

Pacific Women Advisory Board Meeting Report – April 2016

Regional

SHARE

May 10, 2016

Pacific Women Advisory Board Meeting Report

Fourth Meeting 4 April 2016

The fourth meeting of the Advisory Board for Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (Pacific Women) was held in Apia, Samoa on 4 April 2016. The meeting was chaired by Hon. Fiame Naomi Mata'afa, Deputy Prime Minister of Samoa and Minister for Natural Resources and the Environment. The meeting agenda is at Attachment A.

The objectives of Pacific Women are:

- Women, and women's interests, are increasingly and effectively represented and visible through leadership at all levels of decision-making.
- Women have expanded economic opportunities to earn income and accumulate economic assets.
- Violence against women is reduced and survivors of violence have access to support services and to justice.
- Women in the Pacific will have a stronger sense of their own agency, supported by a changing legal and social environment and through increased access to the services they need.

The Advisory Board's purpose is to provide advice on the strategic direction of Pacific Women. The Advisory Board reflects Australia's commitment to a Pacific-led response to improving the opportunities for political, economic and social advancement of Pacific women. The membership of the Board and attendance at the meeting is at Attachment B.

The meeting commenced with an opening prayer by Board Member, Rev Sereima Lomaloma.

Congratulatory Remarks by the Board to the Chair

Merilyn Tahī, on behalf of the Board Members, congratulated the Chair on her success in the 2016 Samoa General Election and for her appointment as Deputy Prime Minister.

Summary update of Implementation

The Board heard an update on the progress of Pacific Women:

- 103 activities funded: 22 through regional program and 81 through bilateral funding;
- Main focus of these activities are in the areas of enabling change and eliminating violence against women
- Program evaluations of UN Women Trust Fund to end Violence Against Women and the Regional Rights Resource Team
- Launch of the First Progress Report 2012-2015
- Co-funded SPC and FemLinkPacific film on women and climate change in the Pacific shown at recently concluded 60th session of CSW

The Board heard about DFAT's ongoing efforts to mainstream gender equality across all of its work including through internal institutional mechanisms such as:

- DFAT's Pacific Gender Equality Guidance Note is being implemented, including:
 - Policy on family and sexual violence developed in PNG and Solomon Islands Posts and being developed in Fiji and Kiribati
 - DFAT staff in Pacific Division include gender actions in their performance agreements
 - Solomon Islands Post has adopted a systematic, whole-of-post approach to progressing gender equality both externally and internally through working with staff, mainstreaming gender into engagement in Solomon Islands and linking advocacy and aid programming
 - Greater attention to the needs of women and children in the TC Winston response in Fiji

- 16 Days of Activism activities in Port Moresby, Noumea, Pohnpei, Kiribati and included as a focus on visits to Fiji, Samoa and Tonga by the previous Minister for International Development and Pacific

The Board endorsed the First Progress Report and provided positive feedback on the online version. It was agreed that the report should be sent to heads of government prior to the 2016 Forum Leaders meeting with a covering letter signed by the Chair of the Board and the Australian Foreign Minister highlighting what has been achieved and the key challenges.

The Board discussed the percentage of activities by outcome area across the whole program and agreed this was an accurate reflection of the work being done on the ground. The Board queried what was included in the 'Enabling Change' area as this is a significant portion. Linda explained that this work leads and provides a foundation for all of the other streams of work on gender mainstreaming, for example, research to inform policy, regional rights, gender advisory support and support for women's coalitions for change.

The Board discussed the importance of cross referencing thematic areas in activities and programming. For example, linkages between program areas such as women's economic empowerment and addressing violence against women as when women earn more money they can be beaten by their husbands. These consequences need to be recognised and addressed at the same time.

The Board queried whether there was to be another Leadership Dialogue to follow-on from the first dialogue on women in leadership in 2013 and the second dialogue on the private sector and ending violence against women in 2014. The next dialogue is planned to focus on civil society and women's coalitions for change and DFAT is looking for an opportunity to schedule the event in 2016-2017. The cost-benefit of holding the leadership dialogues is an issue that needs to be further explored (both budget and people's time), particularly for a large heterogeneous group like civil society.

The Board expressed general concern at their perception of a low level of awareness and engagement with Pacific Women by governments at country level. They discussed ways in which this could be improved working with DFAT Posts and where possible, involving Advisory Board members. This included using the First Progress Report to inform government and stakeholders about the program.

The Board recognised the importance of data collection, and having the right data and using this to inform and change policy. In relation to this, the Board queried the status of the program Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF) and the Knowledge Management System (KMS) and the contribution of planned Country Reflection Workshops to the M&E process. Linda Petersen, the Team Leader of the Pacific Women Support Unit explained that the MEF had been developed and was being rolled out at country level to assist with the development of country plan MEFs. Similarly, the KMS data collection tools had been tested and were now being used to assist with country plan monitoring and reporting. She explained that country reflection workshops were part of the M&E process but aimed at engaging all key stakeholders in country, not just Pacific Women implementing partners. The purpose of the reflection workshops is to gain insight into changes in the socio-economic and political context in the country that could impact on the achievement of gender equality and the operating environment of Pacific Women supported initiatives. A methodology for the country reflection workshops was being developed and would be tested in Vanuatu in April as part of the review of the Vanuatu country plan.

The Board noted the progress of the menstrual hygiene research which was proposed at the last meeting. It was funded by DFAT's Innovation Fund and Gender Equality Fund and was an example of how Pacific Women has leveraged additional funding. The links between menstrual hygiene and women's reproductive health was noted.

Pacific Women activities at the activity and country level

Program Management Committee

The Board heard reflections on the Pacific Women Program Management Committee (PMC) and engagement with the Tonga Country Plan from Natalia Latu. She highlighted:

- The December 2015 PMC meeting was the first meeting. Advisory Board members participate in the PMC on an annual rotational basis

- The PMC develops an important link and understanding of the practical application of policy decisions
- It provided an opportunity to better understand the work of the Support Unit and the detail of the program, specifically regional and country activities

The Board agreed that they should receive summary minutes from each meeting and continue to have a member attend on a rotational basis. Other PMC documents could be sent to Board Members on request.

Samoa

The Board also heard a presentation on gender equality work in Samoa led by Naea Beth Onesemo, CEO Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development who provided an overview of Australia's support to the Ministry with opening remarks by the Australian High Commissioner, Sue Langford. UN Women Program Officer, Mele Maualaivao and Program Coordinator, Gatoloi Tili Afamasaga shared an overview of the Increasing Political Participation of Women in Samoa program supported by Pacific Women.

The Board commended both presentations noting the following:

- The leadership of the Samoan Prime Minister in taking forward temporary special measures in Samoa as part of his commitment to implementing the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration
- The need for gender analysis of legislative provisions, e.g. in relation to village councils preventing "titled" women from standing in the election
- The need for further research into attitudinal change pre and post-election process
- The importance of literacy and education in building understanding and acceptance of women's political participation

The roles and direction of *Pacific Women*

The Board heard about the progress of designing the roadmaps in three of Pacific Women's outcomes – women and leadership; economic empowerment and ending violence against women in the context of the Pacific. The roadmaps are intended to guide future investments in these areas. As part of this process, the Board also heard about the progress of the review of counselling services for survivors of violence in the region to assess their relevance and quality, in order to inform efforts to increase the effectiveness of these services at country level and regionally. The Terms of Reference for the first three year evaluation was shared and discussed.

The Board noted:

- The role of the roadmaps in ensuring transparency, accountability and better targeting of Pacific Women's response and resources in these key outcome areas
- The participation of Board Members in the Roadmap Reference Groups: Savina Nongebatu (Leadership), Sereima Lomaloma (Violence), Lesieli Taviri (Economic Empowerment)
- The process for the development of the roadmaps was planned to take 4-6 months
- That the consultants for the mid-term review would be selected from DFAT's M&E Panel
- The three year evaluation would include visits to selected countries

The Board nominated Maere Tekanene to the Reference Group for the three year review.

Priorities for the Advisory Board for the next six months

The Board members prioritised engagement to raise the profile of Pacific Women through scheduled events to share the First Progress Report at both country and regional levels. Key events would be:

- 47th Pacific Forum Leaders Meeting in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia in September 2016
- 11th Commonwealth Women Affairs Ministerial Meeting in Apia, Samoa in September 2016

- Secretariat of the Pacific Community, CRGA Meeting in Suva, Fiji
August 2016

Reflections on the meeting and agreement on the report

The Board acknowledged and thanked DFAT for the effort to ensure there was more time for discussion and fewer presentations at this Board meeting. There was general agreement that the meeting was informative and constructive.

Next Meeting

The Board agreed that in line with their earlier agreement to meet in different sub-regions that a meeting in the North Pacific in November 2016 to focus on the outcome of the roadmap development process and the three year evaluation should be considered. It was agreed that DFAT would canvass options with Post and come back to the Board.

Conclusion

The Board expressed its appreciation to DFAT for the opportunity to engage with Pacific Women and thanked the Hon. Deputy Prime Minister of Samoa, Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa for chairing the meeting.

The meeting closed with a prayer by Board Member, Natalia Latu.

Attachment A

Agenda

Pacific Women **Advisory Board Meeting**

4 April 2016

Venue: The Boardroom Tanoa Tusitala Hotel, Apia Samoa

Chair: Hon Fiame Naomi Mata'afa

9:00 – 11:00 Welcome and Update

9:00 Welcome and Introduction:

9:15 Summary update on implementation of Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development, including feedback from Advisory Board on the first Progress Report: Tracey Newbury, Director

10:0 Morning tea

11:00 – 12:45 Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development at the activity and country levels

11:00 Reflections on the Pacific Women Program Management Committee and engaging with the Tonga country plan: Natalia Latu

11:30 Presentation on gender equality work in Samoa

12:45-2:15 Lunch

Photo opportunity

2:15-4:30 The roles and direction of the Advisory Board

2:15 Setting the direction of Pacific Women: discussion on the roadmaps and the three year evaluation.

3:15 Afternoon Tea

3:30 Priorities for Advisory Board for the next six months

- 4:00 Reflections on the Meeting and Agreement on the Report
- 4:30 Date and location for next meeting and Wrap Up
- 4:45 Meeting End

Attachment B: Members of the Advisory Board

Hon Fiame Naomi Mata'afa, Chair, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Natural Resources and Environment (Samoa);

Ms Andie Fong Toy, Deputy Secretary General, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat;

Dr Colin Tukuitonga, Director General, Secretariat of the Pacific Community;

Ms Jane Kesno, former head of the PNG Office for Women (PNG);

Dr Lawrence Kalinoe, Secretary Department of Justice and Attorney-General (PNG);

Ms Lesieli Taviri, Chairperson of the PNG Busies Coalition for Women (PNG);

Ms Maere Tekanene, former Minister for Education (Kiribati);

Ms Merylyn Tahu, Coordinator of the Vanuatu Women's Centre (Vanuatu);

Ms Natalia Palu Latu, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Policy and Reform Division, Ministry of Finance and National Planning (Tonga);

Ms Savina Nongebatu, immediate past Co-Chairperson of the Pacific Disability Forum (Solomon Islands);

Reverend Sereima Lomaloma, Anglican Minister and Ministry Officer, Anglican Diocese of Polynesia & Chairperson of House of Sarah (Fiji);

Ms Yoshiko Tamaguchi, Pacific Young Women's Leadership Alliance
(Republic of Marshall Islands).

Ms Natasha Stott Despoja (Observer), Australia's Ambassador for Women
and Girls

Dr Audrey Aumua, Deputy Director General SPC represented Dr Colin
Tukuitonga at the meeting.

Dr Colin Tukuitonga, Ms Jane Kesno, Ms Savina Nongebatu, Dr Lawrence
Kalinoe and Tracey Newbury sent their apologies for this meeting.