White Ribbon Day: International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women

Regional

November 25, 2014

To mark White Ribbon Day, Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls, Natasha Stott Despoja will host a regional dialogue in Fiji with business representatives, entrepreneurs and community organisations to discuss how violence against women impacts on the private sector and the response of business to this violence.

Violence against women is a domestic and global issue. In the Pacific, six out of ten surveyed women and girls have experienced violence by a family member or intimate partner. As well as having social and health consequences, violence can mean that women are often excluded from important leadership and economic opportunities.

Today's dialogue is part of the Australian Government's 10-year $320 million Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development initiative which aims to improve the political, economic and social opportunities for women in the region.

During her visit to Fiji, Ambassador Stott Despoja will launch the expansion of FemLINK Pacific's community radio program which is addressing the under-representation of women in decision making and political leadership.

She will also open Medical Services Pacific's One Stop Shop clinic, which provides holistic services to survivors of sexual assault including medical, legal and counselling support.

Ambassador Stott Despoja will announce new funding to support the Ba Women's Forum to increase women's economic empowerment through the production of mother-of-pearl jewellery and announce the second phase of the Fiji Community Development Program to support civil society organisations in Fiji.

Today I am also pleased to launch an online interactive map which shows where and how Pacific Women is working to reduce violence against women, ensure that women and women's interests are represented in decision making and expand women's opportunities to earn an income and accumulate economic assets. The map is available at: http://map.pacificwomen.org