



# **ACTIONS AND IMPACTS FOR A PEACEFUL PACIFIC: 2015 AND BEYOND**

## **FEMLINKPACIFIC POLICY FOR PEACE 2014**

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## FEMLINKPACIFIC POLICY FOR PEACE 2014

We believe Peace, Human Security and Sustainable Development is possible when women in all our diversities are equal partners within civil society, and with governments and international organisations.

Women's participation is key from the local to the national level and must be supported with an inclusive and creative information and communication system  
By amplifying women's knowledge and voices a shift from reaction to prevention is possible.

A  **publication**

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## INTRODUCTION

For the past two years FemLINKPACIFIC used its annual Policy for Peace in our Pacific Region document to identify women leaders in the region who are capable potential candidates for elections to the various decision making bodies, from village councils to national parliaments, being held in the island countries.

They are women who can also be appointed as envoys and mediators, as experts in the field of peace, security and development.

The documents endeavored to provide linkages between the women's voices as expressed in their peace and security narratives from Bougainville, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tonga to the existing regional mechanisms, and to demonstrate how their experiences and action oriented strategies equip them as leaders.

The women are active in peace building and service in many spheres of their communities, connected through our Pacific Women's Media and Policy Network on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security).

The organisations involved include Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency of Bougainville, Vois Blong Mere Solomon of Solomon Islands and Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili of Tonga.

Now is the opportune moment to review the impact of their recommendations and activities as a basis for deciding future directions. This involves an examination of the mechanisms for advancement and continuity of practice to sustain the peacebuilding activities and policies initiated in the region and the articulation of action oriented strategies with existing regional mechanisms.

It also required revisiting the established three focus areas of

- Gender and human security in the Pacific: gender mainstreaming and women and young women's leadership in conflict prevention and management, political decision making and peacebuilding and peacekeeping
- Security sector governance: gender mainstreaming and women and young women's participation in security sector oversight and accountability
- Enhancing women and security: protection of women's and girls' human rights during humanitarian crises and in transitional and post conflict contexts

The formulation of this report has also enabled the Pacific Women's Media and Policy Network on UN Security Council Resolution 1325, coordinated by FemLINKPACIFIC, to review its own series of resolution and recommendations adopted and refined through its annual policy meetings, informed by the network members' lived experiences.

Human security requires multiple and diverse actors to develop solutions to interdependent threats and the Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security provides the framework for ensuring the inclusion of women, particularly as part of civilian oversight, participation and ownership of the security sector and reform processes.

Women are 'waging peace' and are spearheading the critical shift from commitments to operationalization of SCR 1325, and CEDAW to ensure an effective response to the complex and multifaceted threats and challenges to human security in the Pacific.

An effective response requires the participation, recognition and valuing of the experiences and role of women.

The women who have crossed conflict lines to promote non-violence, peace and human rights, usually ignoring the personal risks that such actions could cause, still often remain outside of the formal peace process, excluded from the structures that make the decisions to sustain peace or engage in conflict.

With the adoption of the Pacific Forum Conflict Prevention and Human Security Framework as well as the Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2012 – 2015) there is valuable opportunity ahead to ensure:

- there are processes for community participation and ownership linked to existing development and governance processes
- prevention of misunderstanding and adversarial relationships between CSOs and security forces often result
- to ultimately enable the development of collaborative approaches to conflict transformation and prevention.

This policy document gives the flavour of the realities of Pacific peace women in their own voices, and some of the successful interventions and progress they have initiated as well as assessments of the gaps and risks they have noted on the reviews of their recommendations.

## OVERVIEW

### **REGIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN: GLOBAL CONNECTIONS, ADVANCE AND CHANGE FROM 1995**

FemLINKPACIFIC's report on Gender and Security Sector Oversight: the Case of the Regional Action Plan affirms that human security guards the essential freedoms, safety, identity and human dignity of all people. It reflects the values in the preamble of the UN charter and encompasses development, humanitarianism, human rights, and security. It calls for holistic and context specific strategies to counter violent extremism. The ultimate goal and responsibility of any security policy, including counterterrorism policy, should be the preservation and protection of the freedoms, safety, identity, and dignity of individuals and their communities.

In an interconnected world, security must be seen as a global public good. There is a growing consensus about the need for a more holistic approach, based on a better understanding of what individuals and communities need in order to feel safe and secure.

By recognising the structural causes of conflicts in terms of social, economic and political exclusion, grievances and inequalities, the human security approach requires analysing root causes, mapping existing local capacities for peace, and designing coordinated strategies for civil society and governmental preventive action as part of a long-term commitment to peace. The human security approach is not only centred on people as objects of interventions, but also as providers of security in their own right, requiring their in depth knowledge of a situation and context specific solutions.

Sustainable human security is therefore not only the responsibility of states, but also of citizens and local communities. Consequently, collective efforts should support local capacities and leadership to enable local response strategies to conflict as much as possible. Ultimately, the legitimacy of both state institutions and security strategies relates to the extent to which populations perceive access to justice, basic human needs and space for participation. The perspectives and needs of different segments of the population - including men, women, boys and girls, refugees, minorities, etc. – need to be considered. A gender-inclusive approach further recognises and addresses the different vulnerabilities of women and men to these threats, and their respective strengths and skills to build a more secure society (UN Security Council Resolution 1325 – Women, Peace and Security).

For FemLINKPACIFIC, women's security is all-encompassing. It is not related to just armed conflict or even to domestic violence, but affects every area of women's lives. The question of women's security is one of the welfare and status of women, human security, and the impact of decisions related to the military, the police, and the broader security sector on women. While concerns include the elimination of violence against women and children, there is also a far more extensive concern that includes the need to advocate for gender mainstreaming across the sphere of security sector governance.



As we have heard from the stories we have documented in each of these four countries of our work, more guns do not mean more security. Through women's eyes, there is a comprehensive notion of security defined in human, rather than military, terms.

Since 2009, FemLINKPacific has linked the annual '16 Days Against Violence Campaign' to our rural women's community media '1325' network, building on the monthly meetings where rural women leaders share and articulate their Women, Peace and Human Security priorities using a SCR 1325 lens.

SCR 1325 reaffirms that women are crucial partners in shoring up the three pillars of lasting peace: economic recovery, social cohesion and political system.

But our political reality is that even with democratic elections taking place in the region, we still have a long way to go to be able to claim spaces in a legitimate political system, even to simply challenge spending priorities by the state.

By using women's media, local women are empowered via the dissemination and control of information while listening women are connected to the same information.

The 2012 theme of UN Security Council Open Debate on SCR 1325 reiterated the need to support women's civil society roles in peacebuilding and conflict prevention, and that means that local and national action plans must be inclusive of women's definitions of peace and human security.

It also requires a transformation of structures to ensure the full and equal participation of women in decision-making.



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## **THE CASE OF THE REGIONAL ACTION PLAN ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY**

It was not until the enactment of the Honiara Declaration in 1992 that the Forum Leaders adopted measures addressing security concerns. This trend culminated with the Biketawa Declaration whose objective is to “upholding democratic processes and institutions which reflect national and local circumstances, including the peaceful transfer of power”. It is within this security framework that Civil Society Organizations and the Pacific Island Forum started to cooperate.

FemLINKPACIFIC’s engagement with the Forum Regional Security Committee (FRSC) was a result of asking the question – if there is the UN Security Council at UNHQ in NY what is the mechanism in the Pacific? With the collaboration between FemLINKPACIFIC, UNDP Pacific Centre and the Pacific Islands Forum, Women, Peace and Security was brought to the attention of the FRSC.

In 2004 at the 9th Triennial Conference on Pacific Women, ministers, government officials and CSO representatives recognised peace and security as critical issues and added it to the Pacific Platform of Action on the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality 2005 – 2015.

Women, Peace and Security has been on the agenda of Pacific leaders and through women’s civil society engagement in various ways. What has been critical, however, has been to link the commitments to women’s political participation and representation with regional security and national security sector governance processes. Launched in 2012, the Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security provides a three year action plan on gender mainstreaming, with a set of indicators for the promotion of women and young women’s leadership as well as developing the capacity of governments to adopt measures to increase women’s representation and participation at all levels of leadership and decision making, including conflict prevention and management, political decision-making, peace building and peacekeeping. The plan also provides a set of tangible strategies to enable more effective participation of women leaders in the context of the Biketawa Declaration and Good Offices role of the Secretary-General of the Forum Secretariat.

The Regional Action Plan has provided an opportunity for the region to identify broad priorities, initiate strategic actions, and determine responsibilities among different actors. It also ensures that Women, Peace and Security activities are not seen as standalone efforts but rather as an integral part of regional peace and security discussions, in line with regional efforts to promote gender equality.

The Regional Action Plan provides a framework at the regional level for Forum Members and Pacific Territories and can help Pacific government officials to improve women and young women’s leadership in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, mainstream gender in security policy-making, and ensure women and girls’ human rights are protected in humanitarian crises, transitional contexts and post-conflict situations. In short, to use the inherent capabilities of women as peace builders.

The framework is based on these key pillars:

- Focus Area 1: Gender mainstreaming and women and young women’s leadership in conflict prevention and management, political decision-making and peacebuilding and peacekeeping
- Focus Area 2: Gender mainstreaming and women and young women’s participation in security sector oversight and accountability
- Focus Area 3: Protection of women’s and girls’ human rights during humanitarian crises and in transitional and post-conflict contexts

FemLINKPacific Executive Director Sharon Bhagwan Rolls is Gender Liaison for the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict. GPPAC is a global civil society network of organisations working on conflict prevention and peacebuilding that calls for a fundamental change in dealing with violent conflict: a shift from reaction to prevention, as an approach that will save lives and prove more effective and less destructive. The Global Partnership seeks a world in which people and governments elect peaceful means, rather than armed conflict, to achieve greater justice, sustainable development, and human security.

Working across 15 regions, GPPAC has adopted a gender policy which focuses on ensuring gender balance in leadership positions, addressing internal and external strategies at global secretariat as well as regional levels: for example by appointing a cadre of dedicated gender focal points who bring their own expertise into the implementation process, and through capacity development for both the gender focal points and the membership of the regional steering groups. Gender mainstreaming is carried out within the working groups of GPPAC, including groups on dialogue and mediation, human security peace education and preventive action. An example of this is the development of an early warning action toolkit with gender indicators.

Women's organizations and activists within the GPPAC network, including in the Pacific Island region, have been instrumental in bringing about a gender mainstreaming strategy within GPPAC; demonstrating not only models for inclusion but also leadership in peacebuilding.

The work of the gender focal points to articulate women's agency has not just claimed UNSCR 1325; it has transformed the resolution into a living document. But there is still a struggle to transform the political spaces where UN member states are engaging – wherever it is including transforming the peace and security architecture in the Pacific Island region where women and continue to experience multiple forms of conflicts and political crises.

In February 2014, the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, NY (NGO CSW/NY), one of three women's committees of CoNGO that advocates for women's rights and gender equality, announced Sharon Bhagwan Rolls from Fiji as the 2014 NGO CSW Forum Woman of Distinction. NGO CSW/NY said: 'Bhagwan Rolls' commitment to peace and security using information and communication technology as tools for empowering women is deeply rooted. With her help, women have been able to monitor and respond to peace, human security and development trends. She founded Fiji and the Pacific's first women-led community radio network FemTALK 89.2FM and assisted in the development and launch of the first women-led community radio station in Tonga, 98FM. In April 2000, as the Secretary of the National Council of Women Fiji she coordinated the Blue Ribbon Peace Vigil and the Women's Action for Democracy and Peace (WAD'aP) when Fiji faced its second political coup. Using suitcase radio technology the community media network is contributing to enhancing the cause of the women's movement in Fiji and Tonga and providing a practical model to demonstrate the potential of women as radio producers and operators. She is the gender liaison and a member of the board of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict as well as a board member of the Global Fund for Women. She is the sole Pacific representative of UN Women's Global Civil Society Advisory Group. FemLINKPACIFIC, is a community media initiative that gives voice to the voiceless to empower women and ensure peace and security.'

Helen Hakena of Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, co-founded the Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency (LNWDA) in 1992 to help restore peace to the civil war torn island. Women had been leaders in the opposition to a huge copper mine in Bougainville that led to a ten year conflict. Helen worked at the most grassroots levels to ensure women were central to both peace agreements and development initiatives. She continues to promote women's rights at the local level despite attacks on women human rights defenders branded as witches. Speaking at the UNESCAP Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2014 she outlined the kind of transformative development goals that may be necessary:

"...governments of our region to commit to a new model of development – a model of development justice where women are central to decision making around any development matters, locally, nationally, regionally and internationally. Where wealth, land and power is redistributed more equally, where economies focus on local communities and serve the people, not profits. Where our Earth is valued and cared for above individual interests, where militarization, violence against women is recognized as major development issues. Where human rights are our aim and where governments and corporations are accountable to us, the people, and where the voice of women in my community counts more than a balance sheet."

Josephine Teakeni is the Executive Director of Vois Blong Mere Solomons and highlighted "1325" priorities at the GPPAC Pacific Roundtable in Suva in June 2014:

"...Participation of women and empowerment of women is very crucial as mothers and women of our nations. We are besides nurturing, we are also naturally and traditionally peacemakers at home, mediate conflicts in home and communities. We are also managers of homes, we are the managers of the natural resources when sometimes they are not managed properly it will affect our peace our human security issues. And as mothers we are to participate and empowered to be able to play those roles. As mothers we are also experts in our own way. We are not only victims when there is a conflict we are also part of the solution because of how we are and that is why it is important that we participate in whatever is affecting our lives within the communities or within this nation that will be part of it, and to be able to effectively participate and we need to be empowered and to be supported.....I see that when women are empowered they are able to effectively participate and make things happen to address their human security. (that's) why we should be part of what's affecting our lives from the highest level of decision making. We have to advocate and continue to be responsible because we will make this happen for us and we can make it on our own. We need the support, we need help from those who believe in equality, in decision making and participation and the empowerment programs."

## **PARTICIPATION**

### **FOCUS AREA 1: GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND WOMEN AND YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT, POLITICAL DECISION MAKING AND PEACE BUILDING AND PEACEKEEPING.**

#### **ADDRESSING THE UNDERPINNING GENDER INEQUALITIES**

It is timely that with the adoption of the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration and the Joint Statement on the Rarotonga Dialogue on Gender Equality (2012), which reflects Pacific Forum Leaders' commitments to improving the status of women in the region, focus is put on support for women's increased political and private sector representation.

The Regional Action Plan – Women Peace and Security is a mechanism which can both respond to Leaders' priorities, particularly to increase the number of women in leadership and politics, and mainstreaming gender equality goals into the broader development of mechanisms to enhance cooperation among different actors to work together in the promotion of greater peace, development and security at the regional level.

Helen Hakena, the Executive Director of Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency and the GPPAC Gender Focal Point based in Bougainville

Communication needs to be improved between the provincial and national government as part of the "drawing down of powers". Crucial to this is the Bougainville Administrator and the elected President of the Autonomous Bougainville Government because money and economic development is controlled by Port Moresby. It was only in June 2014 when a fulltime judge was appointed to be based in Bougainville.

The Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration also commits to supporting women's political representation, including by: strengthening consultative mechanisms with civil society groups on key budget and policy issues; advocating for increased representation of women in the private sector and local level governance boards and committees; and considering specific legislative changes to allow temporary special measures such as reserved seats.

The 2013 Regional Pacific MDGs Tracking Report highlighted the slow progress in empowering women in the Pacific Region. Only Cook Islands, Niue and Palau are on track to achieve the broader goal of promoting gender equality and empowering women. Gender disparities, in which women are disadvantaged in relation to men, continue to exist in all areas of Pacific life. The pace has been slow across the region, influenced by a web of intersecting, fluctuating and often conflicting factors such as the heritage of discriminatory traditional practices, decades of colonialism and missionary influence, periods of armed conflicts and growing forces of modernisation, globalisation and climate change. High education achievements for women and girls are not leading to better employment outcomes. The Pacific as a region still has the lowest level of women in parliament. Women's representation in the formal sector remains a challenge and with limited access and opportunities to realise their economic rights, women and in particular women with disabilities are exposed to poverty, exploitation and risks. Geographical constraints and population dispersion affect effective service delivery, while customs, traditions and negative attitudes towards family planning prevent the uptake of services when available.

Temporary special measures support women in parliament and decision making especially as parliaments play a crucial role in the attainment of inclusive security by passing gender-responsive security legislation and policies.

Helen Hakena, the Executive Director of Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency and the GPPAC Gender Focal Point based in Bougainville:

While women with the traditional titles are members of the Village Assembly, a traditional Bougainville structure enabling them to engage on a lot of issues including land, they are under represented in elected positions such as on the Council of Elders (COE). Hakena is concerned about the information and communication gaps between these structures. The elections of the COE takes place every three years: "We should be campaigning for women in the Council of Elders because they would be able to participate in determining where the government funds go." This required reform on the regulations of the COE and the council structures needed human rights education, especially because they deal with issues such as rape and violence.

An equitable presence in subsequent parliamentary as well as local government structures including development planning commitments enables women to have both the necessary critical mass and the expertise to help redefine and ensure implementation of the new human security agenda, including through representation on National Security Councils and other committees and delegations addressing security issues.

Additionally there is a critical need to consider innovative and practical ways for participatory security policymaking processes ensuring the inclusion of both women and men in decision-making from the local level particularly to ensure women are able to contribute their peace and human security perspectives to assist in determining the direction of policy options, and have a greater say over budgetary allocations, including military and defence spending.

## **Recommendations:**

- International donors and development agencies should incorporate women, peace and security commitments, including adequate representation of women in decision making as a condition of supplying aid and development assistance, and should work with governments to ensure that gender equality and women, peace and security concerns are part of the national priorities around which general budget support is provided. Progress on the adoption by Pacific Forum Leaders and Regional Action Plan, but needs support not only at regional level but also incorporation in national plans to put into action; strategies, not just plans.
- National electoral laws should incorporate gender equality quotas and ensure voter registration and education for women as well as the increase of women in electoral commissions and observer missions. Electoral experts should work with local women's groups to provide relevant training for women candidates and political parties. Tonga is developing on this level; Solomon Islands progressing with UNDP assistance; Bougainville still has a serious need for these reforms; Fiji's challenge has been the Electoral Decree section 115 which affected some NGO work in this area; also a need for gender disaggregated data.
- Pacific governments should exert pressure for the reallocation of funds currently devoted to global military spending (about \$1500 billion) to human security needs, implementing the Millennium Development Goals (about \$140 billion) and prepare for real security threats such as climate change. Not implemented
- National assessment of women's contribution to the macro and micro economy as well as gender budget analysis should be incorporated into all national development plans by 2010. Not implemented.



- Pacific governments and political parties should adopt quotas and affirmative action measures to ensure democracy in all peace and security decision making, including at least 30 per cent representation of women in cabinet, parliament, provincial and district committees, political party leadership, local government and committees, and through reform of campaign financing frameworks and policies. In Tonga there has been some effect on town councils, with the constitution requiring 30% to 50% women's participation; Solomon Islands women attempted this reform but were not successful; Bougainville has three places for women in the government but needs more at lower levels, especially in lower levels of government, as required by CEDAW; it needs to be seen as good governance; Fiji political parties continued to show more commitment to finding women candidates for the 2014 elections, but still put up a maximum of nine out of 50; PNG Women's Forum continues to advocate for temporary special measures for women's seats.
- Gender equality should be incorporated into constitutional reforms to reaffirm the principles of nondiscrimination, equality, affirmative action and women's right to freedom and security, as well as the protection of women participating in constitutional conventions. Progress in Fiji and Tonga, with Bougainville setting the precedent with temporary special measures and reserved seats for women, but still requires action.
- Governments, in close collaboration with civil society, should collect names and profiles for a national list of women's experts for nomination to high level posts, as special envoys, and to eminent persons groups to be contributed to the Pacific Islands Forum database of Pacific women peacemakers and, furthermore, must work to ensure that those on this list are seriously considered for appointments. Profiling of women is working and should be continued and expanded with better collaboration between regional organizations, and with better promotion; should be linked to gender disaggregation statistics; FemLINKPACIFIC continues to profile such women in the absence of government data, through a process of engaging with women who have the confidence to act at local level and have potential for higher leadership.

Critical is the support of appropriate and accessible channels of information and communication to ensure gender perspectives are communicated, analysed, addressed and mainstreamed into Security Sector Governance initiatives to promote a more inclusive and sustainable human security for women, men, girls and boys by developing practical tools, information-sharing, networking, and action-oriented strategies.

FemLINKPACIFIC Labasa based rural convenor Adi Vasulevu, conceived the idea of the network's Community Radio Times publication to share women's stories back with those in our rural centres. Her journey with the suitcase radio is all part of a longer journey to promote and practice of Culture of Peace and Non Violence:

As a young woman from a remote village of Udu point in Vanua Levu, a region of the island that's populated by only indigenous Fijians, the coup of the 1987 was an eye opening experience of the surfacing of the racial divide and the extent of political conflict. Over the next few years I began the journey of building bridges between ethnic groups with the People for Intercultural Awareness (PIA) an organization founded by the Columban Fathers after the coup. Along the way I learnt and realized the importance of communication and how disconnected our islands are to information and local communities. In 2000 we had another coup and by 2003 it was evident that women, despite being of different ethnic backgrounds, were the most affected. They were facing economic challenges from the impacts of the political upheaval – and they were silent. In November 2004 we had our first community media training in the Cathedral crypt in Suva where I was presented with my first tape recorder following FemLINKPACIFIC's first community radio workshop as part of the annual 16 days of activism campaign.

Working with women, I witnessed light bulb moments embracing change, going from the traditional norm of women being made to sit silently in the background and in the kitchen to taking those small steps to speaking out. Some of the first few women whose stories I recorded in the early years are vocal leaders of multiracial women's groups today. They were the first to establish such women's groups in our rural communities that were culturally divided by the system at that time. Recording their stories were like a celebration in itself.

There are seven young women working at what is now our very own community media centre in the Northern division. They attend to radio features productions and daily broadcasts five days a week from the Labasa Community Media Centre. Our network continues to grow and the interest within the general public and community increase each year.

FemLINKPacific: There is a need to guarantee that media freedom, inclusive of community media forms such as community radio, is a prerequisite for providing the enabling environment for participatory and inclusive democratization. (in relation to the Fiji Constitution)

- Ensure formal recognition of community media in regulatory frameworks, including licensing provisions for the establishment of community radio stations which reflect and support the non profit nature of these operations. Community radio established in all four countries in which the femLINKPacific network operates; need consistency in regulations at regional level. PMA scheme is process inclusive of community media; important to include gender policy in regulatory process.
- Reform public service broadcast policies to ensure a quota of content and gender mainstreaming of content, including through broadcast of local content by community media practitioners. Important to include gender policy in regulatory process.
- Development of assistance programmes should be designed to strengthen the media sector to take into account Pacific community needs, including implementation of the Digital Strategy of the Pacific Plan and recognition and support for existing community media initiatives and provision of appropriate equipment such as wind up radios. Linked to disaster management policies and initiatives.

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 SCR1325 and related resolutions. A 'Track II Dialogue' on Women, Peace and Human Security ran alongside Forum Regional Security Committee meetings to provide an opening for CSOs, gender experts and academics to feed their discussions on the gender dimensions of security into the FRSC.

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.

## **ADDRESSING THE PROGRESS ON GENDER EQUALITY IN RELATION TO SECTION J: WOMEN AND THE MEDIA**

FemLINKPACIFIC has found as have recent studies of the Pacific media including the September 2012 Pacific Institute of Public Policy paper on “Media and Democracy” that while the role of the media is to be communication channel between the people and the government, political pressures within Pacific governance systems has seen the transformation of the public service broadcasters into commercial entities with a largely commercial and state-led agenda, which severely curtails the public’s access to information and their own communication platforms. In the context of the broadcast media, there is a need to broaden the definition of public service broadcasting to support community radio broadcasting.

A typical case has been seen in Fiji, where the state allocation is provided only to the state broadcaster, and there are limited opportunities for small media operators as well as community media organisations to access funds to enable a diversity of local programmes and media content. This is of serious concern when the media has been identified as a crucial tool to promote gender equality.

However, the current trend in public, mainstream and social media is not a new challenge; it is an obstacle that has long been identified. The Beijing Platform for Action of 1995 which resulted from the Fourth World Conference on Women called on governments, the international community and civil society alike to “take strategic action” with regard to the “stereotyping of women and inequality in women’s access to and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media”.

Technology today enables us to produce content and connect the issues of rural women to not only national and regional media in the Pacific but also to the global platforms addressing women’s peace, human security and human rights.

*Betty Blake, Ma’a Fafine mo e Famili of Tonga, said radio programmes are helping change the mindset on the status of women in Tonga. “We are planning to support women candidates in the national elections because no women were elected into the current Parliament. Community radio can help people see why women should be elected, including women accepting the fact that we need women in parliament.” A strategy being considered is to organise one female candidate for each constituency supported by a women in politics network. Legislative support such as Temporary Special Measures is also needed. She is hopeful that CEDAW will be ratified before the elections and that more women will be encouraged to participate with the development of more local government structures and significant roles of district officers, as well as appointments of JPs.*

The SPC's Pacific Women's Conference has been catalytic in progressing women's access to and participation in media and ICTs since 2004. The 2013 Conference provided the most substantive direction for Pacific Islands Governments in order to harness the power of the media to address gender inequality was noted, as well as the challenges of eliminating gender-bias and the traditional stereotypes portrayed of women in the media with the following recommendations:

*“74. Called for governments to recognise that community media and women's media networks are important for collaboration and partnerships.*

*75. Called for governments and NWMs to use the Global Media Monitoring project to conduct quantitative and qualitative analysis of content to be able to ensure that government communication and media strategies effectively promote their gender equality commitments.*

*76. Called for PICTs to recognise and fully respect the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples, especially the knowledge held by women, as well as in territories and areas conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities.*

*77. Called for research with gender analysis by PICTs, in collaboration with development partners, on the impact of inappropriate uses of ICTs, and called for the development of national regulatory infrastructure and policy.”*

Adopted in February 2014 the Fiji Government's National Gender Policy sets out specific strategies linked to “Increasing the participation and access of women to the expression of their opinions and to decision making in and through the media including their involvement in new technologies of communication; Promoting a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media through training.”

The policy's specific recommends:

- 1. Support women-led media initiatives including community radio, television and print media, and consider financial support for the supply and importation of media equipment;*
- 2. Allocate at least 30% of Public Service Broadcasting funding for the promotion of CEDAW and gender equality projects, and requiring all Public Service Broadcasting to have a gender policy and gender codes;*
- 3. Ensure the training and competence of all government media personnel on CEDAW, gender equity and women's empowerment, conducted by the Ministry of Information and/ or the Ministry of Women;*
- 4. Review the Media Industry Development Decree from a gender perspective, and in particular regular reviews of the Codes of Conduct in the Media Industry Development Decree 2009 to incorporate a gender perspective of media ethics in Fiji;*
- 5. Conduct annual qualitative and quantitative gender audits by the Ministry of Information of content produced by government information networks using the Global Media Monitoring Guidelines, and support other media organisations in the conduct of similar audits for other media;*
- 6. Consult with Information Communications Technology specialists from women's media organisations when any reform is contemplated in relation to the regulation of Information Communications Technology.*

While community media, in particular radio is certainly a viable and legitimate platform for women to claim

communication rights, it is vulnerable to limited funding and technical resources as well as the challenges of restrictive spaces due to regulations which often limit the access of both the media and the communities.

Labasa market vendors comments to FemLINKPACIFIC:

Even though there are programmes to address rural women's economic empowerment bylaws and regulations at the market do not take into account the need to be responsive and inclusive of national policies and commitments to gender equality. Women vendors are struggling to pay a range of licence fees even though economic empowerment programmes encourage them to diversify. For example in addition to the stall fees, to sell fruit like water melon and pineapple, there is an additional fee for selling sliced fruits and juice. Time to review the way the market vendors associations are being organised and women be included in the market planning and operations as well!

FemLINKPacific works to ensure that women are

- provided safe spaces to be able to articulate their peace and security issues;
- provided media tools to speak and write about peace and security and the prevention of violent conflicts;
- accessing the training and knowledge for women to address/challenge the traditional decision making constructs within the major ethnic groups in our country which impede women especially within the rural population, and the poor from actively participating in decision making;
- empowered within their communities to be able to articulate their visions for equality, development and peace from local to national level and beyond, using appropriate information-communication technology

Our work since 2001 has enabled the development and sustainability of the Pacific Island region's women's media and policy network on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security) – whether it is enabling and supporting women's advocacy and lobby in the corridors of the United Nations or training more than 300 young women from diverse socio-economic and political backgrounds including single mothers, SOGI and disability rights activists.

This has enabled FemLINKPACIFIC to expand our community radio project from a one suitcase radio kit to a permanent station in Suva, the first radio station for Labasa on the second main island and a mobile kit for rural broadcasts.

While our partner organisations have worked through their own rural or community networks to document and report on the priority issues of women linked to “1325” in Fiji, we have developed a rural community media network of correspondents, producers and broadcasters in Labasa, Tavua, Ba, Nadi and Nausori who are linked together through the media and policy initiatives coordinated from our Suva Community Media Centre.

Building on the initial Generation Next project (2006 – 2011) we have developed a big sister mentoring programme to support young women as producers and broadcasters to bridge the rural-urban communication divide through community radio, as well as a diverse range of community media initiatives including our print and online publications as well as social media, in particular Facebook, as well as the production of podcasts, videos and digital promos.

Rural correspondents and convenors bring together local women leaders every month to make visible those who are making a difference through the use of media initiatives including community media and radio to document stories. In post conflict Solomon Islands and Bougainville regional correspondents seek our women making a difference to secure peace.



In this reflection ahead of the 10th anniversary in 2014 of FemTALK 89FM, Dorothy Bali talked about how the broadcasts are working for senior citizens. Her late mother, retired Nursing Sister Satya Bali participated in our first broadcast in the Western Division.

*“The Ba Seniors Centre hosted the first suitcase radio broadcast back in 2005. It was the first time for the women we invited from different communities as well as our seniors to see and talk on the community radio station. I was nervous but the most excited were my elderlies. They are a group of women who mostly stay indoors look after their families and undertake the household chores. They were stepping out of their homes and talking on the radio. This is where they shared their stories, what they do daily how they get their daily income and what their problems are. FemLINKPacific provided these women a chance to be seen and heard. To talk and sing with a media platform from which they can raise their concerns and share their experiences.”*

In 2012 FemLINKPacific hosted an innovative community media-mainstream media campaign “Here are the Women”. Five television simulcasts (15 hours of television) enabled rural women leaders to speak with confidence and conviction to their rights, their peace and human security. Now known as the “Radio with Pictures” series this is enabling rural women to be seen and heard on a national broadcast platform!

But even with new media technology including television and internet/online media, the role of radio remains an essential part of Pacific Island life. That radio can broadcast immediately from anywhere to communities is one of its key assets; even in the production of programmes, “the theatre of the mind” technique or philosophy is just as effective today as it was prior to television.

Engaging with women and government officials in policy and development planning level interactive dialogues through the use of radio, a simple hand-held tape recorder or a microphone provides an enabling environment for everyone involved in the programme production.

Until the adoption of Fiji’s National Gender Policy (February 2014) Women and the Media had not been a priority in the national gender equality agenda since 1995. There was small scale of support by Government through the provision of scholarships for female students to study journalism and access the SPC CETC programmes, until 2013.

FemLINKPacific was permitted a licence to establish and operate community radio in 2004 and was given a small grant to produce editions of its Community Radio Times, but there is no specific funding for content production.

## **Suitcase radio**

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.

3.10.16. 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.

## Media monitoring

Since 2000, NGOs such as Fiji Media Watch, FemLINKPacific, as well as FWCC and FWRM conduct media monitoring; FMW is the national coordinator for the Global Media Monitoring Project and FemLINKPacific is the regional coordinator for the GMMP. This has been primarily focused on news media content. There has been limited analysis of the sexual and violent nature of public media programmes especially since the introduction of television since 1991 and FemLINKPacific has provided training on ICT since 2003. Content development has taken place mostly through feminist media networks and FemLINKPACIFIC's community video and community radio programme which provides spaces for other organisations including faith based groups.

While there is a commitment to promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media there has been no major action taken aside from the previous Media Council Code of Ethics and the Fiji Media Decree that has a code of conduct on advertising that needs to be reviewed in line the National Gender Policy. There is no specific regulation or national policy on participation. It is also of concern that there is no specific reference to pornography in the media decree code of conduct; it needs to be better institutionalised through linkages with VAW and Police networks, especially linked to cyber-crimes.

Since 1995 there has been very little investment in gender and media work for national level action. Only UNESCO and SPC invested in development of the Pacific Women in Media Action Plan. The Pacific Media Assistance Scheme, PACMAS, is a regional programme with a gender policy.

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. This percentage includes those who work in the news, present the news and are the subject of news.

Helen Hakena's Bougainville organisation, Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency, has been a member of the Regional Women's Media and Policy Network on UNSCR1325 since 2007 and is currently also a civil society representative of the Regional Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (convened by the Pacific Islands Forum) and the Asia Pacific High Level Committee on Women, Peace and Security (convened by UN-ESCAP). She continues to be an active member of the Pacific Violence against Women Network and IANSA/PSAAG.

Helen Hakena, the Executive Director of Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency and the GPPAC Gender Focal Point based in Bougainville said media is important to reach places we are unable to go. When women are engaged in the media they are creating discussions. Community radio is an important link to the public media. However there is a need for training for the community radio producers and this has resulted in collaboration between New Dawn and Leitana Nehan's correspondents who assist in pre production. "They interview women in their villages, these are not small issues, these are their struggles. We are sharing what the government is doing, such as on road works, which is important to women." She also speaks on the community radio New Dawn FM and pays for time on Radio Bougainville. "We are covering the court, especially highlighting domestic violence and land issues. We have found our press releases are useful as a prevention strategy. In a recent case in Bana where a woman was accused of sorcery, we intervened. Media is also used to mobilize women."

"I believe it will be very effective to provide public awareness programs not only the central areas but particularly in the remote areas because I believe they are the ones who are far away from what is actually happen from social, economic and political life. Within the urban areas they are not experiencing that, They ought to be given some sort of awareness programs with regards to their relationship right from the remote areas to the leadership that is being provided for them at the main centers. I believe that for a start we will be bombarded with criticisms and harassments but we are trying to build a society that will appreciate the other view the other opinion...,so I believe that media has to play a very essential role in doing that. Unfortunately the most dominant media which is controlled by government which is not that independent but I believe we will be able to find a way to work together with them despite the difficulties." (Po'oi Pohiva speaking at GPPAC Pacific Roundtable, June 2014)

## THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN THE MEDIA

The Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media highlighted that while the representation of women on the Fiji media organisation boards is lower than men, their presence in important policy-setting roles is substantially higher than most nations. In fact, women were more than a third or 35.7 per cent of those in governance, including boards of directors in the Fijian media surveyed (in 2011). While the report as a whole indicates that men occupy majority of the management jobs and news-gathering positions in most nations, Fiji fares well. Two radio stations and one newspaper participated in the study. The report said the small number of participants did not mean that findings should necessarily be considered unrepresentative of the broader landscape of the news industry in Fiji, which had a few newspapers and electronic media. The report said there was no evidence of a glass ceiling in the (Fiji) newsrooms surveyed. Findings affirm that women had moderate access to all occupational levels except for the technical professional level, where women numbers of 9.5 per cent were low. At top level management, the report highlighted that women were under-represented, at just under a fourth or 23.1 per cent. The report also revealed that women dominated sales, finance and administration at 53 per cent. This support category, it said, comprised jobs not directly related to news reporting or production but that it was typical - women hold positions in human resources, public relations and clerical ranks in many nations.

### **FemLINKPACIFIC's regional community media network Election TOK series in 2014 is bringing visibility and voice to women who are contesting elections in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tonga**

**Gabriella 'Ilohahia**, 50 yrs old, working at Ma'a Fafine moe Famili Inc, 2014 Tonga election candidate: The lack of votes for women is because of the norms of society. Usually in the household setting –and father is head of the family and the mother is looking after the children, Then that is transferred to the government, a place for males only. When we grow up there's an expectation that men are the providers in the household and make decisions, which is wrong and wouldn't they suffer? Men commit suicide, fed up with society saying to them 'You are the bread winner'. Women listen to their husbands especially who to vote for. I ask the husbands to tell wives to vote for me.

**Seketi Fuko**, 61 yrs old, Business Woman, 2014 Tonga election candidate: Well the first thing voters look at is the candidates position as a woman. They see women as people that need to stay home, and their perceptions stay that way when in reality, women can actually advocate and have good debating skills.

**Sipola Halafih**, 41 yrs old, Head of Science Department, Tonga High School, 2014 Tonga election candidate: In my view, the reason why there are very low votes for women is a lack of empowerment for women to get out of their comfort zones and actively confront politics. The small number of women candidates are the women who truly believe they can achieve it. As women we need to be thick skinned, especially if you are a parliamentary candidate like. We need to be courageous.

**Tongovua Tolohe Appleton**, 60yrs old, Business Woman, 2014 Tonga election candidate: The upbringing of women expects women to stay home, not do the umu, sail a boat etc..those are only a man's job. But in my belief, the lack of understanding or knowledge of women on their importance to society will always leave them in an inferior position. Society limits the woman's capability. Moving a country into higher standards needs both men and women working equally to improve.

**Lemasingo Nai**, 26 yrs old, NZ AID Project, 2014 Tonga election candidate: I explain to both men and women that the position of an MP is not purely a man's role, it is for both men and women. My aim is not to represent women only, but every one, men also and children, and elderly.

**Sapate Toke**, 63 yrs old, Business Woman, 2014 Tonga election candidate: It is a terrible wastes those women's talents and abilities aren't utilized to carry out this monumental task. Men and women need to work together to make solutions that work.

**Ana Bing**, 34 yrs old, Independent Consultant for ADB, 2014 Tonga election candidate: One of the reasons why I run is to give men an opportunity or a choice to choose a woman. There is a lack of voter education. People don't understand the political reform, they don't understand that the impact of their vote will affect them either way.

"I believe participation of women at all levels of society it's a great demand, and a priority for our women back home. Because we believe that if women are integrated into every level, there is the voice of women. There is the expertise of women being used in those levels so I think that's a very important thing that we have to recognize women and put women in all levels of decision-making back home. Peace and security in my country, Tonga, would come in different forms and at different levels. Taking an average family in Tonga, when the basic needs of the family is met such as food and shelter, clothes, clean water, good health, employment, I think there is peace and security in that home. If the rule of law is well in place and functioning, as well as our leaders respecting human rights, and practicing good governance, transparency and accountability, I feel that (is how) peace and security is met in Tonga - Betty Blake, Ma'afafine moe Famili



## **SECURITY SECTOR GOVERNANCE**

### **FOCUS AREA 2: GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND WOMEN AND YOUNG WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SECURITY SECTOR OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY.**

#### **ADVANCING WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY IN SECURITY SECTOR GOVERNANCE**

The Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security provides the opportunity for collaboration between CSOs and government officials to advance the outcomes of the April 2009 for the Pacific Regional Security Sector Governance Conference which included:

- Development of national security policies and strategies;
- Capacity-strengthening programmes for civil society;
- Provision of support to improve parliamentary oversight;
- Development of gender-sensitive policies and programmes; and
- Strengthening the capacity of Ombudsman institution to improve accountability of the Security Sector.

Vois Blong Mere collaborated with the UNDP office in Honiara to convene a peacebuilding training event in May 2014. It was attended by women leaders from Malaita and Guadalcanal province including Veronica from Verahue village in West Guadalcanal, who is one of the peace builders and a women leader in her community. She is married and has two children and was a participant of the peace training. "During previous elections one candidate said to our community that if he won the seat he would help with small projects and economic activities for rural people, but nothing like that happened and nothing was given to us. We have had four women in in the parliament; I suggested if we want more women to win in elections then women, men and youths would work together to recognize women. I am looking for a good leadership, honesty, responsiveness, equality and transparency from leaders and political parties."

In 2009 Pacific Island Countries identified the importance of gender mainstreaming in the security sector (military, police, correctional services, immigration and judiciary) and increased women's participation in regional and national security sector decision-making, oversight and accountability mechanisms. Following that workshop the FRSC mandated PIFS and UNDP to support efforts in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to develop comprehensive national security policies.

In this context, Focus area 2 of the Regional Action Plan aims to ensure that Women, Peace and Security commitments and obligations incorporated in the development and implementation of national security, defence and justice policy by applying gender mainstreaming to make sure and make possible women and young women's participation in security sector oversight and accountability

Helen Hakena, the Executive Director of Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency and the GPPAC Gender Focal Point based in Bougainville said in Bougainville, while the Women, Peace and Security Policy was adopted by the Autonomous Bougainville Government in 2013, there are no resources for implementation – particularly as women are included in the implementation plan. Hakena who is a co-chair of the committee, says she persists in monitoring the implementation: "The government needs pursuing. There is no use having a policy if no one is implementing the policy."

With the evolving nature of security threats, the agenda of the FRSC over the past decade has changed significantly to now also include conflict prevention and management of political crises and women, peace and security. Given the expanded agenda of the FRSC and the Forum Secretariat and Regional Law Enforcement Secretariat's role in supporting the FRSC, the Regional Action Plan aims to achieve:

- improved mainstreaming of Women, Peace and Security in the Forum Regional Security Committees priority setting and decision-making
- improved mainstreaming of Women, Peace and Security within the work of the Secretariat's Political, Governance and Security Programme and Regional Law Enforcement Secretariats.

Helen Hakena, the Executive Director of Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency and the GPPAC Gender Focal Point based in Bougainville, also a civil society representative of the Regional Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (convened by the Pacific Islands Forum) and the Asia Pacific High Level Committee on Women, Peace and Security (convened by UN-ESCAP). "For us women we want total disarmament, we want women's safety because when guns are around, even one gun, it scares everyone." Yet politicians are not talking about disarmament: "There is no political will. Women need to be engaged in the disarmament process – they know where the guns are. Women have proven themselves and time and time again we repeat our plea for the guns to go."

The Veterans Affairs and ABG Peace Division have informed Hakena that they will be pursuing a stock-take to trace the weapons: "They are doing a mapping of the number of guns in Bougainville and that is why we want them to engage with women. It is our issue as well. Women also want to know where the ammunition is coming from. If Bougainville is starved of ammunition women will be safe from the violence."

There is also the issue of Unexploded Ordnance (remaining from World War 2) in Torokina which is unfinished business because guns are moving back and forth in Bougainville and across to the Solomons. The removal of the ammunition was disrupted due to landowners claims for compensation.

"We want a gun-free elections. We want a ceasefire – every weekend we hear gun shots across the water and people are moving." Hakena has also been advocating for the protection of women's human rights defenders and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons through the IANSA Networks.

The Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security recommends that:

- a) Member states with assistance from PIFS and UNDP collaborate with CSO networks to develop and implement training for FRSC officials on gender mainstreaming in the context of the security agenda of the FRSC.
- b) National level consultations between Governments and CSOs are undertaken to review existing national security and justice policies and those that are being formulated, to incorporate Women, Peace and Security commitments.

## **From FemLINKPACIFIC's Beijing +20 Report - Equality, Development and Peace:**

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.

Betty Blake, Tonga: With the Police Commissioner chairing an inter-agency committee on Domestic Violence and working with Blake, there have been moves to take more of a peacebuilding approach. With 8 out of 10 women reportedly experiencing violence there is an important role for the domestic violence unit within the Tonga Police Force as well as the women's rights groups such as the Tonga Women and Children Crisis Centre. The domestic violence unit needs to continue to invest in ongoing gender sensitization training.

Since 2007, FemLINKPacific has convened the Pacific Regional Women's Community Media and Policy Network on UNSCR 1325 and through a series of activities including the "Peace Talks" project and the publication of the annual Policy for Peace in the Pacific Region series, contributes to solidarity and collaboration with Peacewomen in Fiji, Bougainville in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Tonga.

Silvia Masau is a single mum who joined the community radio team in 2012.

"Working at FemLINKPacific has not only been an eye opener but it has helped build my self esteem and has empowered me. I have been able to connect to international processes such as the Commission on the Status of Women and the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 but most of all I love going out to the field and talking to women from all walks of life."

By advocating for implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security within national and regional policy spheres and through a Women, Peace and Human Security Framework stemming from women in local communities, FemLINKPacific has worked to translate UNSCR 1325 not only in the literal sense but to also to operationalize it and to demonstrate the opportunities that exist at a policy level, a community level, as well as within our own women's networks, with the benefit of transnational links and support.

The Regional Action Plan is a crucial step in acknowledging how women continue to play an important role in brokering peace because they help to foster and maintain confidence and trust among the people and are able to address issues of concern to women and marginalised groups, particularly as too often we are unable to share our knowledge or communicate impending instability and violence even though we are active at the local level in terms of conflict prevention and management, mediation and dialogue. This is also too often compounded by the low level of women's political representation at all levels of political decision-making at national and sub-national level across our region.

Helen Hakena, the Executive Director of Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency and the GPPAC Gender Focal Point based in Bougainville.

*"Being linked to a Community of Practice committed to peacebuilding, from GPPAC to LANSAs as well as the regional community media network and human rights networks is vital. This is one way to support the grassroots women and give solidarity. I have talked about sustainable development for women, inclusion and participation for women. Women suffered because of the mining in Bougainville and they have not been taken care of, and now we are concerned about the reopening of the mine." A recent Women's Mining Conference has called for an independent expert to undertake an environmental investigation.*

The RAP-WPS therefore has the potential to:

- facilitate the enabling environment we need to improve women and young women's leadership in conflict prevention and management, peacekeeping, security policy decision-making
- ensure women's and girls' human rights are protected
- strengthen civil society, women's groups, including young women's and gender equality advocates' engagement with regional security and conflict prevention policy and decision-making.

"I am a proud member of FemLINKPACIFIC's young women producers and broadcasters and also have the pleasure of having my own show on the community radio called Rainbow Connections. The Executive Director has always been very accommodating to the LGBTIQ members and has always believed in the work we are doing. I am proud to be associated with an organization that has given voice to the LGBTIQ community on such a large scale and is the first radio station to have LGBTIQ shows. I have always been valued here as an individual and as the founder of an organization."

FemLINKPacific has worked to translate SCR 1325, not only in the literal sense but to also operationalize the resolution, to demonstrate the opportunities for advocacy and input that exist at a policy level and a community level, as well as within our own women's networks, with the benefit of transnational links and support. There is still a need for a national mechanism to engage with relevant government officials.

## Recommendations:

- All troop and police contributing countries should engage gender experts and expertise to be included in all levels and aspects of peace operations, including in technical surveys, the design of concepts of operation, training, staffing and programmes.
- Through institutions such as the Regional Commissioners of Police Network, law enforcement agencies, the military and governments should provide gender disaggregated data in order to map the ratio of men and women in the security sector. Needed as countries in the region go into elections; and for research, but has not been provided as yet.
- Pacific governments should commit to the international governance standards requiring democratic civilian oversight of the security sector.
- Recalling the Pacific Forum Leaders' commitment to implement the Human Security Framework, national governments should, in close collaboration with civil society, conduct a review of defence and national security policy, their postures and budgeting processes in order to meet human security needs. In Bougainville this requires a budget to get done; no action in Tonga.

Current consultation, dialogue and community radio activities are designed to:

- Support participants to articulate their peace and human security priorities which will be formulated into a community level action plans on UNSCR 1325
- Provide participants with appropriate education materials
- Demonstrate the use of community media as a means of documenting issues to ensure women's perspectives are highlighted and to inform dialogue and peacebuilding processes
- Strengthen and enhance our rural women's media network, contributing to a vibrant national women's information-communication network
- Deepen the philosophical understanding of Peace and Security and Non Violence terms and approaches currently being undertaken by peace practitioners
- Enhance and up skill nonviolence action and strategies for women participation in society
- Provide a space for dialogue between participants and key government counterparts to better inform these agencies of women's efforts at national, regional and international level to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325

Marte Hellema, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict

*“The network in the Pacific is very important because there are so many issues that are relevant globally, such as the effects of climate change on conflict that are unfolding in the Pacific. For the rest of the world to be able to learn from the Pacific is important. GPPAC can also play role in being a bridge to connect the Pacific to be part of global processes like the post 2015 development agenda. Monitoring progress when it comes to Peace and Security is very difficult to measure and even more so when you talk about conflict prevention. How can you measure if you have prevented something right? But you can monitor is how collaboration is going, how different civil society groups in the region are working together; how collaboration with government is going; with regional intergovernmental organizations going; with the UN. I think on that level, GPPAC in the Pacific has seen a lot of progress, particularly if you look at collaboration with different institutions like the United Nations Development Programmes or with the Pacific Island Forum.*

*I think the most important contribution of women in peace processes is to make it natural. It's women in their own families who teach their children how to be part of the community of their world in a peaceful manner. The highlight is to find places or moments where it isn't questioned anymore, where it's not seen as a goal anymore or not strange anymore, just normal. That's where we want to go to.”*

Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls. Regional Representative for GPPAC in the Pacific.

*“When you're working on issues sometimes on your own, in your own community, you can sometimes feel a bit isolated particularly in peace building work because I think there is a lot of focus on human rights but peace building needs to be supported, because we're working not just to promote human rights but to really address some of the root causes of the violence and conflict that we're experiencing in our region. For Femlink to be able to contribute to the drafting, the shaping and now the implementation of the gender policy of GPPAC I think that is also showing that it's not a top down approach but really the relevance of the experience from the region that is part of this global network.*

*.....(2015 is an) important year for us in the sense that the Pacific has so many issues – not just climate change, not just peace and security, not just gender equality or youth empowerment but all of it coming together and making that visibility on a global scale is really important to us.”*

## **Recommendations:**

- Women should be involved in the development of legislation on gun licensing, the marking and tracing of weapons and their destruction of homemade weapons and ammunition, including through their leadership in traditional ceremonies. The Pacific Plan of Action refers to arms trade treaties; women are forced by men to smuggle and trade arms because they are less likely to be searched.
- Governments to actively work in close participation with civil society in disarmament and nonproliferation machinery including small arms and light weapons control, the banning of cluster munitions and landmines, and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. In Bougainville, women previously involved in this peace work are now not included, yet it is the women who know where the guns are; in Tonga, it is not known how the guns come into the country, but women could help in a gun referendum; a number of Pacific governments have been making progress on antinuclear treaty support but needs more, and needs women's input into statements and connection with the women's movement.

Helen Hakena, Bougainville: *“An American team came to identify where caches of old World War II arms and ammunition were hidden, and were successful in locating them. They said they would return to destroy them – but before they went they made known where the caches were!”*

- Pacific governments should ensure long-term support for a new generation of women's leaders in the peace and security sector, including through the availability of scholarships and other training and capacity building initiatives. The Womens Leadership Alliance network gives strengthened support in the Pacific.
- Governments participating in intergovernmental processes around financing for development and aid effectiveness must work to ensure that aid modalities are gender responsive and that resources are committed to attaining gender equality. Much more required.
- Governments should work to ensure a system of gender budgeting and tracking of money allocated for women and gender equality in the United Nations system including at headquarters and in country or regional offices. Still needed, no noticeable progress.
- Consumer councils to work with Peacewomen for a ban on toy guns and the delegitimisation of other military style toys such as 'Rambo' knives and army greens for children that glamorise militarization and which contribute to a culture of consumerist militarism. Have provided input on this as part of International Day of Peace activities.
- Revenue generated by tax collection to be allocated by governments to address real human security needs, including environmental, health, food, personal, economic, community and political.

Helen Hakena: "Linking with GPPAC is very important because Bougainville is still in a post-conflict situation, and we continue to talk about prevention. Prevention of armed conflict, coming up again in Bougainville, so when we link with GPPAC our issues can also be exposed at another level, particularly at the regional level and the global level because GPPAC is a global network of civil society, linking civil societies together, So that is very important to me, linking with GPPAC links us from the grassroots to the regional level and right up to the global. And our issues at the regional level, particularly from the national levels can be heard and can be taken up



# **GENDER AND HUMAN SECURITY IN THE PACIFIC FOCUS AREA 3: PROTECTION OF WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' HUMAN RIGHTS DURING HUMANITARIAN CRISES AND TRANSITIONAL AND POST CONFLICT CONTEXTS**

## **REGIONAL ACTION PLAN ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY**

In 2012, The Forum Regional Security Committee endorsed the Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in 2012 to provide a regional level framework for Forum Members and Pacific Territories to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which specifically acknowledges the impact of war on women and women's contributions to conflict prevention and sustainable peace and the need to protect women's and girls' human rights in humanitarian crises, transitional contexts and post-conflict situations.

The development of the Plan was acknowledged by Forum Leaders in 2012 and endorsed at the 2013 Pacific Women's Triennial Conference, convened by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

A Reference Group on Women, Peace and Security was established in 2013 to monitor and oversee the implementation of the Plan with representatives from Forum Member countries, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Tonga; civil society organisations Leitana Nehan Development Agency, FemLINKPacific; and regional organisations SPC, UNDP. The Reference Group is assisted by Technical Advisers representing the Solomon Islands Government, UN Women and UNFPA.

The Forum Secretariat supports the Group in its capacity as the 'ex-officio' Chair of the Reference Group. This will ensure the independence of the Reference Group as a panel of experts requested to guide the Forum's implementation of Leaders' decisions pertaining to women, peace and security.

Helen Hakena, the Executive Director of Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency and the GPPAC Gender Focal Point based in Bougainville is concerned that youth programmes remain focused on sports rather than human rights based empowerment:

"We are seeing so many teenage mothers in every household. They are not asserting their rights. And security for these young people is not there. So when we call our monthly Generation Next meeting we find the number has increased because of the demand to learn about their rights, to learn about their health. We are providing information and they have a choice."

Some of the girls do not know how to read and write because their education was disrupted by conflict. "It will affect the peace process and elections, because they have a limited understanding. Illiteracy is a huge problem. Our children are having to travel out to other provinces for further education."

Leitana Nehan organised a sports-oriented approach to promote non-violence in collaboration with the Community Development Programme. "But a lot is dependent on the government officials."

## Activities of the Reference Group in 2013-14

The Reference Group conducted a stocktake in March 2014 of activities that have been implemented in the region that coincide with the priority action areas of the National Plans. Regional activities relevant to the Plan include:

- (a) the Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence Program in advancing the work of women's participation in Forum Members' police forces;
- (b) the Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding's Women Leadership Program that supports tertiary level education in conflict transformation for women from around the region;
- (c) the work of various organisations (including the Forum Secretariat) in supporting practice parliaments for women; and
- (d) the actions of Forum Member governments, in partnership with the United Nations, development partners and local NGOs, to promote and protect women and girl's human rights, including the provision of health and social services, during recent natural disasters affecting Tonga and the Solomon Islands.

President of Tonga's Talitha Project, Vanessa Heleta

*'UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls' was the slogan of the inaugural Orange Day in Tonga, which will be observed on the 25th day of each month to remind people to take a stand.*

*Violent acts against women were merely frowned upon but grossly justified as being necessary – to maintain order in the household, where the woman's right is limited to that of submission.*

*Deaths and an increase in the number of reported domestic violence incidents pushed the Tongan parliament to pass the 'Family Protection Bill' last year. Violence against women is a problem that needs to be discussed by every individual, and the informality intended for the event allowed no separation and exclusivity of conversation. Everyone needed to participate in the conversation.*

In May 2013, the Reference Group supported the Regional Security Sector Governance committee in the Pacific Meeting that was hosted by the Forum Secretariat through the delivery of a paper discussing how women, peace and security issues can be addressed in the context of national security policies.

Individual Reference Group members have provided technical and financial support to assist the governments of Solomon Islands and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville in developing national action plans for women, peace and security. Following a request in April 2014, the Reference Group provides support to the Solomon Islands to complete its National Action Plan.

The Reference Group planned action for 2014-2015 based on its March 2014 stocktake. The overarching priority was the mainstreaming of women, peace and security commitments into relevant regional and national plans, frameworks and mechanisms, rather than treating women, peace and security as a 'standalone' issue.

The following areas were identified as opportunities:

- (i) policy development in relation to security sector governance, in particular the development of national security plans;
- (ii) policy development in relation to humanitarian emergencies and climate change, in particular the development of the Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific;
- (iii) Forum mechanisms, in particular the Pacific Plan and Biketawa Declaration; and
- (iv) the Post-2015 Development Agenda, in particular the Third International Conference on Small Islands Developing States.

Kate Kaura is a former leader of the Northern Region Women's Association. Currently she is the leader of the Catholic Mothers in her church community. Her field work is as a trauma counselor.

"My feeling is security isn't guaranteed in the country. Sometimes I listen to radio and hear about the economic crisis in terms of more work with low salaries and delay of payments. On environment, logging is one of the problems which causes flooding, and water pollution and disappointment between tribes and families. For my community drinking alcohol in a public place is an issue. And when I think about these things I don't have peace in mind. In my community sometimes I have fear and get frustrated when our young boys get drunk and react, like shouting, screaming and few times they fought each other which causes a lot of disturbance and disagreement for everyone inside the community. Changes have taken place but on small things which were not necessarily contributing toward people's living. Changes only happen on areas like fast accessing of information through the internet and more vehicles are on the road, these are the changes I have seen."

Two further priority areas were engaging more substantively with FRSC officials and providing relevant support and advice to Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence; and promoting and raising awareness of the Reference Group's work and the Regional Action Plan.

Work on the priorities includes:

Providing technical assistance to Forum Member countries during national security policy consultations;

Attending the 2014 Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies workshop, "Regional Security Governance and Architecture in the Pacific Islands Region";

Advocating for the inclusion of women, peace and security commitments in relevant regional frameworks and documents; and

Providing technical assistance to Forum Member countries seeking to develop national action plans on women, peace and security.

The Plan is due to be reviewed in 2015 to help provide information for the Pacific contribution to the global review of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

A July 2014 session of FRSC supported the continued work of the Pacific Islands Forum Women Peace and Security Reference Group and the implementation of the Regional Action Plan; and encouraged additional resource support from development partners.

In a recent series of interviews conducted by Vois Blong Mere, women reflected on whether they felt their security had improved since the 'tension years' before and following the ethnic tensions of 2000 and post elections violence in 2006 in Solomon Islands.

Lisa Horiwapu said the interviews showed that there is still a concern about the law and order situation: "Today crime rates are high and most of the crimes now committed are related to drug and alcohol abuse." Peace remains fragile since the crisis. There remains a nagging concern that managing peace including responding to the rate of crime needs a long term and gender inclusive strategy: "(because) criminal activities are all over the place and it seems that the police and responsible authorities are not doing much to address such issues. If there have been improvements, it is only for short term and over time the tendency for things to break down again is still high." Economic development relies on peace and stability and this means everyone needs to work together to prevent to the culture of rioting, as well as stealing, now known as "beligarism", drug and alcohol abuse and other crimes from escalating: "(this) requires a collective effort by the people, police and government to address now to improve human security when things can still be controlled."

FemLINKPACIFIC's monthly Women: Peace, Human Security and Development Report is a monthly call to action for government and development partners to recognise and address rights relating to health; education; water and food; work and livelihood; and social security which are of predominant concern to Fijians.

This information was also communicated in a submission to the Constitution Commission of Fiji in 2012. They highlight that the brunt of poverty continues to be experienced by women in the lower income brackets or the growing informal economy which includes rural women who are particularly impacted by poor infrastructure development, further impeding their ability to access and participate in political processes.

Vois Blong Mere Solomon collaborated with the UNDP office in Honiara to convene a peacebuilding training event from 26th to 30th May 2014. It was attended by women leaders from Malaita and Guadalcanal province including Rosemary Vutiande, who is the leader of Women in Peace Circle organisation. The peace organisation was formed during the ethnic tension between Malaita and Guadalcanal with the goal of working together to restore peace in the country. She is also a member of Vois Blong Mere theatre group. "In my community transport is one of our problems and at times we find it difficult especially when we want to take our products to sell them at the Honiara market. Buses have reached our area but aren't reliable for everyone. Sometimes we take our products to the bus stop and wait few hours and if the buses have no space we go back to our homes with our products and wait for next day and this takes us time to earn income to support our family. I can see that security isn't guaranteed and that causes a lot of problems. One of its affects was the riots that happened last month which created disturbances and frustration for school students, working people, Chinese and the government and it created an unhappy time."

Priority issues communicated through FemLINKPACIFIC's reports 2012-2013 identify food and economic security as major obstacles, particularly as rural women do not have access to land and are also unable to balance the family budget as expenses continue to outweigh family income. Many women relate violence experienced in the home with economic problems and there remains a disconnection, particularly in rural communities, between their needs and hardships faced and national budget allocation, particularly to health services. The lack of economic security is also affecting women's ability to effectively participate in political processes and many rural women who rely on traditional media and communication systems such as radio are further marginalised because of the lack of gender inclusive media and communication strategies available, aside from such initiatives as FemLINKPACIFIC's rural community media network and community radio.

Lidia Waqalicaki, 52, is the President of the Catholic Women's League in Nausori and lives in Davuilevu, Fiji. "Women are providing for their families and like me, some are struggling like me so women should be provided with equal opportunities like having access to land, women should be given land owner status." Lidia is an active member of FemLINKPACIFIC's 1325 community media network and feels that women's civil society provides an important bridge between information especially for leaderships and empowerment particularly for rural women. She told FemLINKPACIFIC's convenor/correspondent Paulin Fong in a community radio programme for FemTALK 89FM that land security for women is linked to rural women's food and economic security and with the power of ownership can also ensure infrastructure development is addressed.

In April 2012 a landmark Fiji Women's Forum, the first of four so far, was convened as a Consultation on Women's Participation in National Democratic Processes by the National Council of Women Fiji, the Soqosoqo Vakamarama I Taukei, FemLINKPacific and Fiji Women's Rights Movement. Women are already participants and decision makers in all areas of state and civil society, but their views are minimized, blocked or tokenized when formal processes regarding constitutionality and governance are nationally debated and decided.

Despite very limited time allocated by the State for civic education and the often disempowering spaces for women in which the consultations were held, Women's Forum representatives effectively mobilized to deliver over 125 rights based civic education campaigns and programs in communities around Fiji to enable the participation in the Constitutional Consultation process of women in all their diversities, particularly rural women and other minority groups. FemLINKPACIFIC was active in localizing UNSCR1325 and mobilizing networks so that between July – August 2012, 208 women leaders representing a collective membership of more than 2000 women from local clubs took part in divisional consultations and reached two new rural centres, Tavua and Rakiraki. This information was added to earlier material from a total of 404 rural women leaders represented more than 4000 women.

As a result of the Women's Forum activities, over 650 individual and group submissions were made, including for increased women's participation in decision making roles, in particular through Temporary Special Measures. The Fiji Women's Forum was deeply disappointed when the People's Draft Constitution 2012 that reflected their submissions on women's values and priorities was rejected, resulting in the invisibility of women in the subsequent Government drafted constitution that contravenes the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), ratified by Fiji in 1995. The Forum also condemned the State's decision to abandon the Constituent Assembly.

FemLINKPacific understands the return to parliamentary democracy requires a transformation from a military-led government to one that is more accountable to peace-building, democratization and development. Through women's eyes, there is a broader notion of security defined in human, rather than in military, terms. Peace is possible when civil society regains faith in and democratic control of all organizations that have the authority to use or threaten to use force. Until women feel secure in their homes and communities, countries cannot be assured of sustainable peace in the nation. When women feel secure, peace is possible. When women feel secure enough to organise for peace – expressed through theatre, public demonstrations and civil disobedience – peace is on its way.

May 24 is the International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament and in 2014 FemLINKPACIFIC once again contributed to the Women's Peacemakers Programme campaign toolkit addressing Militarism in the Pacific: In order to discuss militarism in the Pacific it is necessary to take into account not only the role of the military of Pacific Island countries and territories but also the role of and relationship with Australia, New Zealand, Britain and USA, France – even the French Legionnaires – as well as India and China whether you are talking about training or recruitment including in the growing private sector recruitment.

With this reality, regional mechanisms addressing gender, conflict, peace and security such as the Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security address Security Sector Governance must have accountability within action plans of other UN member states.

In the national, regional and global efforts to progress implementation, there is a critical need to enhance and institutionalize the formal recognition of the efforts of Pacific Peacemakers who have indeed paved the way in implementation - from literal translations to the translation of the resolution in practical ways.

The Regional Action Plan provides a framework for Pacific Island Countries to enhance women's leadership in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, mainstream gender in security policy-making and ensure women and girls' human rights are protected in humanitarian crises, transitional contexts and post-conflict situations. It also sets out a regional mechanism that will support regional and national efforts.

## The Anti Nuclear Movement

Our work on advancing commitments to peace, human security and conflict prevention, including through the Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security builds on a rich “HerStory” of Peacewomen in the Pacific, dating back to the early days of the Fiji Young Women’s Christian Association which provided the early nurturing ground to the Nuclear Free Independent Pacific movement. We are keen to see linkages within the broader efforts of conflict prevention and human security and security sector governance so that Governments actively work in close participation with civil society in disarmament and non-proliferation machinery including small arms and light weapons control, the banning of cluster munitions and landmines, and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

Environmental Security is connected to the reality in our region of the protracted nature of nuclear testing. Due to their connections via the sea, all Pacific states have been connected and affected by the testing. It is vital that there is support for strong Pacific Island government and non-government organisations’ movement against nuclear weapons testing. The ocean pollution and impact on the food chain and subsequent genetic damage to human populations and future generations from nuclear fallout were some of the ways Pacific islanders have been affected by nuclear weapons. Generations of Pacific Island women have voiced concern about the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons: nuclear fallout on the oceans, health and genetic damage, environmental pollution, unknown impacts on the food chain and forced migrations of peoples.

Nuclear Remembrance Day 2014 was held on the 60th anniversary of the Castle Bravo nuclear detonation in the Marshall Islands, the most powerful nuclear bomb tested by the United States. The test, conducted on Bikini Atoll, was 1000 times greater than the bomb that Hiroshima in WWII. It created a 20-mile-high upheaval of coral, water, animal, and plant life, which then drifted in a huge cloud of raining fallout estimated at between 1,000 to 10,000 more than the fallout of Hiroshima. It drifted across the Marshall Islands creating horrific humanitarian consequences over generations. This included increased rates of thyroid cancer, leukemia, and other radiation induced diseases. The most common birth defects on Rongelap and nearby islands have been “jellyfish” babies born with no bones in their bodies and with transparent skin. They usually live for a day or two before they stop breathing. Many women die from abnormal pregnancies.

FemLINKPacific, as a member of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict and International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), reaffirms that emphasis on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons is a reality for the Pacific Island region which continues to bear the impact of the use and testing of nuclear weapons.

It is also critical that governments democratise national annual budgets processes to ensure proactive community participation in identifying priorities and needs, which will help to ensure adequate line items to resource implementation of gender equality commitments across all government departments. This sort of commitment to “financing gender equality” must also be carried through into inter-governmental discussions and decisions on development aid and financing.

While the implementation of the action plan has the oversight of Reference Group on Women, Peace and Security convened by the Pacific Islands Forum which includes representatives of governments (Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea and Tonga) and civil society (FemLINKPacific and Leitana Nehan Women’s Development Agency) the responsibility of implementation should not be left to this reference group or the Forum Regional Security Committee alone.



Helen Hakena, Bougainville: One evening I was out sweeping my compound and I saw a woman with a child run to the shore opposite, jump into a boat and head for our side. A man in another boat came after her. When she arrived she asked me for help. I kept sweeping and told her to go quickly inside, the door wasn't locked. I kept sweeping. The man, who was her husband, landed and rushed up to ask me where I had hidden his wife. I kept sweeping and said: "How could I hide your wife, I've been here sweeping all the time. You didn't see me move from here, did you?" He finally went away, and I was able to help his wife go to some relatives in another place. Another time, a woman who had been badly beaten by her husband came to my house asking for help. I let her inside, locked the door and called the police. We had some good policewomen then who would deal with domestic violence cases. While we were waiting, the power went off and all the lights went out. We were sitting in the dark when the policewoman arrived. I opened the door and let her in to interview the woman. In that moment I forgot to lock the door again. Suddenly the woman's husband rushed in with a big stone in his hand and smashed it on the policewoman's head. She fell unconscious, quite badly injured. The man ran away and we were able to call for help. The policewoman ended up in hospital for quite some time.

"There are many examples of the roles played by women in peace building processes across the Pacific. For example, in Fiji women have organized peace vigils, dialogue and provided technical inputs into defence reviews and national security policy development; negotiations across crocodile infested rivers with armed combatants and developing education methods for peace building in the Solomon Islands; actions to bring about the laying down of arms in Bougainville; advocacy, research and education to encourage voting in Marshall Islands; efforts in Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu and across the region to end violence against women. These are only a few examples of responses to conflict or perceived threats to human security that women's organizations have developed and sustained over the years. Despite women's productive efforts their participation in peace building, post-conflict recovery and efforts to enhance the oversight and accountability of the security sector is still a matter for debate. Women still struggle to be heard at the negotiating table in leadership roles and are not given sufficient recognition and resources to do their work." (Pacific Regional Action Plan 2013 – 2015)

## Recommendations

- Governments should make sure security sector personnel receive gender sensitivity training in full compliance with UNSCr1325 in order to support the implementation of existing commitments and utilize tools such as gender based early warning indicators. Some progress in Tonga where a police unit to deal with violence against women has been established; four female police officers equipped with an aid funded vehicle in Bougainville was extremely helpful but the officers were reassigned and the vehicle used for other purposes.
- Community police initiatives should be enhanced through regular engagement with women's groups and the recruitment of women with expertise and life experience to community policing programmes. Going well in Tonga; some efforts made in Bougainville although some blocks have arisen; police training taking place in Fiji.
- All troop and police contributing countries should engage gender experts and expertise to be included in all levels and aspects of peace operations, including in technical surveys, the design of concepts of operation, training, staffing and programmes.
- Building on the Pacific Conference of Churches' commitment to peace building and conflict resolution, churches and faith based leaders should explicitly support 1325 and include more women in decision making positions, including through the development of curricula at theological colleges. Some progress reported being made in this area, including in Solomon Islands.

- Recalling the Pacific Forum Leaders' commitment to implementation of the Human Security Framework, national governments should, in close collaboration with civil society, conduct a review of defence and national security policy, their postures and budgeting processes, in order to meet human security needs. Not happening, governments not releasing the required information, and need reminding of this obligation.
- Governments to implement commitments to the elimination of all forms of gender based violence, particularly domestic violence which increases in the build up, during and after conflict, in collaboration with women's human rights experts and advocates. Progress at some levels: Pacific Forum Reference Group on Gender Based Violence; Tonga Family Protection Act; Fiji Domestic Violence Decree although unclear if it is linked to peace and security; Solomon Islands domestic violence legislation; PNG pending.
- Police to increase level of response to the violation of women's security, and uphold standards to build confidence and trust that may have been eroded through corruption, violence or abuse of power. Bougainville has some progress but more required; Fiji revived the Violence Against Women and Children task force; Tonga has had police training and a police domestic violence unit established.
- Gender equality should be incorporated into law reform processes, especially family, civil, labour and land reforms. National legal systems should penalize and remedy all forms of violence against women in conflict and post conflict situations. Specially trained police units should be established to investigate crimes against women. Law enforcement officials including judges, police and armed forces should be sensitized about such crimes. Women's access to justice should be ensured through legal literacy programmes, support services and legal aid. Tonga has no free legal aid, only advice; Bougainville has effective Public Solutions Officer for family conflict; Fiji is expanding the Legal Aid Commission network.
- Pacific Forum leaders and the Security Committee should incorporate gender analysis into all aspects of small arms and light weapons disposal programmes by including women civil society experts in official and informal working groups, including border security and control to stop gun running. Has been consultation at regional level for adoption into Regional Action Plan but still needs engagement at country level; it is women's role to keep track.
- The rights, needs and representation of women displaced by conflict and natural and climate change disasters should be reflected in local and national legislation and regulation, such as ensuring provision of essential services, health centres, housing and schools. There is a need, especially in Bougainville, for special adult education for the 'left behind generation' who missed education because of conflict and displacement, and measures to have their children into the education system, including a birth registration subsidy.
- Women's human rights experts should be included in drafting the mandate of truth and reconciliation commissions and other transitional justice mechanisms as well as their planning and implementation so that crimes against women are included, special hearings for women are scheduled, the rights of women testifying and participating are protected throughout and considerations of gender equality and women's concerns are included in the recommendations and other outcomes of these mechanisms. Solomon Islands women should be supported to produce their own Truth and Reconciliation report and to make submissions; Bougainville women need support all the way, the Government report is not yet released; Bougainville women are working with Red Cross to get information about missing persons, so they can find and bury husbands and sons killed in conflict, an encouraging project involving grass roots women who know how to do things, not just wait for

funds. Previous reconciliation attempts waited for funding and then failed, but women work by doing things through tradition, so the reconciliation will be sustainable.

- Government should provide regulated and safe child care centres as well as childcare allowances for carers in the home through appropriate legislation to increase productivity and ensure women's participation in the work place. Tonga has established an early intervention programme for children with disability as a Tonga Social Services pilot as well as preschool and primary school free education.

- To encourage equal participation in the economy and public life, a substantial funding increase is required in public education, and the removal of fees, other barriers to education and gender bias in curricula. Fiji has welcomed free school tuition and bus fare assistance, but the cost of education is still a challenge. Bougainville has no free education and education is expensive or non-existent.

- Governments should ensure resources and availability of safe women's spaces to organise dialogues and peace and trust building activities as a precursor to women's full involvement in the peace process. This is still required. Women continue to organise but need funding for women's peace building activities. UNWomen through CPAD support is acknowledge but more is required, such as bus fares. Women's activism needs to be supported to prevent conflict.

- Government and other agencies should ensure that annual budgetary allocation for post-conflict allocation to assist women and communities in post-conflict psycho-social recovery, including through safe houses, rape and trauma counselling services including medical supplies, and free legal advice to conflict survivors.

- During times of conflict, governments and UN agencies should ensure that women have equal participation in all processes and programmes that relate to their personal security, including in the planning and management of camps and services for internally displaced persons. In Bougainville the number of internally displaced persons not returned home is causing problems, including land issues where people have settled on the traditional land of others because government owns little land it can allocate; lawlessness because there is no authority in the communities; some can't move home because there are still guns in the area; there are also gun battles in the displaced communities; government should try to develop small satellite towns in other areas.

- The rights, needs and representation of women displaced by conflicts should be reflected in local and national legislation and regulation, such as ensuring provision of essential services, water, electricity, health centres, housing and schools.

In Bougainville this links to a need for education and for trauma healing. In Tonga it is held that such matters are better dealt with in court and conflict is often hidden in the house. There is a need to listen to women on conflict management and give support to prevent resurgence of conflict, particularly with the use of traditional knowledge and custom.

- Governments, bilateral donors and the banking sector, including development banks, should collaborate to increase women's access to loans and credit for livelihood projects, developing appropriate requirements for loan application so that these do not discriminate against women. Fiji and Bougainville loan situation improved; Tonga loans still require husband's signature.

- Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes should equitably benefit ex-combatants and those taken up and forced into support roles in armed groups. Reintegration and pension packages should include reasonable compensation for years of service, injury, illness, mental illness, trauma and stress counselling and retraining.
- A Pacific-wide DDR study should be conducted by locals, building on the knowledge of community-based organisations, including cost projects for adequate DDR in the region, drawing on the INSTRAW and DCAF Gender and Security Sector Reform Working Group to support this process.
- Governments to actively work in close participation with civil society in disarmament and non-proliferation machinery including small arms and light weapons control, the banning of cluster munitions and landmines, and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.
- Police to increase level or response to the violation of women's security, and uphold standards to build confidence and trust that may have been eroded through corruption, violence or abuse of power.
- Governments to harmonise gun control and domestic violence laws.

### **Who We Are**

*"We are a regional feminist community media network working so that women in all her diversities can claim their communication rights to define their peace, human security and development priorities. Our women-led community radio network "FemTALK 89FM" enables the production of a range of innovative media and communication initiatives to inform media and policy action"*

FemLINKPACIFIC is countering gender stereotypes through a range media initiatives particularly to promote the important role of women in decision-making, focusing on local governance systems and development processes. We also support women's use of media for their own empowerment and for the development of their communities.

*"Our media initiatives provide women with the freedom, safe space and independence to produce programmes as a way of representing their voice; Women are recognized as advocates in their community. When we broadcast with FemTALK 89FM women join us from beyond the 10km transmission radius claiming their space on the airwaves to participate actively, to be informed and to speak out!"*

Our work is directly linked to the principles of democratisation and communication rights, including promoting the principles of diversity, inclusivity and access to communication in our societies

### **Contact our Community Media Centre in Suva**

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## Acronyms

<b>ABG</b>	Autonomous Bougainville Government
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>COE</b>	Council of Elders
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>CSW UN</b>	Commission on the Status of Women
<b>FRSC</b>	Forum Regional Security Committee
<b>FWCC</b>	Fiji Women's Crisis Centre
<b>FWF</b>	Fiji Women's Forum
<b>FWRM</b>	Fiji Women's Rights Movement
<b>GMMP</b>	Global Media Monitoring Project
<b>GPPAC</b>	Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict
<b>IANSA-PSAAG</b>	International Action Network on Small Arms – Pacific Small Arms Action Group
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communications Technology
<b>LGBTIQ</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer
<b>PIFS</b>	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
<b>RAP-WPS</b>	Regional Action Plan- Women Peace and Security
<b>RDSSD</b>	Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development
<b>RRRT</b>	Regional Rights Resource Team
<b>PACMAS</b>	Pacific Media Assistance Scheme
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SODELPA</b>	Social Liberal and Democratic Party
<b>SOGI</b>	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
<b>SPC</b>	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
<b>SPC-CETC</b>	SPC Community Education Training Centre
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNAMI</b>	United Nations Assistance Mission to Iraq
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNDOF</b>	United Nations Disengagement Observer Force
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
<b>UNESCO</b>	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>UNMIL</b>	United Nations Mission to Liberia
<b>UNMISS</b>	United Nations Mission to South Sudan
<b>UNSCR</b>	United Nations Security Council Resolution
<b>WPA</b>	Women's Plan of Action
<b>WPP</b>	Women's Peacemakers Programme

