

# Women climate change negotiators speak out about Pacific issues

[Regional Leadership And Decision-Making](#)

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Project partner: Women's Environment and Development Organization

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Rising oceans highlight how climate change is affecting the Pacific. The Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) promotes women's climate change leadership. Pacific Women has been studying how women's voice on Pacific climate change issues has improved as a result of WEDO's work.



Participants at the Pacific Women Climate Change Negotiators workshop in August 2017. Photo credit: Australian High Commission, Suva, Fiji.

International decisions on climate change are made at the annual United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties meetings. While gender roles, laws and customs in Pacific Island countries create an environment where women are often more vulnerable to climate change impacts, financial and cultural barriers have resulted in very low numbers of Pacific women participating in UNFCCC meetings.

To address this, WEDO held workshops for 41 women from nine Pacific Island countries to develop their skills in diplomacy, including drafting text for interventions, decisions and other written outcomes of the UNFCCC negotiating process. Pacific Women's tracer study on women who participated in the WEDO training found that some participants took on active roles within their delegation, attending meetings and panel discussions, drafting statements and speeches, providing legal advice and engaging with the media. Their increased capacity provided strong representation of the priorities of Pacific women and marginalised groups in the UNFCCC process.

'[The negotiation training] helped boost my confidence,' said a participant from Vanuatu. She said that being recognised as a trained negotiator helped her to 'participate with other delegates at the negotiation spaces.'

The study found that participants improved their knowledge and skills, with women reporting improved self-confidence for negotiation and leadership roles. The training also increased their understanding of UNFCCC processes and the links between gender and climate change.

Women's full and equal participation in climate change decision making will improve the success of climate change actions by ensuring they are more gender-responsive. One participant from Fiji reflected: 'To have a climate change negotiation training that is specifically designed for Pacific women, and the framing focusing on climate justice, is indeed a breakthrough moment, especially in terms of women's empowerment and the awareness around gender and human rights within the climate change dialogue.'