

A platform of action for women's economic empowerment

Regional Economic Empowerment

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Project partner: The Pacific Community

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The theme at the 13th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and 6th Meeting of Pacific Ministers for Women held in Suva in October 2017 was the importance of women's economic empowerment in achieving sustainable development of Pacific Island countries. This acknowledged that when more women participate in either formal or informal economies, their families, communities and countries become wealthier.



Participants at the 13th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women. Photo credit: The Pacific Community.

Hosted by the Pacific Community every three years, the Triennial Conference is a forum for Pacific women to share experiences and identify measures for advancing gender equality and women's human rights. In 2017, conference participants explored the importance of women's economic empowerment in achieving sustainable development of Pacific Island countries.

The last two decades have seen progress in: women's financial inclusion and financial literacy; maternity leave in the public sector; women contributing to superannuation schemes for long-term financial security; increased training opportunities for women; and improved gender equality in primary, secondary and tertiary education. However, this progress has not translated into equal employment opportunities or control over productive or income-generating assets. Gender pay disparities have widened or remained the same. Legal, policy and social barriers continue to hinder women's access to finance and resources.

At the Triennial Conference, all Pacific Ministers for Women endorsed the Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights 2018–2030. The new Pacific Platform for Action is designed to support the implementation of gender equality commitments made in all global, regional and national instruments, including the 2012 Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration and the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals. This Pacific Platform for Action also provides guidance for Pacific Island countries and territories, regional agencies and development partners in prioritising strategic approaches to achieve gender equality.

Conference Chair, the Honourable Mereseini Vuniwaqa, Minister of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation in Fiji, explained how Pacific governments can use the Pacific Platform for Action: 'Apart from setting a roadmap on next steps, [the Pacific Platform for Action] also allows us as a government to measure what we have been doing so far, whether that is the direction that the region, as an entity, is taking, and what it is that we can do differently and do better,' she said.