

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **‘Snakes and Ladders’ tool brings home women’s experiences of economic empowerment**

*Thursday 22 April 2021 (Pacific Islands):* More than 650 participants registered to join a panel of Pacific speakers today to map women’s empowerment through a ‘Snakes and Ladders’ activity, in the lead up to the Pacific Community’s Triennial Conference of Pacific Women next week.

The panel and its interactive ‘Snakes and Ladders’ tool illustrated the multiple factors that can create opportunities or pitfalls on the journey towards women’s economic empowerment.

‘From participation to power: mapping economic pathways to women’s empowerment’, one of the side events held in the margins of the 14th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women, was convened by the *Pacific Women* Support Unit in partnership with CARE Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu Skills Partnership.

‘Today we learned about successful, practical approaches used by partners in the Pacific to ensure that women don’t just earn more money, but are also empowered to make decisions about themselves and their income, having a greater say in their homes and communities,’ said Tara Chetty, Partnerships Lead, *Pacific Women* Support Unit.

‘It’s important for those of us working in this sector to learn about how diverse women in the Pacific navigate economic pathways to empowerment – all the more so in the wake of COVID-19 as women and girls are being disproportionately impacted,’ Ms Chetty said.

Guest speakers for the ‘From participation to power: mapping economic pathways to women’s empowerment’ Triennial side event were:

- Elsie Mongoru, CARE International in Papua New Guinea (PNG)
- Fremden Shadrack, Vanuatu Skills Partnership
- Gabriella Marimyas, *Pacific Women* Support Unit.

Elsie Mongoru, Program Manager, CARE International in PNG said: ‘we know that strong cultural and economic norms around women’s and men’s roles often disadvantage women in their homes, in their communities, and also at work. That’s why we work with corporations, individuals as well as families to change perceptions, behavior and practices.’

‘Our programs prove that practices that discriminate and disadvantage women can change. It is important to work with both women and men for changing social norms in households,’ Ms Mongoru said.

‘We work to make visible the role women contribute in household livelihoods. We encourage men to take up a fair share of the responsibilities in their homes and to support the participation of their wives in decision making.’

Fremden Shadrack, Director, Vanuatu Skills Partnership, highlighted the importance of empowered women.

‘When women are able to realise their full potential, our nation as a whole benefits – a skilled and empowered population of both men and women is needed for our independence and prosperity,’ Mr Shadrack said.

‘From participation to power’ is one of the side events held in the margins of the 14th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women registering more than 1000 delegates across the Pacific through a combination of in person and virtual discussions from the 27–29 April 2021. The 14th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women is followed by the 7th Meeting of Pacific Ministers for Women, 4 May. Both

meetings will bring together policy maker and representatives from 22 Pacific Island countries and territories of the Pacific Community (SPC) along with other stakeholders.

**For more information:**

*Pacific Women* Support Unit, Communications

Phone: +679 331 4098

Email: [information@pacificwomen.org.fj](mailto:information@pacificwomen.org.fj) or [jacqui.berrell@pacificwomen.org.fj](mailto:jacqui.berrell@pacificwomen.org.fj)

Website: [www.pacificwomen.org](http://www.pacificwomen.org)

**Background:**

Through a long-term commitment, Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*) connects more than 170 gender equality initiatives supported by Australia and implemented by over 160 partners across 14 Pacific Island countries.

*Pacific Women* is one of the largest global commitments to gender equality. It partners with governments, local and international non-government organisations (NGOs), private sector, disabled people's organisations, coalitions and others to improve the political, economic and social opportunities of Pacific women and to end violence against women and girls. Its emphasis is on partnerships and locally-driven development.

Providing technical, knowledge sharing and convening support to the portfolio of partners is *Pacific Women's* Support Unit, working to improve the long-term impact of gender equality projects in the Pacific. The Support Unit's offices are in Suva, Fiji, and Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.

*Pacific Women* was announced at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' meeting in August 2012. It commits up to AUD320 million over 10 years in 14 Pacific Islands Forum member countries.

*Pacific Women* initiatives respond to the commitments in the 2012 *Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration*, while also supporting Australia's *Pacific Step-up* and its *Partnerships for Recovery* approach of working together with Pacific partners to address COVID-19 impacts on women, girls and their communities.