CROP agencies. As of 2009, out of 11 CROP agencies only two had full-time gender staff. These agencies rarely include gender experts in high-level planning and policy discussions, and gender issues are not systematically mainstreamed into sectoral policies and programmes (Braun forthcoming). Despite longstanding gender commitments, including through the CROP Gender Strategy (1998, revised 2005), implementation has been extremely weak and there are no monitoring or accountability systems in place.[30] Executive, senior management and professional positions are heavily male dominated while support staff positions are heavily female dominated. SPC's Human Development Programme is in the process of developing a harmonised monitoring system for all CROP agencies that will help them systematically track implementation of gender commitments, measure and report on progress, and allocate the human and financial resources necessary to meet their obligations.

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29. *2nd Annual Gender and Development Pacific Partner Meeting, 21 August 2008.*
30. *G. Nelson. (2007). CROP Gender Mainstreaming Stocktake.*

3.8.5.   Gender has not been well integrated into most mainstream regional development frameworks. This shortcoming has been a significant issue with the Pacific Plan, the region's largest regional framework on economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security (Braun forthcoming). A detailed gender analysis of all regional frameworks and strategies would help highlight both the deficiencies and potential progressive solutions. Further, regional mechanisms are needed to ensure that all future regional strategies (or reviews of existing strategies) systematically integrate gender and involve the participation of women and gender experts.

3.8.6.   There is no regional human rights mechanism in the Pacific, although discussions are ongoing about establishing one. SPC and PIFS have established a working relationship to draft a paper to explore the possibility of such a mechanism. It is expected that the resulting paper will be presented to a regional PIFS meeting in June 2010. Various governments in the region have supported the establishment of a regional mechanism due to the lack of resources at national level, and the limited capacity to meet human rights reporting requirements and comply with human rights standards.

3.8.7.   Given the fundamental importance of strong institutional mechanisms for gender equality to the achievement of every gender equality goal, and in light of the extreme weakness of these mechanisms at present, intense lobbying, programming and resourcing need to be directed at institutional reform at regional as well as national level. The weakness of Pacific institutions and mechanisms, across the spectrum, is at the root of the lack of progress in virtually all areas of the BPA and RPPA.

3.8.8.   The experience and achievements of internal gender mainstreaming tools and monitoring systems, such as those recently implemented by the UN and those being developed by SPC, should be shared more widely to encourage the implementation of similar systems by all governments, donors and agencies.

Key Actions

Governments

▶   Support actions to better integrate gender across all regional frameworks by requiring that gender experts are involved in all regional planning processes and by supporting the development of systems and structures to facilitate high-level multi-sectoral ownership of gender equality.

▶   Support the establishment of a regional human rights mechanism with strong special procedures for the protection and promotion of women's human rights.

Donors and development partners

▶   Support and strengthen mechanisms within regional and UN agencies to ensure continual improvement in gender mainstreaming, including through the use and expansion of the UN Gender Equality Accountability Scorecard and the development of CROP systems to monitor implementation of gender commitments.

▶   Widely share these tools for adaptation by other national and regional agencies, and widely publicise the results of monitoring.

▶   Support actions to better integrate gender across all regional frameworks by requiring that gender experts are involved in all regional planning processes and by supporting the development of systems and structures to facilitate high-level multi-sectoral ownership of gender equality.

▶   Support the establishment of a regional human rights mechanism with strong special procedures for the protection and promotion of women's human rights.

Civil society

▶   Support the call for high level multi-sectoral mechanisms for gender equality at national and regional levels.

▶   Lobby nationally and regionally for the establishment of a regional human rights mechanism.

▶   Strengthen networks and partnerships that will facilitate equal participation of women in national and regional mechanisms.

3.9. Critical Area I: Human rights of women

3.9.1.   The Pacific Islands region has by far the lowest ratification rates worldwide of the core international human rights treaties (Jalal 2008b). The human rights of women in the Pacific are violated in many different ways, covering the full spectrum of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The following represents only a few of many examples.

3.9.2.   Gender-based violence including domestic violence is rampant (see Section 3.4).

Imrana Jalal and Virisila Buadromo, Pacific women's human rights advocates, at the UN

3.9.3.   Harmful practices in parts of Melanesia include:
the burning alive of mainly women accused of sorcery, payback or punishment rape, forced marriage to one's rapist or as part of a dispute settlement, and polygamy. Imprisonment for adultery is another issue in PNG, and the mistreatment of widows is seen in Melanesia and Tonga (Jalal 2009).

3.9.4.   In some PICTs, including PNG, Kiribati and Solomon Islands, there are reports of men prostituting their wives and their male and female children. Female 'guest workers' in the sex trade and other industries, particularly those who have been trafficked, face high risks of sexual harassment, exploitation, violence and HIV infection. Their vulnerable immigration status and lack of citizen's rights make them easy targets of intimidation and coercion. This experience in turn prevents them from coming forward to seek support services. There are reports of women being trafficked to Palau from China and the Philippines to work in karaoke bars as hostesses and sex workers, in private homes as domestics, and on construction sites. Some employers recruit women to work in Palau through fraudulent representation of contract terms and conditions of employment (US Department of State 2009). Trafficking of Asian women for prostitution is an issue noted by the US State Department but there are no in-country resources to support these women to escape and return home (US Department of State 2006). Sex tourism and the exploitation of women through prostitution are major issues in Guam, and these issues are expected to worsen with the increasing military presence there.

3.9.5.   Women do not enjoy equality in political participation, as discussed in Section 3.7.

3.9.6.   Their civil rights are also breached in law and in practice in some countries. For example, in Kiribati, Nauru and Vanuatu citizenship and immigration laws discriminate against women. In Vanuatu under section 10 of the Citizenship Act (CAP 112), a foreign woman married to a Ni-Vanuatu man is entitled to automatic citizenship, whereas a foreign man married to a Ni-Vanuatu woman does not have the same automatic right (Amnesty International 2008). Because of this discrimination, some Pacific women who marry foreign men are forced to leave their own country. Similar discriminatory legislation exists in Kiribati, where children born to women with a foreign husband are denied citizenship, while the same restrictions do not apply to men with foreign wives (Jalal 2008b).

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3.9.7.   Women's right to non-discrimination in the family is regularly violated. Family matters are often left to customary rules that discriminate against women, and written law is often discriminatory as well. In Kiribati, for example, custodial rights of a putative father of a child born out of marriage discriminate against women. Where a man does not deny paternity of such a child, he will automatically have exclusive custodial rights of the child once the child is two years old. Many women would rather not file for an affiliation case and thus forgo the necessary financial assistance to avoid losing their children (Amnesty International 2010). In PNG a village court convicted a widow and sentenced her to a term of six months' imprisonment for being involved with another man, basing its decision on a customary practice that did not allow widows to have subsequent relationships. Although this decision was eventually overturned by a higher court (Jalal 2008b), these types of practices and attitudes are still widespread. In Vanuatu and Solomon Islands, some women enter into marriage through 'bride-price payment', a practice considered to encourage men to view women as property (US Department of State 2008). This attitude is frequently cited as a reason for male violence: 'she was bought and paid for and won't do what she's told'.

3.9.8.   Women's rights to land and housing in many PICTs are similarly curtailed by legal and customary systems that discriminate against women, most of which are legitimised by national constitutions. In Tonga, women are legally prohibited from owning land, while all males are guaranteed land under the Constitution. In some countries, such as PNG, Vanuatu and Tuvalu, while the written law does not overtly discriminate in this way, customary land systems that discriminate against women in land ownership and control are recognised and perpetuated. Even in matrilineal areas such as in parts of Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and the Marshall Islands, women's traditional role and social status as landowners have been eroded with the introduction of patriarchal religious, legal and political systems, commercial resource exploitation and the cash economy (Stege et al. 2008).

3.9.9.   Pacific governments acknowledge that women and girls experience gender-based discrimination in their public and private lives. All countries in the region have ratified CEDAW, with the exception of Nauru, Palau and Tonga (see Table 14). The American territories of Guam, CNMI and American Samoa also do not have the protection of CEDAW by virtue of the USA's failure to ratify it to date. In Nauru, CEDAW has not been ratified because of archaic laws that need amending, a lack of qualified people available to draft new laws, and the government's lack of prioritisation of CEDAW. In Palau there is still widespread misunderstanding of CEDAW and the benefits it brings for women and society overall. In 2009 the Tongan Parliament explicitly refused to ratify CEDAW, stating that it goes against Tongan culture.

3.9.10.   To date, Fiji Islands, Samoa, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Cook Islands and PNG have submitted either initial or combined initial and periodic CEDAW reports. The metropolitan territories of France, New Zealand and the United Kingdom have done the same, though with varying and sometimes very limited coverage of the Pacific Islands under their administration.

3.9.11.   Cook Islands, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu have ratified or acceded to the CEDAW Optional Protocol, as have France (including its Pacific territories of New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna), New Zealand (including on behalf of Niue and Tokelau) and the United Kingdom (including its Pacific territory of Pitcairn).

Table 14: CEDAW ratifications and examinations among PICTs since 1979

Country/territory	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1999)	Examination dates
American Samoa (US territory)	*Not party to CEDAW*		
CNMI (US territory)	*Not party to CEDAW*		
Cook Islands	11 Aug 2006	27 Nov 2007	39th session, 2007
Fiji Islands	28 Aug 1995		26th session, 2002 46th session, 2010
French Polynesia (via France)	14 Dec 1983	9 Jun 2000	29th session, 2003 & 40th session, 2008
FSM	1 Sep 2004		
Guam (US territory)	*Not party to CEDAW*		
Kiribati	17 Mar 2004		No report submitted
Nauru	*Not party to CEDAW*		
New Caledonia (via France)	14 Dec 1983	9 Jun 2000	29th session, 2003 & 40th session, 2008
Niue (via New Zealand)	10 Jan 1985	7 Sep 2000	29th session, 2003
Palau	*Not party to CEDAW*		
PNG	12 Jan 1995		46th session, 2010
Pitcairn (via UK)	7 Apr 1986	17 Dec 2004	21st session 1999 41st session 2008
RMI	2 Mar 2006		No report submitted
Samoa	25 Sep 1992		32nd session, 2005
Solomon Islands	6 May 2002	6 May 2002	No report submitted
Tokelau (via New Zealand)	10 Jan 1985	7 Sep 2000	29th session, 2003
Tonga	*Not party to CEDAW*		
Tuvalu	6 Oct 1999		44th session 2009
Vanuatu	8 Sep 1995	17 May 2007	38th session, 2007
Wallis & Futuna (via France)	14 Dec 1983	9 Jun 2000	29th session, 2003 & 40th session, 2008

Source: United Nations Human Rights Treaty Collection, 2010

3.9.12. There has been a significant increase in Pacific women's understanding and use of human rights as a conduit for change. Legally binding human rights instruments combined with human rights training, analysis and support from a range of agencies including SPC's RRRT and Human Development Programme, FWRM and FWCC have laid the groundwork for much stronger advocacy in the region on the full range of women's issues. Rights-based advocacy continues to proliferate, and continued support in this area is needed.

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A.   Examples of successful policies, legislative change and programmes and projects by government or other actors

3.9.13.   Legislative and policy-making progress and challenges as well as the progress and impact of CEDAW reporting are summarised in Sections 2.2 and 2.3.

3.9.14.   In 2007–2008 UNIFEM Pacific and the UNDP Pacific Centre developed comprehensive desk reviews and publications to assess the degree to which the national laws of 10 Pacific countries comply with CEDAW. These reviews show both successes and major challenges for CEDAW legislative compliance in the Pacific. They have proven to be very useful for gender equality advocates in governments, CSOs and regional agencies alike seeking to understand and influence the differing legislative situations in a wide range of country contexts.

3.9.15.   In Fiji Islands, FWRM, RRRT and the UNDP Pacific Centre collaborated on a pilot project to address one of the most significant forms of systemic human rights violation in the Pacific: women's lack of enjoyment of their right to adequate housing and land. Regional and national consultations were held with key stakeholders in government departments and organisations involved in providing housing. During regional consultations, women's stories and case studies were developed and a framework for the rights-based analysis of women's land and housing was developed and utilised. RRRT and UNDP are in the process of adapting a toolkit based on the one developed by the Housing and Land Rights Coalition to analyse women's rights to adequate housing and land in the Pacific context, which could be used on a regional basis (ESCAP 2009b).

B.   Examples of obstacles encountered and remaining gaps and challenges

3.9.16.   The RPPA notes that 'although human rights are enshrined in the constitutions and legislation of PICTs, institutional, attitudinal and social barriers often prevent women from gaining full protection of their legal systems or exercising their legal rights. Cultural beliefs, religious practices and social bias, and a lack of awareness of legal rights hinder the exercise of rights'.

3.9.17.   There is very strong resistance in the Pacific to changing to laws and practices in ways that will protect women's human rights. Mirroring this attitude is a widespread lack of political will and commitment by governments to advance legislation, policies and programmes of this nature, or to police and enforce women's rights. Harmful practices are often prosecuted or dealt with under general non-specific criminal laws, outdated or ineffective laws, or laws that are not effectively implemented due to patriarchal attitudes or lack of resources (Jalal 2009).

3.9.18.   Opponents of change often try to frame human rights as an imposed Western idea based on individual rights, when the Pacific way centres on family and communal rights.

3.9.19.   Gap areas in human rights treaty ratification, advocacy and analysis include economic, social and cultural rights such as the right to food, water, housing, health, reproductive freedom, sanitation and livelihoods.

3.9.20. The deterioration of human rights in Fiji Islands has continued since the coup of December 2006. Serious human rights issues include increasing media censorship, visitations and arbitrary questioning of citizens by military personnel while being held without a warrant, dismissal of magistrates, harassment of critics, unanswered police brutality and the abrogation of the Constitution (Amnesty International n.d.).

3.9.21. Female human rights defenders have been targets of harassment and oppression. For example, in Fiji Islands women's rights activists have been detained by the military for publicly criticising the military coup, and have had travel bans placed on them (Amnesty International 2009). In PNG in November 2005 a female human rights defender disappeared, with the suggestion that the reason related to her work on women's rights (Amnesty International 2006).

3.9.22. Women human rights activists describe a climate of male dominance at all levels of decision-making, lack of understanding of gender issues by the male-dominated parliaments, gender-biased laws and political policies dependent on culture, the political will of male politicians, and skewed finance and election practices.

C.   Lessons learned

3.9.23. There is an ongoing need for technical regional agencies such as SPC's Human Development Programme and RRRT and the regional UN offices to continue to work at national and regional levels supporting governments in meeting their commitments under CEDAW, the BPA and the RPPA through research, advocacy and capacity building of NWMs and targeted audiences such as those in decision-making positions.

Key Actions

Governments

▶ Review policies and strategies related to national development and the justice sector alongside the BPA and RPPA strategic objectives on Human Rights of Women to ensure they are aligned.

▶ Support the ratification of CEDAW and its Optional Protocol in those countries that have not yet ratified them.

▶ Support the establishment of national and regional human rights mechanisms to enforce women's human rights.

▶ Disseminate information on the human rights of women widely, including through the media, educational institutions, religious institutions and community development work.

Donors and development partners

▶ Ensure all regional programmes take a rights-based approach and in particular respect and promote the human rights of women.

▶ Support the establishment of national and regional human rights mechanisms to enforce women's human rights.

Civil society

▶ Strengthen networks and partnerships for continued and increased effort to promote the human rights of women.

▶ Lobby for the establishment of national and regional human rights mechanisms to enforce women's human rights.

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See the BPA Diagnosis and Strategic Objectives on Women and the Media at
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/media.htm

Training women radio broadcasters, CETC, SPC

3.10.1. The rapid explosion in ICT in all PICTs is opening up new opportunities for women to connect into regional and global educational, recreational, and economic development networks. Electronic communication networks already play a key role in gender education and in understanding and working to achieve the CEDAW, BPA and RPPA goals.

A. Examples of successful policies, legislative change and programmes and projects by government or other actors

3.10.2. Women have seized the opportunities ITC offers to connect with each other, as well as to learn about and mobilise around gender equality. Issues-based networks include: Women Peace and Human Security (femLINKpacific), Buka-based NGO Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency, Vois Blong Mere in Solomon Islands and Mafafine Moe Famili in Tonga; anti-domestic violence networks (FWCC); energy network PEG-net (SOPAC); multimedia campaigns associated with human rights such as Girls Can Do Anything (FWRM); and the Pacific WAVE (Women Advancing a Vision of Empowerment) media network. The WAVE network is the only regional mainstream women's media network and members currently include women media workers from 13 countries. The Pacific Women's Information Network (Pacwin) hosted by SPC is a major regional networking and information-sharing forum on all issues related to gender equality and the advancement of women, with members numbering over 600 (regional and international) and an average of three to seven email communications per day.

3.10.3. Some women are starting to use ICT to explore educational, economic and development opportunities. For example, Samoa's Women in Business Development Inc. markets fine mats, handicrafts and virgin coconut oil products globally through website sales and orders. Other examples include Samoa's Fesootai network of community-based tele-centres (11 of which are managed and operated by women's committees); Niue's Learning Centres, which introduce women to ICT and the various functions they might use; the Pacific Graduate Women's Net (PGWnet); and the Small Islands Communities online discussions (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – UNESCO). Women in the public service also connect via the Pacific Village Online project, which links all the public services in the region with a database of national codes of conduct. The Pacific Rural Internet Connectivity System (PacRICS) recently extended its free Internet connection at 40 public good sites for another 12 months. This free service includes the upgrade of modems and transmitters.

3.10.4. Since 2004 femLINKpacific has provided an important 'suitcase radio' model for women's media networks. Its successful use of this model has demonstrated that women are able to use media technology to enable rural women and young women to not only access news and information but also produce their own content to highlight their priorities.

3.10.5. Two national media organisations that have recently developed gender policies are the Fiji Broadcasting Corporation (2007) and Palau Office of Broadcasting Services (2008). It remains to be seen how these policies will be implemented, and monitoring and reporting under them will be key.

B.   Examples of obstacles encountered and remaining gaps and challenges

3.10.6. There is an absence of national and regional mechanisms for standard-setting in media and communications (electronic, print, visual and audio). This gap contributes to the continuing portrayal of negative and degrading stereotypes of women in the media.[31] There is also untrammelled entry of international programmes, many of which present stereotypical and negative pictures of women's experiences, and foreign advertisements promoting consumerism. The Pacific Women in Media Action Plan led by UNESCO and SPC in 2007 highlights the need for media guidelines, standards and practices to explicitly state a commitment to gender equality. Media gender monitoring projects are needed to address the negative and stereotyped portrayal of women in the media. The Pacific WAVE media network is a possible means to follow through on monitoring activities.

3.10.7. Overall there is a serious lack of gender policies being adopted and applied within media and ICT initiatives both at national and regional levels. For example, the regional PacRICS project implementation plan has no gender-related indicators.

3.10.8. Feedback from a recent WAVE meeting indicates that some media organisations have incorporated elements of gender sensitivity in reporting into their newsroom code of ethics.

3.10.9. Access to ICT is not evenly spread. There is a danger that rural women especially are becoming further marginalised in the new 'digital divide' due partly to affordability but also to the lack of infrastructure to provide services to rural areas. Similarly, projects to provide computers in schools favour those living in urban areas.

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31. *http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/38sess.htm*

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3.10.10. There is an absence of ongoing and cumulative media training for NWMs and gender advocates. Further, NWMs have yet to realise the power of media as a tool to progress BPA and RPPA goals. Media-related outputs are not systematically included in programme planning, and responses to newspaper and other reports that impact on women's lives are rare. NWMs do not figure prominently as 'generators' of gender education or media releases and relationships with media representatives (print, radio, television) are usually informal and irregular. Solomon Islands is an exception. Here, the broadcasting unit has a close relationship with the NWM. In general, however, it is essential that NWMs and women's groups throughout the region gain media training to help them capitalise on the major role that media can play in advocating for gender equality.

3.10.11. Advocacy for women's membership on broadcasting and television boards is also needed. The Global Media Gender Monitoring Project (Gallagher 2005) found that in Fiji Islands, where 49% of the population is female, only 20% of people featured in the news are women.[32] This percentage includes those who work in the news, present the news and are the subject of news. Extensive work is needed throughout the region to establish gender balance in the news industry.

3.10.12. Most PICTs need regulatory frameworks addressing content for community-based media operations as well as a policy for the equitable operation of community information centres. Policies should also ensure that participation in media training programmes and in the production of content is inclusive and reflects the diversity of the communities.

Ruci Mafi, Regional Media Centre, SPC

3.10.13. Anecdotal reports are that the availability and use of cell phones and email in PICTs has contributed to increased violence against women as husbands and partners become suspicious of these new means of communication. Further study is needed in this area to fully understand and address ways in which new technologies may be harming women and girls.

C.   Lessons learned

3.10.14. Women's electronic networks have an immense potential for change. Among possible models for others to emulate are the Women Peace and Human Security network, which has succeeded in gaining a place for women's groups and civil society groups in FRSC Track II discussions (see Section 3.5), and the FWCC anti-domestic violence network, which has built up a strong and informed cadre of female and male advocates in most PICTs.

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32. *The Global Media Monitoring Report was coordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication (www.whomakesthenews.org).*

3.10.15. Pacific women have a hunger for information in their own languages and for spaces to discuss development issues. This high level of interest can be leveraged by building on the power, efficiency and reach of radio to communicate, inform, educate and build networks across many groups of women. Women's participation is dependent on their access to information in the vernacular, and safe spaces to discuss their issues.

3.10.16. The Suitcase Radio project featured all the requirements of a robust project and can act as a model for other initiatives to strengthen women's access to and participation in informational media. First, it involved research to identify which media women preferred and were most likely to access. Conducted in Fiji Islands, PNG, India and the Philippines, this research showed that oral forms of communication, such as story-telling, popular theatre and face-to-face interaction, were the most empowering way of sharing information between intermediary groups and grassroots women, and that radio was the most accessible communication tool for facilitating this interaction (Bhagwan Rolls and Narayan 2008). Radio was preferred because of its low cost, accessibility in rural areas, linguistic flexibility, interactivity (for example, through talkback programmes), ease of use and lack of dependence on either electricity or literacy. Second, the project was participatory and involved multiple partners, including donors, youth who were trained in carrying out and recording the rural interviews, NGOs, national women's groups whose members would be reached through the radio suitcase, and various agencies that would commit to preparing regular quality news segments. Third, it produced a handbook that: outlined the benefits of community radio as a community education tool; described how communities can establish their own community radios, including through the valuable step of establishing partnerships; and provided details about necessary equipment. Finally, the information collected through the project's monitoring and evaluation process covered: data on the numbers of women participating (as listeners or as makers of news); the empowerment these women gained through their participation; the numbers of women participating in democratic processes; the young people trained in interviewing skills; and the nurturing of intergenerational relationships between rural women and youth.

Key Actions

Governments

▶ Review or develop national media policies and strategies with reference to the BPA and RPPA strategic objectives on Women and the Media to ensure they are aligned.

▶ Support training of NWMs and other gender advocates in the use of the media to progress the BPA and RPPA goals including through the preparation of media releases on gender-related issues and strategies for responding to media reports that present negative and stereotypical images of women.

▶ Support training of the media to increase awareness and encourage the promotion of the BPA and RPPA goals.

▶ Develop policies and programmes to give rural women and communities access to information and discussion forums on gender and development issues, including through ICT.

Donors and development partners

▶ Support programmes aimed at women and media including the expansion of innovative projects to enhance rural women's access to ICT.

▶ Integrate gender into and develop gender-related indicators for all regional ICT strategies.

Civil society

▶ Ensure that programmes and strategies include women in the media component.

▶ Network and partner with existing women in the media groups to ensure strong media coverage of your work including in mainstream media.

▶ Develop capacity within your organisations to develop media publicity on the gender dimensions of your work.

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See the BPA Diagnosis and Strategic Objectives on Women and the Environment at
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/environ.htm

Community agriculture initiative, SPC, Fiji

3.11.1. Up to 50% of the region's biodiversity is at risk from the introduction of exotic plant and animal species, unsustainable development practices, population growth and natural disasters (AusAID 2008b). Especially vulnerable are the smaller, ecologically fragile islands. Global crises including climate change and the fuel, food and financial crises of 2008–2009 are further challenging the resilience of the Pacific's community-based systems, while growing populations in some PICTs are placing severe pressure on already limited resources including overfishing, freshwater depletion and pollution.

3.11.2. Women and communities rely on land and sea resources for family needs, income generation and exchange goods. Whether made on a small scale (such as family cash-cropping) or large scale (such as release of family land for logging projects, mineral extraction, or palm oil plantations), these resource decisions have usually been made by male family members, while women and girls have borne the brunt of their consequences. For example, many women now walk longer distances to food gardens and fishing areas and face chronic water shortages, water pollution and health issues. Some of these decisions – such as the establishment of mining camps in rural areas – increase girls' vulnerability to prostitution, as well as heightening the risk of teenage pregnancies, STIs and weakened family systems. Increasingly, aspirations for modern goods and services and the commercial valuing of land are becoming a source of family and community strife.

3.11.3. Women's access to land and land rights is a major development issue in all PICTs, as is women's participation in decision-making forums relating to natural resource use. Both are complex and highly sensitive issues given the relationship between family systems and customary land.

3.11.4. Food security has become a major issue in the Pacific as environmental, demographic and economic pressures mount. SPC's Land Resource Development Plan focuses on food and nutrition security, sustainable resource management and biosecurity and trade facilities, all of which are central to women's basic needs. Organic agriculture and fair trade have been listed as a priority, especially for rural communities. The focus of the centre of excellence for atoll agriculture research and development (Kiribati) is on technology to help atoll farmers increase their production and increase food security.

3.11.5. The 39th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting, held in August 2008 in Niue, recognised food security as an issue of increasing importance and called on all Pacific countries to address food security issues on a multi-sectoral basis and, where possible, to increase the production and supply of healthy food. In response to this concern and to progress the initiative on a regional basis, a Pacific Food Security Technical Working Group was established in late 2008. Comprised of representatives from WHO, SPC, FAO, UNICEF and PIFS, this group aimed to develop a regional food security policy document and guide the process of organising a regional food summit. The resulting Pacific Food Summit, held from 21–23 April 2010 in Port Vila, Vanuatu, subsequently endorsed the Framework for Action on Food Security in the Pacific. There are seven main themes in the framework. Women's access to nutritious food and their role in food production is recognised under the 'vulnerable groups' theme. This characterisation of women as a 'vulnerable group' rather than half the population whose contribution and priorities should be on an equal footing with other decision-makers and 'mainstream' priorities is unfortunate and outdated, and perpetuates rather than rectifies women's marginalisation.

A. Examples of successful policies, legislative change and programmes and projects by government or other actors

3.11.6. Research documenting women's traditional land rights, including the impact of modern natural resource management systems on them, is setting the scene for more serious discussions on women's rights to land (Stege et al. 2008). Significant work remains to be done in this area, although some small gains are being seen. For example, Solomon Islands women have made what has been called a 'middle line' gain in land discussions, such as the 30% quota for women in the Lauru Land Conferences.

3.11.7. Organic farming has had some success and is a potential growth area for Pacific women. The priority areas of the Pacific Organic Standards 2008 all open up choices for rural women. These areas are: economic development, environmental protection, improved health, and opportunities for Pacific smallholder farmers to link into global export markets. Samoa's Women in Business Development Inc. continues to play a lead role in advocacy and training for organic farming and the certification of organic farming, in partnership with Samoa's Ministry of Agriculture.

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3.11.8. SPC's Division of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) targets women in its activities, as the contribution of women in Pacific fisheries is often under-valued and misinterpreted due to gender stereotypes. Gender training is carried out for participants (male and female) and fisheries staff. More work needs to be done, however, and FAME has indicated that it will: work with other sections of SPC to address gender issues, promote the involvement of all sectors of the community in decision-making on resource issues, promote careers in fisheries for women, and endeavour to improve the gender balance of its professional staff as an example to the region. A gender analysis will also be undertaken on the soon to be implemented EU-funded SciCOFish (scientific support for the management of coastal and oceanic fisheries in the Pacific Islands region) project, with a similar exercise undertaken for future projects developed and implemented by FAME. Monitoring and evaluation of these commitments, guided by gender equality experts, will be critical to assess the extent to which they are being carried out and contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment.

3.11.9. An impressive set of sex-disaggregated databases have been built up in the past five years. They are especially strong in some SPC programmes, such as those of FAME, the Pacific Regional Oceanic and Coastal Fisheries Programme (PROCFish), and the DSAP agriculture project. Questions remain, however, as to how the data are used and what happens to them when projects end.

B.   Examples of obstacles encountered and remaining gaps and challenges

3.11.10. While some women and women's groups are participating more in developing national plans of action for the environment, climate change, disaster management and food security, overall they are still largely absent at national and regional decision-making tables, and rural women's needs and perspectives are not prioritised by government. Women's groups have nonetheless voiced their concerns on environmental management issues. For example, FWRM argued fiercely against plans under Fiji's Water Authority Bill to privatise water, on the grounds that making fresh water a commodity rather than a fundamental right would have an adverse impact on communities and particularly on women's work burden.[33]

3.11.11. Further, there is still a tendency to frame women as holders of traditional knowledge and/or community mobilisers rather than as people who want to grow their scientific knowledge and technology skills so that they can apply it to their daily needs. Promoting opportunities for women's careers in science and technology is another area in which action is needed (see Section 3.2).

3.11.12. New land legislation and discussions such as Samoa's Land Registration Bill 2009, which is aimed at freeing up 'idle' land for commercial and agriculture use, and Vanuatu's increasing focus on land alienation as a key feature of its economic development strategy, will undoubtedly undermine Pacific women's already tenuous access to land. In Fiji Islands, landowners of the former sugarcane farms are being asked to use them or otherwise lease them to the Fiji Government for commercial and agricultural use.

3.11.13. There is an absence of systematic research and training to show the relationship between natural resource use and resource depletion and to teach sustainable practices.

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33. *Australian Associated Press, March 8, 2007.*

C.   Lessons learned

3.11.14. Strategies focusing on activities that can be done around the rural household and that respond to food security and income generation simultaneously, such as organic farming, are important.

3.11.15. It is essential to have data to show women's participation, concerns and interests and to set the basis for building further training and career development, including entrepreneurial skills.

Key Actions

Governments

▶ Review national environmental and natural resource policies and strategies alongside the BPA and RPPA strategic objectives on Women and the Environment to ensure they are aligned.

▶ Prioritise women's rights to land, clean water, sanitation and affordable energy sources in national development plans.

Donors and development partners

▶ Support women's access to technical training and information about climate change, disaster management, food security and energy as a means of better equipping them to adapt their own practices and participate in local, national and regional decision-making processes.

▶ Support and conduct research into the impact of climate change, natural disasters, food insecurity, lack of sustainable energy and resource use practices on women, and ensure the results inform and are factored into relevant regional decision-making forums and plans of action.

▶ Support and expand research on women's land use and rights, and help ensure women's equal participation in national and regional land use discussions and the development of legislation and policies protecting women's rights across all customary and legal land systems.

Civil society

▶ Strengthen networks and partnerships that support the integration of gender perspectives and the special situation of women into the development and implementation of land, natural resource and environmental management strategies and policies.

3.12.   Critical Area L: The girl-child

> See the BPA Diagnosis and Strategic Objectives on the Girl-Child at
> **http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/girl.htm**

3.12.1. All PICTs have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child either directly or through their metropolitan territory, with the exception of Tokelau.[34] Implementation remains a problem, particularly in areas where custom clashes with national constitutions and UN treaties. Public education on children's rights continues to be delivered primarily by NGOs, directed at government workers, communities, children and young people.

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34. *Tokelau is often included in the ratifications of human rights treaties by New Zealand, but this was not the case with the CRC.*

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Youth Day, New Caledonia

A. **Examples of successful policies, legislative change and programmes and projects by governments or other actors**

3.12.2. Many NGOs (e.g. the Save the Children Fund) provide havens for young people and families seeking help when victimised by abuse. They also provide public education, hold national forums and provide training for workers in the health, justice and education sectors about children's rights (AusAID 2008a). The Cook Islands Workers Association and the Ministry of Internal Affairs have developed brochures addressing the human rights of young people. The country's domestic violence unit has raised awareness of the issue among communities, church groups and schools. In November 2005 Punanga Tauturu Inc., in partnership with FWCC and other NGOs, established a male advocacy group on the island of Rarotonga, Cook Islands, that works with men to change attitudes and raise awareness about abuse, including against children (ECPAT International 2009).

3.12.3. UNICEF Pacific has introduced a parenting module into its life skills training manual for young Pacific Islanders. In Marshall Islands, where teenage pregnancy rates are high, parenting support for teenage mothers is available from both an NGO and a government organisation. Elsewhere in the region, initiatives to involve fathers as well as mothers in learning about good parenting methods include the Pacific Children's Program and Pacific Stars Lifeskills Project (UNICEF 2005).

3.12.4. Young people have mobilised themselves on development issues in the Pacific, including through their participation in regional and national youth summits. Declarations and outcome statements[35] from these summits are reflected in regional frameworks, which call for greater participation of young people and urgent attention to their development needs, including gender-specific action points.[36]

3.12.5. UNICEF's Policy, Advocacy, Planning and Evaluation (PAPE) programme is an attempt to place children at the centre of national policy, legislation, planning, budgeting and reporting (UNICEF n.d.). It supports the development of evidence-based social and economic policies that address the rights of girls, boys and women, and assists governments to ensure that disaggregated data on these groups are integrated into planning, monitoring and evaluation systems. The Government of Vanuatu completed the first ever Pacific-based child poverty and disparity analysis report in 2009 facilitated by the University of New South Wales Social Policy Research Centre. The study follows UNICEF's global methodology by focusing on the poverty and disadvantage faced by families with children and looks in detail at how public policies and resources could more effectively reduce child deprivations. PAPE also works with the four other UNICEF Pacific programmes (Child Protection, Health and Sanitation, Education, and HIV and AIDS) to ensure there is a system of results-based planning and management; to ensure data and advice are available on specific areas like HIV, juvenile justice, youth, health and nutrition; to support communication for development; and to assist in research, monitoring and evaluations of UNICEF-supported programmes.

3.12.6. In 2009 PAPE collaborated with the Child Protection Programme to advance outcomes for child protection through legislative reform and development. The issue of child abuse is rarely understood in economic terms, thus the initiative sought first to develop a costing model to calculate the cost of child abuse and loss of economic potential in PICTs. Second, it developed a model for calculating the costs involved in reforming the legislative and child welfare systems, for the purpose of clearly identifying the overall economic benefits of investing in children's rights. The Child Protection Legislative Reform Costing Model, piloted in Vanuatu, takes into account the context of developing countries, including their limited availability of data and their minimal (if any) investment in child abuse prevention and response services. This model presents a promising approach for replication in other PICTs, and its results should be closely watched by all PICTs and development partners.

B.   Examples of obstacles encountered and remaining gaps and challenges

3.12.7. Because not all births occur in facilities where they can be recorded, many are unregistered in the Pacific Islands region. Some programmes are starting to address this gap in data. For example, in Samoa the government pays village women representatives a fee to liaise between the government and those villages where children are born with the assistance of traditional birth attendants, and by this means the births get registered.

3.12.8. In addition, there are many child mothers in the region as a result of early marriages, unprotected teenage sex, sexual abuse or harmful traditional practices that discriminate against girls (Ali 2006).

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35. *Pacific Youth Charter 2006, Pacific Tofamamao 2015 Declaration (Youth and MDG), Suva Point Declaration 2009.*
36. *Pacific Youth Strategy 2010, Pacific Plan – Youth and the Pacific Plan.*

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2000 Pacific Arts Festival, New Caledonia: "Pacific cultures on the move together"

3.12.9. Some PICTs allow only male children to succeed to their father's interests in land, while others permit only daughters to succeed their mother's interests. Some customs give preference to female children, others to male children, and they differ in their treatment of children born to married and unmarried parents and of adopted children. In Kiribati and Tuvalu, discriminatory customary practices providing for different treatment of male and female heirs are formalised in written laws (McMurdo 2009).

3.12.10. The impact of ethnic tension on the lives of girls is not well documented but is nonetheless evident. For example, the ethnic tension between Fijians and Indo-Fijians has resulted in preferential schooling arrangements based on religion and ethnicity, which perpetuate separatism and elitism in current and future generations (Sherborne 2008).

3.12.11. In many PICTs, facilities and opportunities for the disabled tend to be accorded low priority in national education and health budgets, and opportunities for the physical and mental development of the disabled may be almost non-existent unless NGOs are active in this area (UNICEF Pacific et al. 2005). This issue of invisibility and marginalisation is significant for both girls and boys with disabilities. In 2001 the Cook Islands Disability Identification Survey found that 50% of school-aged children with disabilities were not receiving any formal education (PIFS 2010a). Samoa's Ministry of Education has taken lessons from models used in other parts of the world to progress the issue of inclusive education. After conducting extensive consultations with communities and organising numerous training programmes for teachers, the Ministry adapted a toolkit for schools to support and promote inclusive education, with particular attention to addressing the needs of learners with disabilities (PIFS 2006b).

3.12.12. Progress, gaps and challenges in education are discussed in Section 3.2. The current economic crisis could propel more children away from school and into the labour force (especially boys) or into household tasks (especially girls). Child workers already make up an estimated 19% of the labour force in PNG and 14% in Solomon Islands (UNICEF et al. 2009). A US Department of Labour (2007) report identified the existence of child labour in most PICTs. For instance, in Fiji Islands, PNG and Samoa, children were found to work in agriculture, the informal sector, family businesses, and on the streets.

3.12.13. Children in many PICTs are exploited through the sex industry (Duncan and Voigt-Graf 2008). As confirmed in research commissioned by ESCAP, UNICEF and the NGO End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT International) in Cook Islands, Fiji Islands, Kiribati, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, child prostitution is prevalent throughout the Pacific, where the demand is often fuelled by male-dominated logging, fishing and mining industries (ESCAP 2009c). This is an area that still needs much work with respect to awareness raising, legislation and enforcement.

C.   Lessons learned

3.12.14. Innovative tools and strategies such as the PAPE economic costing model and Samoa's village birth registration system should be closely watched for their potential to bring change and accelerate progress. Where these strategies prove effective they can be emulated based on inter-regional sharing of best practices.

SPC Open Day, SPC, New Caledonia

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Key Actions

Governments

▶ Review policies and strategies in the national development, education, health and justice sectors alongside the BPA and RPPA strategic objectives on the girl-child to ensure they are aligned.

▶ Give particular priority to addressing major violations of the rights of the girl-child, including early marriages, sexual abuse, incest, child labour, child prostitution and other forms of child abuse and neglect.

▶ Consider innovative programmes to register all births, including in villages and remote locations.

▶ Establish and maintain programmes and policies to enable children with disabilities to live free from stigma and with equal opportunities for education, health services, economic participation, recreation, leisure and community participation.

Donors and development partners

▶ Support programmes that foster a culture of human rights and gender equality among children and youth.

▶ Support and expand the PAPE programme in child-centred policy, budgeting, legislative reform, planning, monitoring and evaluation, data collection and reporting into more PICTs.

Civil society

▶ Strengthen networks and partnerships to lobby for and monitor non-discrimination on grounds of sex and gender in all programmes and services directed at youth and children.

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4. Institutional development

4.1.   National mechanisms

4.1.1.   All PICTs have a national mechanism for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. While the status of these units cannot be compared given their differing contexts, generally NWMs are not located in strategic ministries (see Section 2.1). Their more peripheral location impacts on their ability to interact with and influence executive-level processes and decisions, including on budgetary allocations. It also influences the importance other line ministries may accord to the NWM and its mandate.

4.1.2.   Almost all Pacific NWMs are placed in multi-portfolio social ministries (see Table 4 in Section 2). 'Women' may be signposted in the ministry name, but not always. In FSM the women's desk sits in the Health Department and the one staff member is expected to fulfil her gender-related duties alongside her health portfolio responsibilities. In Guam, the Women's Bureau is presently under the Labour Department. The region has had no stand-alone women's ministry since Samoa's ministry was restructured as the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development in 2003. Tonga's NWM was located in the Prime Minister's office in 1993, but was transferred to the Deputy Prime Minister's office in 2004, and then was again relocated to the Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture in 2006. PNG recently approved the establishment of a new Office for the Development of Women in the Prime Minister's office, which will be comprised of both social and economic divisions. It will be responsible for policy advice, gender mainstreaming, implementation and monitoring of gender equality commitments, research, and strengthening of civil society partnerships.

4.1.3.   In smaller states especially, responsibility for gender work, including under CEDAW, the BPA and the RPPA, is shared between a government desk and a national women's organisation, such as WUTMI in Marshall Islands, AMAK in Kiribati and the National Council of Women in Tuvalu.

4.1.4.   In many cases, core budgets of NWMs barely cover salaries and a small amount of operational costs, and NWMs are generally very poorly equipped. Due to lack of proper national budgetary allocations to gender equality, NWMs rely heavily on donor-supported programmes (see Section 2.4). This reliance has serious implications for the effectiveness and sustainability of NWMs in the region. It has also created a discouraging cycle of NWMs focusing on donor priorities which do not necessarily reflect local gender equality needs, priorities and contexts.

4.1.5.   Virtually all NWMs are highly marginalised within their government structure and have little influence on the national political and policy agenda. There are, however, some positive exceptions. For example, Fiji Islands takes a whole of government approach, with the Women's Development Adviser having input into all government policies.

4.1.6. NWMs and gender work generally have low priority within PICT governments, and for the most part matters to do with gender equality are seen as the responsibility of NWMs rather than the whole of government. In addition, specific actions for women carried out by ministries outside the NWM are viewed as 'women's issues' and as contributing to the women's plans of action rather than as the core business of these ministries. There is little recognition of a whole of government approach and little understanding or acceptance of the place of gender equality principles in national planning. There are major difficulties in obtaining interest, commitment, consensus and agreement from other ministries to further gender-responsive policies and strategies. Meeting BPA and RPPA goals is generally dependent on the skills and commitment of individuals.

4.1.7. NWMs and gender equality advocates are rarely included in the visioning stages of projects carried out by sectoral agencies, despite this stage being one of the most strategically advantageous for promoting gender equality. In the early stages of planning for a national policy on women and agriculture, agricultural staff (and donors) in Samoa did not see a role for the NWM. Similarly, two regional projects, both of which included a considerable gender capacity-building component, did not include NWMs in the original discussions, or draw on their gender expertise and experience. The Development of Sustainable Agriculture in the Pacific (DSAP) project included extensive gender training for agriculture staff, a participatory community action model with targets for female, male and youth participation, and research on women's crops. Although well documented and implemented, this project did not involve the NWM in the early days. The PPDVP was also initially envisaged solely from a police perspective. The subsequent inclusion of FWCC and other VAW agencies in the project advisory team has become central to this project's success. NWMs and women's NGOs are now major stakeholders in the national activities being carried out under these projects, but these examples highlight the 'sectoral' or silo view that can still pervade the culture of line ministries and sectoral agencies.

4.1.8. There is confusion about whether the priority role of NWMs should be policy advice or service delivery. They have tended to focus more on the latter, particularly community mobilisation and education programmes. They have not, as a matter of routine, seen their programmes in terms of the policy and legislative actions they may need to initiate in order to progress the CEDAW, BPA and RPPA goals. Further, there has been a focus on developing horizontal collaborative partnerships rather than engaging at the executive level to enshrine women's rights in national laws, policies and processes. A number of NWMs that have successfully targeted action at executive, judicial and legislative levels noted that their success was the result of the long-term work of strong, politically astute and fearless women's NGOs and government staff. However, in most cases, there is insufficient knowledge, technical capacity and confidence within NWMs to influence policy, which perpetuates the focus on basic-level programming.

4.1.9. Both technical capacity and morale are low within many NWMs. Self-identified capacity-building needs include expertise in gender analysis, gender resource mobilisation, and gender approaches to development. There are also differences in capacity and knowledge between central government offices and rural or outer island women's offices or networks.

4.1.10. International reporting obligations are extremely demanding for most PICTs, particularly small island states, which do not have the staff or resources to properly meet these obligations. Although these processes are critical to local capacity and to national accountability, preparing five-yearly Beijing reviews, MDG reports, CEDAW reports and other international reports consumes already meagre resources.

4.1.11. The Pacific Islands region has no national human rights institutions (NHRI) that are consistent with the Paris Principles on the independence of NHRIs. Although Fiji Islands has had an NHRI in place for several years, its independence has been called into question since the military coup of 2006 and it accordingly does not meet the Paris Principles. PNG is investigating the possibility of establishing an NHRI. Further, as stated in Section 3.8, there is no regional human rights mechanism in the Pacific region. Working with the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the New Zealand Human Rights Commission explored the most suitable means of creating and reinforcing NHRIs in the region, as well as the possibility of establishing a regional human rights mechanism. In collaboration with PIFS, the Regional Office of OHCHR commissioned a study on the added value of integrating international human rights norms and standards into national human rights protection mechanisms (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights n.d.). The paper outlines in detail the merits of ratifying various core human rights treaties linking human rights and development under the Pacific Plan.

4.2. Focal points

4.2.1. Establishing effective gender focal points and hubs of gender expertise across government agencies and line ministries is central to gender mainstreaming. However, few PICTs have genuinely effective focal point systems in place. There is limited understanding of what a 'focal point' is and what role it should play. Where focal points are in place, they lack funds and are functionally weak and structurally marginalised.

4.3. Monitoring

4.3.1. Most NWMs report back to government through their annual reports and to their own ministries through quarterly reports and meetings. There are few systematic methods for reporting on gender equality commitments at the national level, though CEDAW reports are a major reporting mechanism for international commitments. MDG national reports are another key monitoring instrument.

4.3.2. Lines of responsibility and accountability for gender, both within NWMs and across the whole of government, are undefined across virtually all PICT government systems.

4.4. Gender mainstreaming capacity

4.4.1. In 2008 UNFPA assessed 10 Pacific Island countries on the extent to which their national development plans and strategies had mainstreamed gender and addressed the reproductive rights of women and girls (UNFPA 2008).[37] The results showed that gender is mainly addressed in a separate section of such plans rather than being mainstreamed, and that some countries' plans and strategies made virtually no mention of gender issues. The study has served as a baseline for a Multi-Country Programme for 2008–2012.

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37. *The countries covered are Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, Kiribati, RMI, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.*

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4.4.2. Pacific women recognised the weakness of gender mainstreaming capacity across the region at the 2007 Triennial Conference of Pacific Women. As a result SPC, in collaboration with ADB and UNIFEM, designed and launched a Gender Mainstreaming Capacity Stocktake and Support Initiative in 2008. The stocktake recognises that effective mainstreaming of gender and women's human rights requires a strong legal and policy framework, political commitment, accountability, a supportive organisational culture, resources and technical capacity across the whole of government. It seeks to measure these 'enabling environment' categories as well as the capacity of NWMs to act as catalysts for gender mainstreaming. By gauging the existing capacity and resources, and identifying gaps and areas for improvement, the project aims to help national governments develop specific strategies for enhancing the capacity to mainstream gender and women's human rights across all government sectors. The initiative is being carried out in phases, with six countries (Marshall Islands, FSM, PNG, Solomon Islands, Cook Islands and Tonga) participating in Phase One. Stocktake reports for those six PICTs are expected to be completed in 2010 (SPC Human Development Programme 2009). The research and discussions at national level have already had a positive impact in raising awareness of the need for and benefits of mainstreaming gender, and significant interest has been garnered among NWMs, national planning offices and some key line ministries.

4.4.3. Preliminary results have confirmed the very weak enabling environments for gender mainstreaming. Without exception, the Phase One countries had virtually no systematic mechanisms for gender mainstreaming; very low technical capacity for gender analysis, planning and budgeting; limited collection and use of gender indicators across government sectors; varying degrees of political will for (and often awareness of) gender issues; and wholly inadequate human and financial resources for gender mainstreaming. All of these areas need extensive strengthening and support.

4.4.4. The increasing number of line ministry meetings that some NWMs are being called on to attend may suggest that awareness of gender mainstreaming imperatives is on the rise. NWMs express fears that failure to attend to these requests would be interpreted as a lack of commitment on the part of women to national projects. However, given the scarcity of their staff resources, there is a danger that the focus and work of NWMs have or will become fragmented and too thinly spread. There is a need for gender mainstreaming to be owned more broadly across government, for NWMs to be better staffed and equipped to fulfil their catalytic role, and for NWMs to be strategic in assessing which partnership will have the greatest impact in progressing their priority goals.

4.4.5. The increasing numbers of women in high-level posts in the public service in many PICTs is seen to have the potential for improving gender mainstreaming interventions. However, it will take time to build relationships and agree to methods of engagement, and NWMs will need to be much better equipped to act as catalysts across the government bureaucracy and in executive-level deliberations in order for gender mainstreaming to take hold.

4.5. Indicators

4.5.1. Some NWMs have developed their own set of core indicators. Others use the RPPA. Still others have given priority to the MDGs in recent years. Even when NWMs had provided data to support certain activities, government agencies, such as Treasury, did not use them or support their use on the grounds that such data were of little use to their focus. In the current economic crisis, the attitude that the indicators are not an urgent issue is particularly apparent.

4.5.2. The tendency has been to monitor according to outputs achieved. It would be more effective to break down the 'big' issues, such as preventing and reducing violence against women, into a range of smaller and process-related indicators to address the complex and interrelated variables at play.

4.5.3. The Pacific Regional Information System (PRISM), originally funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), then by AusAID and now supported by SPC, gives national statistics offices (NSOs) the tools and the skills to develop, publish and maintain their own websites containing key statistical indicators, statistical summaries, reports, definitions and other documentation for the statistical indicators. The information from the NSO websites is then linked into the SPC PRISM website. In 2003 the PRISM project steering committee finalised a list of core and non-core statistical indicators. The indicators were selected based on three main criteria: (1) the technical expertise required to compile the indicator; (2) the relevance of the indicator to PICTs; and (3) the perceived 'sensitivity' of the indicator in the wider community context. The finalised PRISM indicators were grouped as: economic, social, environmental, communications and utilities, and tourism. The focus is on economic indicators desired by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, for loan and monitoring purposes, most of which have a series constructed for comparability over time. Many, though not all, of the indicators are sex disaggregated, particularly the traditional social indicators, and the PRISM programme is now working on adding both youth and gender databases.

4.5.4. It is often the latest international initiative – currently the MDGs – which occupies statistical resources and time commitments. The risk is that the moment the MDG programme comes to an end in 2015, these donor-funded data series will be weakened or discontinued. It is also important that these limited groupings of indicators do not become the 'end picture' for national statistics systems, given that they cover only a small number of key gender indicators. Independent and self-sustaining systems to monitor gender, based on the national context and women's key priorities, need to be the focus.

4.5.5. Given the persistent lack of gender-responsiveness of mainstream statistical programmes at both national and regional levels, SPC's Human Development Programme began developing a framework of gender indicators in 2006 based on an analysis of international best practices and regional contexts and priorities. A comprehensive multi-sectoral framework of gender indicators was finalised in late 2008 and is being rolled out through a series of workshops and national technical support. The objective is to enhance the collection, analysis, reporting and use of gender statistics for improved gender-responsive policy-making and planning, and to strengthen the capacity of NWMs to work with these indicators.

4.6. Role of different stakeholders

4.6.1. The main and sometimes only avenue for NWMs to interact at executive levels of government has been through their own Ministers and/or through female MPs. Given that women have such a low level of representation in politics, however, there are few parliamentary champions for gender equality, which makes progress difficult for NWMs and is seen to reinforce views that decision-making, and particularly executive decision-making, is the domain of males.

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4.6.2. NWMs have had some success in building partnerships across government and sectoral ministries through the use of formally instituted meetings, memoranda of understanding (MOUs), gender desks set up in line ministries and, more recently, participation in sector-wide approaches such as Vanuatu's Law and Justice Sector Strategy (2009–2014). CEDAW partnerships have been a major way of promoting partnerships more generally and developing understanding of CEDAW issues and processes. Generally NWMs appear to be comfortable and confident working with colleagues across the line ministries, many of whom are trusted friends from school days and/or wantok (family).

4.6.3. NWMs enjoy quite robust relationships with health and education ministries in particular. However, their involvement in infrastructure, economic development and natural resource projects, including basic resources such as land and water, is virtually non-existent.

4.6.4. Some tensions exist between NWMs and civil society organisations. CSOs are often better resourced, have better access to information through drawing on their largely issues-focused networks, and have more freedom to stand up for women's rights due to their independence from government.

4.6.5. Religious institutions have a critical role to play, including in integrating women into all levels of decision-making on a basis of equality with men. The RPPA recommends that religious organisations promote equal opportunities for men and women in their hierarchies (paragraph 124). This is an area in which much work still needs to be done.

4.6.6. Building a critical mass of youth who are knowledgeable about gender equality issues and processes is seen to be vital in all PICTs. Young people returning from regional training or leadership programmes are energised in articulating women's rights issues. Maintaining this momentum is at times very difficult, however, especially in smaller PICTs.

Woman in the clergy, Kiribati

4.6.7. The head of FWRM commented on the need for ongoing relationship-building as follows: 'Different strategies work at different times. What we have found is that in a fairly democratic space – pre-2006 in Fiji – the building of coalitions across civil society, local and international, and across government gained a lot of traction. This is really based more on building trusting relationships with individuals rather than these individuals understanding human rights and why it is important. However, now (in post-coup Fiji) this is so much harder because it means that we have had to develop new strategies to cater to new relationships … because previous relations are no longer appropriate'.[38]

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38. *Personal communication, January 2010.*

<div style="text-align: center;">**Key Actions**</div>

Governments

▶ Review the BPA and RPPA strategic goals on Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women, and identify national priorities for those actions that have not yet been addressed.

▶ Develop and seek endorsement of practical and achievable gender policies and strategic implementation plans including necessary budgets, and monitor, evaluate and update them regularly.

▶ Engage systematically with national development and sectoral strategy and action plan processes to mainstream gender issues throughout, and monitor the implementation of the gender elements.

▶ Focus limited resources on influencing high-level political and policy dialogue for gender equality, and partner with civil society for the delivery of community-based outreach and programme activities.

Donors and development partners

▶ Focus significantly more resources on strengthening national mechanisms for gender equality, such that the necessary systems and structures will be in place to achieve and sustain the full range of thematic gender objectives.

Civil society

▶ Strengthen networks and partnerships both amongst NGOs and with government in order to lobby for and ensure consultation of and engagement with women's organisations in institutional processes to mainstream gender across all national priority-setting, policy-making, planning and budgeting activities.

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5. *Conclusion and way forward*

5.1.1. A great number of challenges remain across the full spectrum of the BPA and RPPA goals, as has been highlighted throughout this report. Although each PICT has its own priorities and forward-looking plans, common priorities include continued and enhanced action to eliminate violence against women, improving women's health and access to health services, minimising the impact of climate change and natural disasters, developing or reviewing national women's policies, developing the capacity of NWMs and the whole of government for gender mainstreaming, and increasing women's participation in high-level decision-making, including ensuring that women's priorities take an equal place on national and regional political agendas. Specific 'key actions' for moving forward in these and other areas are set out in each section of this report.

5.1.2. In all areas, holistic and cross-sectoral processes and approaches that mirror the realities of women's lives and experiences are needed. Climate change, for example, affects food security, water, shelter, health, sanitation and livelihoods and in some cases competition for land, forced migration and fears about social cohesion and cultural security. Reproductive ill-health is a function of gender inequality at all levels of society, lack of access to health services and information, violence against women, discriminatory legal systems, harmful traditional practices and poor allocation of budgetary resources. The increasingly collaborative and multi-sectoral approach to eliminating violence against women and the holistic approach to data and research seen in the Sexual and Reproductive Risk Index are examples to be emulated across the spectrum of gender and development work in the region in the future.

5.1.3. Targeting and achieving a higher level of commitment at executive and parliamentary levels and facilitating realistic processes are necessary to translate BPA and RPPA goals into political action. A major need is to move beyond policy and implement the BPA and RPPA commitments.

5.1.4. Architectural reform is critically needed across the region and at all levels. Efforts and resources need to be significantly intensified to ensure that the necessary underlying institutions and mechanisms are in place to drive gender equality reforms; without this, they will continue to fall short. Support to NWMs as they strive to create spaces for action on gender commitments is essential, as are resources to develop whole of government systems for gender mainstreaming. Systems must also be developed to ensure that regional frameworks thoroughly integrate gender perspectives. CROP agencies need to focus significantly more resources on developing and implementing institutional systems and mechanisms so that all of their multi-sectoral programmes address both women's and men's needs and priorities. In all cases, strategies must be developed to transform the persistently marginalised and siloed 'gender desk' approach into one where gender equality is the mandate of a broad base of high-level, multi-sectoral players.

5.1.5. NWMs and NSOs must be supported and resourced to produce and use sex-disaggregated data and gender indicators. There is also a need to develop and understand the relationships between data sets so that data do not sit in isolated silos. Attention to process as well as output indicators and outcomes will help break down the seemingly large steps that the achievement of the BPA and RPPA goals currently implies.

5.1.6. Finally, throughout the region, there is a deficit of concrete information and measures on impacts of initiatives and activities, with reporting on activities and outputs still far more common. This gap makes it difficult to assess the real result of much of the ongoing work, particularly on the everyday lives of women.

5.1.7. Delegates to the 11th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women should develop cohesive, collaborative, targeted strategies for moving forward in these areas as well as in the 'key action' areas identified within each BPA Critical Area in this report. The fifteenth anniversary of the BPA and RPPA is an excellent time to reflect on the approaches, successes, obstacles and lessons of recent years and to develop new, innovative and transformative approaches to accelerate change for the benefit not only of Pacific women but of whole Pacific nations and societies.

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**For preparation of regional review and appraisals
in the context of the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing
Declaration and Platform for Action in 2010**

I. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations regional commissions will carry out a review and appraisal of progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000), in preparation for the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2010. The regional commissions will collaborate with the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in this process.

The review and appraisal of progress will cover the five-year period between the responses submitted by Member States to the questionnaire in 2004 and in 2009. It will identify achievements, gaps and challenges and provide an indication of areas where actions and initiatives are most urgent to further implementation.

In preparing the review and appraisal of progress, the regional commissions will utilize the responses of Member States to this questionnaire. In addition, a variety of sources of information and statistics will be drawn upon, including reports submitted by States parties under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; information generated in the context of the Commission on the Status of Women; regional action plans and national reports to regional bodies; as well as the outcomes of expert group meetings and other activities at regional level. Other sources of information include Common Country Assessments and the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, (CCA/UNDAFs), Poverty

Reduction Strategy Papers, (PRSPs), national Human Development Reports and national Millennium Development Goal (MDG) reports.

II. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire consists of four parts. Member States are requested to provide information on efforts made and progress achieved since the most recent review and appraisal in 2005.

In **Part One**, reporting States are invited to highlight **major overall achievements and obstacles** encountered in the implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Responses in Part One of the questionnaire should be no longer than 3 pages.

In **Part Two** of the questionnaire, reporting states are encouraged to provide specific examples of achievements, including policy development, legislative change, advocacy, awareness-raising, capacity-development and programmes and projects which they have undertaken on implementation in the **critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action** (except for critical area H which is covered in Part Three), as well as areas requiring further initiative and action identified in the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Obstacles and remaining gaps and challenges in relation to the critical areas of concern should also be identified and a summary of lessons learned provided. Response to Part Two of the questionnaire should be no longer than 10 pages.

Part Three focuses on **institutional development** or those structures and measures countries have put in place to support promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. It covers the critical area of concern H in the Platform for Action: Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, and chapters V on Institutional Arrangements and VI on Financial Arrangements, as well as actions identified in the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Information on national machineries, capacity-building programmes for line ministries, resource allocation, statistics and indicators, monitoring and accountability mechanisms and partnerships should be described in this section. Responses to Part Three of the questionnaire should be no longer than 4 pages in length.

In **Part Four** respondents are invited to provide information on the **remaining key challenges and constraints** in the reporting States, as well as any **plans for future actions and initiatives** to address these and to ensure full implementation of the Platform for Action in each of the critical areas of concern. Reporting States are encouraged, in particular, to indicate any **new commitments** they will make to accelerate implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly at national level over the next five years. Responses to Part Four of the questionnaire should be no longer than 3 pages. The annex provides some examples of issues which could be covered under each part of the questionnaire. These examples are provided as guidance only. Reporting States are not required to cover all these issues but should focus on issues which are most relevant in their national contexts. Additional issues not included in the annex can also be raised in the responses.

III. METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

The information being sought through the questionnaire is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Emphasis is placed on implementation, and reporting States are urged, as far as possible, to provide concrete information on impacts of initiatives and activities described. Activities and outputs and actions should be differentiated from achievements and impacts on the situation of women and on the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women. Reporting States are encouraged to provide quantitative data, disaggregated by sex and age, or to indicate where such data has already been submitted in other contexts. Countries wishing to provide information on indicators used at the national level to monitor activities for gender equality and empowerment of women may do so. Reporting States are also urged to provide information on the specific time periods for initiatives and actions taken.

For guidance, a list of reports submitted by Member States to the United Nations Secretariat prior to the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000), and the ten-year review and appraisal in the Commission on the Status of Women (2005), as well as the most recent reports submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, can be found on the website of the Division for the Advancement of Women (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw).

ANNEX: GUIDANCE ON ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED IN RESPONSES

The examples below are provided as guidance only. Reporting States are not required to cover these issues but should focus on issues which are most relevant in their national contexts. Additional issues not included in the annex can also be raised in the responses.

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Part One: Overview of achievements and challenges in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (3 pages)

Please note that the response to Part One of the questionnaire should contain highlights of achievements and challenges. The issues raised in this part can be discussed in more detail in responses to other parts of the questionnaire. For example, issues related to globalization would be discussed in more details under Part Two of the questionnaire and issues on gender responsive budgeting would be discussed under Part Three.

Guiding questions: The response could, for example, address the following issues and questions:

*a) Has a national policy on **gender equality and the empowerment of women** been adopted and at what level? Was a strategy or plan of action developed to support the implementation of the policy? What mechanisms were established for monitoring and how are different actors held accountable for its implementation? Is there a national coordination mechanism at the highest level to ensure that the policy is implemented in all sector areas?*

*b) What impact does the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**, and the concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, have on the promotion of gender equality? How is implementation of the Convention progressing?*

*c) What are the **main legislative and policy-making achievements** in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment over the past decade? Please provide details.*

*d) To what extent have gender perspectives and the concerns of women been taken into account in preparation of **budgets** at national, regional and local levels? Has this resulted in increased resources for gender equality? Describe efforts to increase and track budgetary allocations related to achieving gender equality and empowerment of women. Have gender-responsive budgeting procedures been introduced and to what effect?*

*e) To what extent are the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** utilized as the national framework for development? What attention is given to Goal 3 on gender equality? Is national-level data available to effectively monitor the achievement of the targets under MDG3? Are gender perspectives and the concerns of women considered in all other MDG goals?*

*f) Provide information on major **government policy discussions and/or parliamentary debates** where gender perspectives and the concerns of women have been taken systematically into account and resulted in policy and/or programmatic changes. What **recent major reforms** have taken place in the country where these perspectives were taken into account? What **major problems** are being debated in the country where the perspective of women and gender equality are considered as an integral part of the overall debate?*

*g) In countries emerging from **armed conflict**, to what extent were women involved, and gender perspectives and women's concerns included, in peace negotiations and in planning of reconstruction efforts?*

*h) How has **globalization** (for example, the use of ICT, market liberalization, changes in trading patterns, etc) affected the empowerment of women and girls and the promotion of gender equality? What efforts are being made to reduce potential risks and to build on opportunities for women?*

*i) In which **sector areas** have specific policies, strategies and/or action plans for promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment been developed and implemented? To what extent are gender perspectives and the concerns of women routinely taken into account in legislation, policy making and programme development in other sectors, so that inequalities and gaps are identified and addressed?*

*j) What types of significant **partnerships** have been established with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups, as well as the private sector and other stakeholders, in support of different aspects of national efforts on gender equality and empowerment of women – through for example, advocacy, participation in planning, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes and service delivery?*

*k) What efforts have been made to actively engage **men and boys** in the promotion of gender equality, including for example in eliminating violence against women and combating HIV and AIDS? What successes have been achieved and what constraints have been identified?*

*l) What is the impact of **climate change** and **food and energy crises** on the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women? What steps are being taken to reduce the potential risks for and impact on women and to engage women effectively in prevention and mitigation processes? Have social protection measures been put in place to reduce the impact on women and have measures been adopted to support women farmers?*

m) What is the impact of the financial crisis on the promotion of gender equality? What measures have been taken to reduce the negative impact on women's access to resources, income and social protection? To what extent have measures to revive growth mobilized women's economic potential?

Part Two: Progress in implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and the further initiatives and actions identified in the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (10 pages)

Please organize the response to this part of the questionnaire according the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (except for critical area H which is covered in Part Three of the questionnaire).

Guiding questions: The response within each critical area of concern could address, but does not need to be limited to, the issues outlined below:

A. Examples of successful policies, legislative change and programmes and projects

*a) In relation to the critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action and other key issues, what **successful actions** (such as legal measures, policy reforms, media campaigns, and pilot programmes or projects) have been taken by the Government or other actors (NGOs, civil society, the private sector) to achieve these objectives. Please provide concrete examples.*

*b) To what extent have **specific commitments** on the critical areas of concern – for example in terms of resource allocation, legislative change and policy and programme development - made by the Government at the Fourth World Conference on Women or in other contexts, been met?*

B. Examples of obstacles encountered and remaining gaps and challenges

*c) Describe the **obstacles, gaps and challenges** encountered in implementation of the critical areas of concern and other key issues identified.*

C. Lessons learned

*d) Provide information on the **main lessons learned** in implementation in relation to each of the critical areas of concern and other key issues identified.*

*e) Provide concrete examples of **successful interventions** and explain why these were judged to be successful? Describe any effort to replicate these efforts.*

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Part Three: Institutional development (4 Pages)

Guiding questions: The response could address, but does not need to be limited to, the issues outlined below:

a) What **national mechanisms** exist for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women – for example, ministry, national commission, parliamentary committee or commission? What mandates and resources does each body have and have these increased in the review period? How do these bodies work together? Describe the location of the national mechanisms and the access to decision-making processes. What networks have been established and how effective are these networks? What resources do the national mechanisms have in terms of staff and financial support? What percentage of financial resources comes from international or bilateral donors or other external sources?

b) Have **focal points** for gender equality and empowerment of women been established within line ministries, and in which ministries? What support is provided from within the ministries? What support (training, advice etc.) is provided by the national machinery? How effective are these focal points?

c) What **monitoring** mechanisms have been established to measure progress in implementation – in relation to national policies, strategies and action plans as well as international commitments? How is accountability for promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women established across all ministries? How is coordination achieved? What role does the highest level of Government play?

d) What levels of **capacity** for promoting gender mainstreaming have been achieved? Through which mechanisms? What are the remaining challenges in the area of capacity building?

e) Has a core set of **indicators** been established and where is responsibility for monitoring located? What gaps and challenges remain in relation to data and statistics? In which areas is lack of sex-disaggregation still a problem? In which areas do new types of data need to be collected? To what extent are the national statistical office and the statistical units in line ministries aware, committed and capable of providing the required data? In which sectors, and to what extent, is sex-disaggregated data being used effectively to inform policy-making and planning?

f) Provide information on the **roles of different stakeholders**. For example, what role does Parliament play in the promotion and monitoring of gender equality and women's empowerment? How could this role be strengthened? Describe the role of NGOs in planning and implementing the follow-up activities. Do NGOs participate formally in the mechanisms established to follow up the Fourth World Conference on Women and support reporting on and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)?

Part Four: Remaining challenges and actions to address them (3 pages)

Provide information on areas requiring future action.

a) List any **further actions and initiatives** which the Government intends to take to fully implement the Platform for Action and outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly beyond 2010.

b) Describe the **priority areas** that have been identified for improving implementation in the next five years.

c) Give **examples of measures** (with targets and timeframes) which will be taken in each of these areas.

d) Outline explicit **new commitments** that will be made to accelerate implementation?

SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

64. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is now widely recognised as a risk to human security and a potential destabilising factor for communities and societies alike. It remains pervasive across the Pacific, and as it is still considered a sensitive issue in most Pacific cultures, its prevalence often goes under-reported. There is an urgent need to acknowledge the prevalence of SGBV in the Pacific at all levels of the community, whether occurring in the domestic context or during conflict and post-conflict situations.

65. While accepting the differing contexts of Forum member countries, Leaders noted the importance of encouraging and ensuring national ownership of necessary processes to address SGBV. Recognising the significance of this issue, Leaders:

   (a) reaffirmed support for ongoing action by the Secretariat and Forum members at the highest level, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, to raise awareness of the seriousness of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and its impact on the Pacific, and to establish firmly on the political agendas of Forum members the issue of SGBV;

   (b) acknowledged the prevalence of SGBV in the Pacific and the risk that it poses to human security and as a potential de-stabilising factor for communities and societies alike;

   (c) welcomed and supported efforts and important contributions at the local, national and regional levels to address SGBV, including through increased Pacific engagement in relevant global initiatives aimed at preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls in all parts of the world; and

   (d) committed to eradicate SGBV and to ensure all individuals have equal protection of the law and equal access to justice.

ANNEX C: Recommendations for Progressing the Pacific Plan (extract)

Noting the new challenges for the region presented by the global economic crisis and ongoing vulnerability to external shocks, PPAC recommends to Forum Leaders that they prioritise the areas presented below to progress the implementation of the Pacific Plan over the next three years by:

...

b. Improving livelihoods and the well-being of Pacific peoples by:

...

   v. supporting the implementation of measures, existing commitments and programmes aimed at increasing awareness of and addressing the causes and consequences of sexual and gender-based violence and developing legislation to criminalize gender-based violence in all forms;

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Appendix 3: National Accounting Framework

The 1993 revision of the United Nations System of National Accounts (SNA) moved the boundary of production to include, for example, subsistence agriculture and fisheries, and their harvesting, processing and preservation, the collection of firewood, the carriage of water and basket-making (UN Statistics Division 1993, para. 6.24). The 2008 SNA revision maintained this boundary, and made the claim that 'The main objective of the SNA is to provide a comprehensive conceptual and accounting framework that can be used to create a macroeconomic database suitable for analysing and evaluating the performance of an economy. The existence of such a database is a prerequisite for informed, rational policymaking and decision-taking' (UN Statistics Division 2008, para. 1.27).

Serious questions must be raised about the usefulness of SNA measurements in the Pacific, which would tend to underestimate production substantially. The former Governor of the Reserve Bank in Solomon Islands, Ricky Hou, advised[39] that he believed that the subsistence sector contributed 80% to the GDP of Solomon Islands, most of which was not counted in this framework. In this context, there is no possibility of 'informed, rational policymaking and decision taking', as data on which the SNA and decisions are based are not fully reflective of the rules of the SNA, and do not provide a true picture of the reality of economic production. In the Pacific this invisibility affects both men and women engaged in, for example, agriculture, fishing, building, construction and substantial maintenance of dwellings and community buildings, the majority of transportation (in canoe and on foot) and the carriage of water.

The SNA includes some household production inside the boundary of production, whether this work is intended for own final consumption or not. In this context goods producing activities are:

a. the production of agricultural products and their subsequent storage; the gathering of berries or other uncultivated crops; forestry; woodcutting and the collection of firewood; hunting and fishing;

b. the production of other primary products such as quarrying shingle;

c. the processing of agricultural products; the production and preservation of meat and fish products; the preservation of fruit by drying, bottling, etc.; the production of beer, wine, spirits (or local brew); the production of baskets or mats; and so on;

d. other kinds of processing such as weaving cloth; dress-making and tailoring; the production of utensils or durables; making furniture or furnishings; and so on; and

e. the supply of water.

None of this mostly subsistence production appears as a core indicator for the PRISM framework. Only non-monetary agriculture, forestry and fishing appear on the non core listing.

There are specific exclusions from the boundary of production in the SNA. That means that people engaged in these activities are deemed to be economically inactive and not 'workers'. This classification has major implications for human rights. The excluded activities are: the cleaning, decoration and maintenance of the dwelling occupied by the household, including small repairs of a kind usually carried out by tenants as well as owners; the cleaning, servicing and repair of household durables or other goods, including vehicles used for household purposes; the preparation and serving of meals; the care, training and instruction of children; the care of sick, infirm or old people, and the transportation of members of the household or their goods (UN Statistics Division 2008, para. 6.20). These rules render those who do this work, whether men or women, boys or girls, invisible among the 'economically active'.

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39. *Personal communication; 2008.*

There is a simple policy process that results: those who are invisible as producers in the national economy will be invisible in the distribution of investments, support structures and benefits, which flow to visible producers of goods and services. The effect is a systemic discrimination overwhelmingly against women, but it is also significant for men and girls and boys in subsistence work in the Pacific Islands region.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has verified[40] that there is plenty of scope to develop robust, high-quality estimates for the informal sector, and subsistence activities (and produce environmental measures) for all PICTs. Countries and territories are still far from implementing the full range of SNA requirements to varying degrees.[41] Informal and subsistence estimates, especially for agriculture and fisheries, are based on benchmark production/consumption data reported in various household income and expenditure surveys (HIES), fisheries surveys, agriculture censuses and population censuses. The benchmarks are extrapolated using various volume movement indicators, such as population, number of operators and subsistence households. The IMF considers that Fiji Islands, Samoa and Vanuatu have reasonable estimates based on this approach.

Estimates of informal/subsistence building and construction are based on number of dwellings and characteristics from population and housing Censuses, and HIES data (including production for own consumption and use). All countries have imputed rents on owner-occupied dwellings estimated from these sources. Estimates for construction output are based on a cost of materials approach, which refers to construction materials reported as expenditure in the HIES. Census housing characteristics provide information on building materials used in own construction. This information can be used to develop estimates for informal and own construction. It also enables a proportion of that construction value to be allocated to informal and own account mining of sand and other building materials. It is unlikely that this approach records the true costs of time and labour engaged in subsistence building and construction. In many situations – notably in PNG, Solomon Islands and Kiribati, for example – the effort required for estimation where there has been no expenditure on materials, means that this aspect of production is left out of analyses.

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40. *Zia Ahmad Abbasi (IMF), email response to Marilyn Waring, 23 December 2009.*
41. *That is, in terms of market prices, accrual timing, sector accounts, and SNA aggregates other than GDP.*

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Appendix 4: People Who Contributed Research and Information to this Report

Government	
Fapoi Akesi	Chief Executive, Community Development, Niue
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Jane Chigiyal	Deputy Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, FSM
Marie Connelley	Director, Department of Labour, Guam
Jane Elymore	National Gender and Development Officer, Department of Health and Social Affairs, FSM
Polotu Fakafanua-Paunga	Deputy Director, Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture, Tonga
Lesieli Tufui Faletau	Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Finance and National Planning, Tonga
Astrid Gopoéa	Chargée de mission auprès de la condition féminine, New Caledonia
Hugo Hebala	Chief Planning Officer (Social Service Sector), Ministry of National Planning and Aid Coordination, Solomon Islands
Maryline Kajoi	Executive Director, Office for the Development of Women, PNG
Jimmy Kemem	Director, Ministry of Finance, RMI
Estelle Lakalaka	Déléguée aux droits des femmes et à l'égalité, Administration supérieure, Wallis and Futuna
Grace Leban	Chief of Community Development Division, Ministry of Internal Affairs, RMI
Alanna Mapu	Acting Assistant Chief Executive Officer, Division for Women, Ministry of Women, Community & Social Development, Samoa
Judy Nam	Department of Women, Ministry of Social Welfare, Fiji Islands
Bernadette Papillon	Chef de service, Service des affaires culturelles, Wallis and Futuna
Ruth Pokura	Programme and Research Officer, Gender and Development Division, Cook Islands
Repeta Puna	Director of Policy and Planning, Central Policy & Planning Unit, Cook Islands
Luse Qereqeretabua	Principal Research Officer, Department of Women, Ministry of Social Welfare, Fiji Islands
Faustina K. Rehuher-Marugg	Minister, Ministry of Community & Cultural Affairs, Republic of Palau
Ethel Falu Sigimanu	Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Women, Youth and Children's Affairs, Solomon Islands
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Lupe Tavita	Information and Research Officer, Women's Department, Tuvalu
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Janet Tuhaika	Acting Director, Ministry of Women Youth and Children, Solomon Islands
Ume Wainetti	Manager, Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee, PNG
Ruby Zarriga	Principal Planner, Department of National Planning & Monitoring, PNG
Regional and international donors and development partners	
David Abbott	Regional Macroeconomic and Poverty Reduction Advisor, UNDP Pacific Centre, Fiji Islands
Emil Adams	Agriculture Adviser, SPC, Fiji Islands
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