

Pacific Women webpage: <https://bit.ly/3goVzgX> or <https://pacificwomen.org/news/tuvalu-and-the-pacific-at-the-65th-session-of-the-commission-on-the-status-of-women-csw65/>



Website story: The participation of Pacific women in decision making and public life is critical to achieving sustainable development.

Tuvalu and the Pacific at the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65)

'We believe that the empowerment of Pacific women and girls is critical to achieving sustainable development and the resilience of our Pacific nations,' stated the Tuvalu Minister for Health, Social Welfare and Gender Affairs, Honourable Isaia Taape about the 65th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65).

'It was important for us to represent the Pacific's priorities for advancing gender equality at the Commission on the Status of Women,' he said.

As Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, Tuvalu represented Pacific islands countries and, based on the pre-agreed Pacific position, led the negotiations of the agreed conclusions.

CSW65 was held from 15–26 March 2021 with the central theme of women's participation and decision-making in public life and the elimination of violence. This year, due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the work of the Commission took place in a hybrid format based in New York but with mostly virtual meetings.

According to Minister Taape: *'We still have a long way to go before we can see women's full participation in decision-making in our Pacific Islands. And the rate of violence against women is shameful.'*

'But we need to continue working together to bring significant changes and recognize women and girls' real value. They are our partners and play such an important role in our lives. It is their right to sit with us at the decision-making table.'

'Many recommendations of the CSW agreed conclusions can be adapted to the Pacific context.'

The United Nation's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was established in 1946 to oversee and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. Every year, government and civil society representatives from around the world gather in New York to participate in the Commission's work and make recommendations to progress gender equality and the human rights of women and girls. CSW offers the participating countries an opportunity to share their experiences, express their concerns, and agree on concrete recommendations to progress gender equality and empower women.

Ms Laingane Italeli Talia, from the Tuvalu Mission in New York led the negotiations.

'Those negotiations last for several weeks, and the final two weeks are very intense. Countries hardly agree on how to progress gender equality. It was important that the agreed conclusions recognized climate change as a substantial threat to Pacific Islands women's lives, recognizing that it is the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of our Pacific peoples, including women and children, ' said Ms Italeli Talia.

'This dimension was included and recommendations were made to promote the participation of women in climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies to ensure those address the needs and priorities of women as well as men,' she said.

'Women's empowerment is not a luxury in our context; it is a necessity for being resilient.

'We also strongly advocated for the right of women and girls with disability and young women to be heard and their views to be considered in decision making. And we urge the global community to recognize the specificities of women and girls from the Small Islands Development States. Our women have very similar experiences of discrimination and exclusion to other women. Still, because they live in remote islands, they are isolated with their problems and have very limited access to information, services and infrastructure.'

PIF Chair was assisted during the Agreed Conclusions negotiations by the Pacific Technical Support Group composed of the Pacific Islands Secretariat, UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office, the Pacific Community, Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*) and other partners include key civil society organisations.

The CSW65 agreed conclusions are available online: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw65-2021>

Pacific Islands Forum Statement for the Sixty-Fifth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women <https://www.forumsec.org/2021/03/17/csw65/>

Photo caption:

Photo credit: Tuvalu Government Media

Photo caption: Tuvalu, as Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum speaking at the CSW65, has been working toward improved gender equality and women's empowerment, such as through its National Women and Youth Forum. The forum brought together women, youth and others to share views and recommendations to guide the 2020 revision of three national approaches – the Tuvalu Gender Equality Policy, National Youth Policy and the Te Kakeega III, or TK III (Tuvalu's National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2016–2020) – as well as to inform the provision of sexual and reproductive health services and education in Tuvalu. Details are on the [Pacific Women website](#).