



REVISED PACIFIC PLATFORM FOR ACTION ON ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY (RPPA)

2005 – 2015

A commitment by all Pacific Island countries and territories

The RPPA is a regional charter developed and agreed to by representatives from all Pacific Island countries and territories. It has four strategic themes:

- 1) **Mechanisms to promote the advancement of women**
- 2) **Women's legal and human rights**
- 3) **Women's access to services**
- 4) **Economic empowerment of women**

The RPPA offers targets and indicators on women's rights and gender equality and is a reference for developing national gender equality policies and supporting the integration of gender concerns in a broad range of sectors. It also includes recommendations to address emerging challenges such as poverty, globalisation and trade liberalisation, HIV/AIDS, labour migration, peace and security, tradition and religion, media and communication technology.

Delegates from all 22 SPC member countries and territories met in Noumea in 1994 and endorsed a set of principles and plan of action to advance gender equality in the region. The Pacific Platform for Action was then taken to the Fourth World Conference on Women Beijing, 1995, which produced the Beijing Declaration and Beijing Platform for Action. Since the Pacific Platform for Action (1994) and Beijing Platform for Action (1995) were adopted, Pacific Island countries and territories have used them to guide national and regional action and international cooperation to empower women in achieving political, legal, social and cultural rights.

In 2004, the Pacific Platform was reviewed at the 9th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and Second Pacific Ministers Meeting on Women (Nadi, Fiji). Twenty Pacific Island countries and territories adopted the Revised Pacific Platform for Action on the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality 2005–2015 as a ‘living document’.

Progress in implementing RPPA commitments is monitored through the Triennial Conference of Pacific Women. Senior officials responsible for women’s affairs from Pacific Island governments, representatives of non-government organisations, development partners, researchers and academics meet to review progress, discuss challenges and make recommendations to further advance gender equality across the region. The next Triennial Conference will be held in Cook Islands, 21–25 October 2013. The RPPA is due for review in 2014–2015.

Priority areas for action

Countries called for stronger institutional mechanisms for action; improved legal and human rights; improved access to health and education services; and more opportunities for economic empowerment.

1 Mechanisms to promote the advancement of women

To develop and strengthen mechanisms to enhance the advancement of women and gender equality at all levels, the RPPA objectives include:

- establishing and strengthening national institutions – such as departments responsible for women’s affairs also being responsible for coordinating and monitoring efforts toward gender equality
- strengthening the capacity of government ministries and departments to mainstream gender in policy and legislative processes
- adopting national gender equality policies
- developing capacities to produce and use gender statistics
- strengthening partnerships with civil society
- advocating and raising awareness on gender inequality issues

2 Women's legal and human rights

Human rights for all are enshrined in the constitutions and legislation of countries and territories. However, institutions, attitudes and social barriers often prevent women from gaining the full protection of legal systems, exercising their legal rights, and participating in decision-making. Cultural beliefs, religious practices and social bias, and a lack of awareness of legal rights also hinder the exercise of rights. This strategic area proposes measures on legal and human rights, participation of women in political and public decision-making and elimination of violence against women. Recommendations include:

- promoting legal and human rights and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women
- reviewing legislation, policies, programmes, administrative procedures and regulations to ensure compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- establishing legal aid assistance programmes to ensure that women have access to judicial process
- promoting legal literacy for both women and men
- increasing political party support for women candidates and taking affirmative action by putting in place policies and practices that enhance gender parity in political representation
- promoting equal participation by men and women in public life – political parties, statutory bodies and boards, management roles in governments, the private sector and civil society organisations
- adopting policies and programmes to prevent sexual and family violence and criminalise any form of violence
- collecting sex disaggregated data on violence against women and its economic costs in order to curb the prevalence of sexual and family violence
- providing substantial support for programmes to assist victims of domestic violence
- adopting a multi-sectoral approach and recognising the important role of men, women, boys and girls in addressing the problem of violence against women
- adopting policies and guidelines against sexual harassment

3 Women's access to services

This area focuses on services related to health, and education and training. The RPPA recommends:

- improving the quality of and access to affordable medical and reproductive health services
- providing a full range of reproductive health information and services to both men and women, including young and adolescent men and women
- reviewing all aspects of legislation relevant to reproductive health

- supporting full integration in health policies and services of issues for women living with disabilities
- adopting measures to support equal access to education and training (including technical and vocational education) at all levels
- revising school curriculums and textbooks to ensure they are free of gender stereotyping

4 Economic empowerment of women

Recognising women's critical role in sustainable development and poverty alleviation, the RPPA recommends in particular:

- adopting measures to ensure women's rights to equal opportunity in all fields of employment
- supporting income-generating activities for women in rural areas and in disadvantaged households

The Revised Pacific Platform of Action for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality is available on SPC's website:

<http://www.spc.int/images/publications/en/Divisions/Hdp/9thTriennialen.pdf>

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community has been mandated by Pacific women's national institutions and non-governmental organisations to assist Pacific Island countries and territories in their efforts to improve the status of women and monitor the implementation of the *Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality* and the *Beijing Platform of Action*. SPC, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and development partners, such as UN agencies, provide technical assistance to countries and territories on these issues.

For additional information, please contact Brigitte Leduc,
Gender Equality Advisor, Human Development Programme

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

B.P. D5, 98848 Noumea Cedex, New Caledonia

Tel: +687 26 20 00

Email: briggittel@spc.int