





Welcome to UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office's Annual Report for 2014.

It has been a busy and exciting year for UN Women in the Pacific, from the eyes of the world being focused on Samoa and the wider region for the Small Islands Developing States Conference and UN Women's Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo Nguka's first visit to the Pacific, to the launch of our Markets for Change project and a highly visible 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaign. Clear progress was made during the year for women's political participation in the region, with Fiji's first democratic election since 2006 resulting in the highest percentage of women representatives ever elected in the Pacific, as well as the elections in Tonga and Solomon Islands which saw a significant increase in women candidates running, as well as the number of votes received. We also witnessed the first women elected to head of a regional body in the Pacific, with Dame Meg Taylor's appointment as Secretary General of the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat. Additionally, with four new countries adopting ending violence against women legislation for the first time in 2014, the Pacific has seen a huge leap forward.

2014 also saw the UN Women Fiji MCO undergo a comprehensive independent audit where the office received the highest rating possible within the UN system. This is a clear tribute to the work that has been done since UN Women's establishment in the Pacific region in order to ensure that internal controls, governance and management processes are conducted to the very highest standards.

This year has seen UN Women's programmes in the Pacific reach more women than ever before. There is evidence of progress and that the needs, potential and contributions of Pacific women are being prioritised and included in the private and public sectors alike. There is still, however, much to be done.

The ongoing global discussions and negotiations that will determine the shape of the new development framework to replace the Millennium Development Goals make this a critical time for gender equality and women's empowerment in the Pacific region. It has never been more important for us to work together to ensure that these new priorities include a stand-alone goal for gender equality and the empowerment of women, but also to ensure that gender is integrated across all other sustainable development goals. We can use this as a springboard to achieving concrete results on the ground.

On behalf of the UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office team, I would like to thank all of our partners and donors, without whose continuing support UN Women wouldn't be able to achieve any of the results that are included in this report. I hope you enjoy reading about our work this year and the changes it has supported on the ground, and we look forward to working with you to support our efforts.



Nicolas Burniat  
Deputy Representative, Officer in Charge  
UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office

UN Women is the UN organisation dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment and; making gender central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

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# CONTENTS

Pacific Context	6
UN Women in the Pacific	9
Ending Violence against Women	10
Women's Human Rights	17
Access to Justice	21
Women's Political Participation	23
Women's Economic Empowerment	29
Climate Change	33
Disaster Risk Reduction	35
Intergovernmental Processes	39
Partnerships	45
Communications	47
Future	51
Acronyms	52
References	53

# PACIFIC CONTEXT

Pacific Island countries and territories are vastly diverse in many ways from language and natural environments to politics and culture. Most nations have small populations, based on multiple outer islands or atolls, spread over large distances. There are few transport or communication resources, limited government services and many islands depend on imports of basic goods.

Challenges related to governance capacity; inadequate blending of traditional and modern forms of governance and leadership; high levels of gender inequality; migration and urbanisation; resource extraction and inter-group tensions cause significant challenges to social and economic development in the region. This is further aggravated by factors such as physical isolation, varied natural resources, inadequate infrastructure and costly transportation, as well as the impact and variability of climate change, natural hazard risks and economic shocks, all of which constitute key development challenges in the Pacific.

There has been progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment in the Pacific, but it still remains a key challenge. The Millennium Development Goals have helped create awareness and gain political support for efforts to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development across the globe. However, with the Millennium Development Goals coming to a close in 2015, the Pacific region's progress towards achieving targets has been slow and uneven and many gender disparities still persist.

Women in the Pacific still face unequal access to productive resources and low levels of employment outside the informal sector. The Pacific has the world's lowest number of women in parliaments and violence against women is at pandemic levels. Many women face cultural, economic and systematic barriers which include little or no access to decent work, land and financial resources, leadership

opportunities, legal representation, basic education and healthcare, as well as the unequal direct and indirect impacts of disasters.

Gender equality is not only a basic human right, achieving it has enormous socio-economic ramifications. Empowering women fuels thriving economies, spurring productivity and growth, and yet gender inequalities remain deeply entrenched in every society around the world.

Women play an essential role in the Pacific when it comes to ensuring the overall health and prosperity of their families, communities and nations. For instance, they are responsible for most of the growing and selling of small-scale agricultural produce in the Pacific marketplaces, in fact between 75 to 90 percent of market vendors in the Pacific are women<sup>1</sup>. Discrimination, however, prevents many women from fully realising their rights, reaching their potential and participating fully in their communities.

In 2015 the world will adopt a new sustainable development agenda to replace the Millennium Development Goals. UN Women calls for a stand-alone goal to achieve gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment as well as the integration of gender equality concerns throughout the other priority areas in order to drive lasting change for the benefit of all.

While the region still has a long way to go, there is a growing recognition at the highest levels of government and in regional bodies that achieving gender equality is essential for the region's future and needs to be prioritised. This commitment and momentum is a result of high level commitments from Pacific Island Forum leaders, increased accessibility of data, and the development of specific legislation and policies on gender equality and gender violence.



# UN WOMEN IN THE PACIFIC

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) was established in 2010 to address the challenges facing women around the world, providing them with a powerful voice at the global, regional and local levels.

UN Women works with governments and civil society organisations across 14 Pacific Island countries and territories through its Fiji Multi-Country Office, with field presences in Kiribati, Nauru, Samoa (covering Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau), Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and program presence in Tonga. UN Women is also represented through the United Nations Joint Presence Offices in Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu.

Outside of the Fiji MCO, UN Women also has a separate fully fledged office in Papua New Guinea, with country-specific programming.

In recognition of the importance of gender issues in the region and as part of its commitment to the Pacific, UN Women has continued to strengthen its presence and capacity regionally during 2014. Among other appointments, UN Women has added the position of Deputy Representative and has placed the Asia Pacific Regional Advisor on gender climate change and disaster risk reduction in the Fiji MCO.

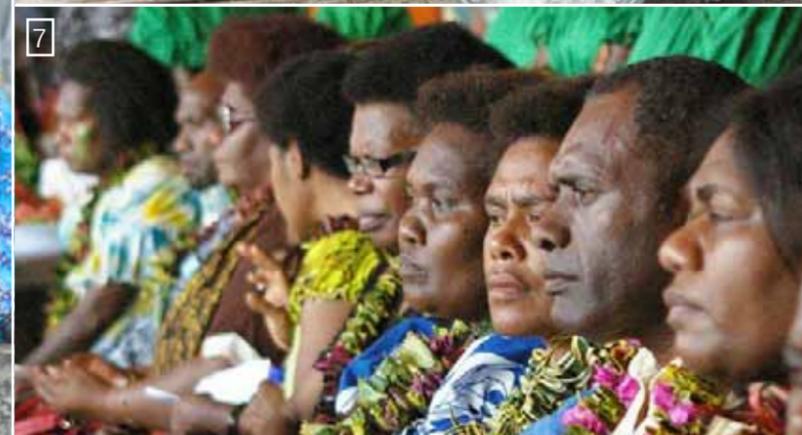
This strong presence allows UN Women works across a number of key programmes including:

- Advancing Gender Justice in the Pacific
- Ending Violence against Women
- Women's Economic Empowerment
- Increasing Community Resilience through the Advancement of Women to Address Climate Change and Natural Hazards

In order to maximise the efforts of the UN to deliver on gender and to implement its coordination mandate, UN Women also co-chairs the UN Pacific Gender Group, which supports the UN's gender work within the Pacific development and humanitarian contexts. UN Women's work with the Gender Group allows it to support the entire UN system in the Pacific to deliver on gender.

Photos:

1 UN Women | 2,5,6,8,10 UN Women/Olivia Owen | 3 UN Women/Marni Gilbert | 4 UN Women/Margot Leger | 7 UN Women/Rachael Kong | 9 UN Women/Audrey Pina Liti | 11 UN Women/Elle van Baaren



# ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women is a violation of human rights and a public health issue of global proportions. Pacific countries have some of the highest documented rates in the world; evidence shows that up to 68 per cent of women living in the region experience physical and/or sexual violence from a partner<sup>2</sup>.

Despite the severity and extent of the violence, services for survivors and access to the formal justice system are limited, while informal justice systems often further compound the discrimination faced by survivors. Civil society organisations are critical to service delivery and strengthening community protective systems, however, they have localised programming and are often based in capital cities, which is of particular concern as 80 per cent of people live in rural areas or on outer islands. Even when services exist, few access them. The traditional silence around violence against women makes it difficult for women to talk about their suffering and to seek help in breaking the cycle of violence. There is a level of shame and stigma associated with domestic and sexual violence, so survivors often experience a sense of isolation and fear retaliation.

In many cases women face social norms demanding that they be obedient to their husbands. These are often linked to deeply held beliefs and attitudes that there are therefore “justifiable reasons” for husbands to use physical violence to “discipline and control” their wives, including for perceived acts of disobedience, suspicion of unfaithfulness, failure to properly complete housework and for refusing sex with her husband.

Change is occurring in the region and 2014 has provided more examples of the growing level of recognition from governments, civil society and development organisations of the need to formulate national policies and frameworks to end violence against women, as well as taking action through a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach.

UN Women has been actively working to support Pacific-led activities to improve the policy environment and to meet the immediate needs, of women who are experiencing violence. The groundwork has been laid and now UN Women is consolidating and building on its work in the region in order to meet the growing demand from countries for technical assistance.

In 2014, four Pacific countries – Federated States of Micronesia (one state only), Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu – passed important new legislation covering violence against women. UN Women provided support to the governments of Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu as they formulated their legislation. This involved helping to build political will for change, technical and financial support – including providing inputs to draft legislation and providing evidence-based policy advice – supporting public consultations in Kiribati and contributing to the Law Reform Task force in Solomon Islands.

Throughout 2014 UN Women has continued to work with governments and civil society organisations to increase their programming, as well as develop the quality and accessibility of those programmes, in particular for survivors in rural and hard-to-reach populations. For example, more than 3,000 survivors across four countries – Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Tonga – accessed services through local organisations as a result of the support of UN Women’s Pacific Regional Ending Violence against Women Facility Fund.

Survivors in the Pacific were also able to access a significantly increased level of multi-sectoral services. Violence against women takes many forms and has a wide range of physical and emotional effects. It can exacerbate reproductive health problems and lead to unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, sexually transmitted infections and exposure to HIV/AIDS.



## CAMPAIGN SUCCESS

In 2014, Hendrick Barai, a project officer from Solomon Islands Family Support Centre’s, was supported by UN Women to attend a month-long gender-based violence training run by Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre and Secretariat of the Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team (SPC-RRRT). The skills and knowledge he gained through that training were put to immediate and effective use on his return, in designing and implementing a lobbying campaign for the new Family Protection Bill.

With further support and mentoring from UN Women and RRRT, Mr Barai and the Family Support Centre developed the lobbying campaign and mobilised the SAFENET network of partners to join the campaign, which was jointly coordinated with the Ministry for Women, Children, Youth and Family Affairs. The campaign took a “divide and conquer” approach, with each campaign group member, including Family Support Centre, concentrating their efforts on five of the members of parliament. Each parliamentarian received one-on-one briefings on the situation facing women and girls in the country, as well as the proposed bill and its aims. They were also given individual information packs.

As a result there was unusually sustained debate over the Bill when it was presented for its third reading, with active participation from the majority of the members of parliament who had received briefings. Mr Barai personally provided support during the Q&A on the Bill in Chambers. The bill was passed unopposed in August 2014, creating a legislative framework around domestic violence that had not existed before.

“Men don’t punch the first person they meet, they wait until they get home. That’s not about anger, that’s about power.”

Tura Lewai  
Pacific Male Champion  
UN Secretary General’s Network of Male Leaders



# PACIFIC REGIONAL ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN FACILITY FUND

Pacific organisations face two major challenges when looking to scale up their efforts to end violence against women both in accessing appropriate funding and strengthening knowledge and capacity levels. The Pacific Regional Ending Violence against Women Facility Fund (Pacific Fund) was set up in 2009 to help fill those gaps.

To do this, the Fund provides grants, technical support and capacity building to innovative projects that will improve the lives of women and girls at the local, national and regional levels. Since 2009, 42 grants have been authorised, committing almost US\$1.8 million to a diverse range of government departments and civil society organisations across seven Pacific Island countries. Together, these projects have already reached more than 175,000 people, 90 per cent of whom live in rural areas and more than 28,000 of whom are violence survivors.

In December 2014 UN Women announced 11 new grant recipients in five countries as a result of its 2013 call for applications. The latest projects to benefit from the Pacific Fund are focused on prevention and providing services, through targeting young people, men and boys, clergy, community, the media, and survivors themselves.

By the end of 2014 Vanuatu Christian Council had already started providing training on gender-based violence to clergy, and is actively supporting its 23 member churches in developing gender-responsive policies and programmes on violence against women.

“Women have been marginalised within the church,” says Ruth Dovo, Vanuatu Christian Council’s programme manager. “Women can contribute positively in this area; they need to give us space.”

Another faith-based organisation, House of Sarah, is using its grant to target male church leaders and clergy in an effort to change their behaviour and perceptions, as well as the overall culture. Run by the Anglican Diocese of Polynesia, House of Sarah already provides counselling to women survivors of violence as well as community education in its parishes throughout Fiji. This is its second grant through the Pacific Fund.

For Tonga’s Ministry of Internal Affairs, the focus is on implementing the Gender Equality Policy and Family Protection Act, which was passed in 2013. Police, justice and health providers will receive training on their roles in implementing the legislation, and the project will also engage with communities around building respectful relationships in families.

The Pacific Fund is principally funded by the Australian Government, with additional support from UN Women’s National Committees of Australia and New Zealand.



## JOINT PROGRAMMES

The effects of violence against women and their children extend far beyond the devastating emotional and physical impacts on the individuals involved. Violence against women also has enormous health, social and economic and development consequences that can last for generations.

A key part of UN Women’s approach to ending violence against women and girls is to work jointly with other UN agencies (UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, ILO and WHO) and national governments to provide intensive multi-sectoral support to the governments of Kiribati and Solomon Islands in implementing national action plans. UN Women led the development of the joint programmes and acts as managing agency. By leveraging the combined strengths of UN agencies and the governments, the programmes aim to create noticeable change for the country’s women and girls, and by extension the wider community, with an overall goal of eliminating violence against women and girls once and for all.

The Joint Programmes look to strengthen capacity within government and civil society organisations to expand survivor services and primary prevention activities as well as changing the environment in which those services are delivered, making violence less acceptable through social transformation.

In 2014, the Solomon Island Joint Programme received a UN Trust Fund grant of USD 600,000 for three years for a number of activities within the wider programme. The activities funded by the UN Trust Fund are jointly implemented by the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, Ministry of Health and Medical Services, UN Women and UNFPA in partnership with UNDP, other UN Agencies and key stakeholders. This is the first time that a joint programme on ending violence in Solomon Islands has received a UN Trust Fund grant and the activities will be launched in early 2015.



Photos:

1 Samoa Victim Support Group staff, Samoa: UN Women/Elle van Baaren | 2 Break the Silence event, House of Sarah, Fiji: UN Women/Ayako Ioroi | 3 Elzira Sagynbaeva, former Fiji MCO Representative, and Rev. Anne Drummond at House of Sarah site visit, Fiji: UN Women/Saleshni Chaudhary | 4 16 Days of Activism Youth Market, Solomon Islands: UN Women/Marni Gilbert | 5 Men walk against violence march during 16 Days of Activism: Eastern Highlands Family Voice, Papua New Guinea | 6 Wheelbarrow boys advocate for ending violence, Streetwise project, Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific: UN Women/Saleshni Chaudhary | 7 Rev. Seirema Lomaloma at House of Sarah: UN Women/Saleshni Chaudhary | 8 16 Days of Activism Solomon Islands: UN Women/Marni Gilbert | 9 16 Days of Activism Solomon Islands: UN Women/Marni Gilbert



## KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING EXCHANGE IN MELBOURNE

In October 2014, representatives from 14 Pacific governments and civil society organisations gathered in Melbourne, Australia as part of a biennial knowledge and learning exchange. Organised as part of the capacity-building component of UN Women's Pacific Regional Ending Violence against Women Facility Fund (Pacific Fund), the week-long workshop gave the participants a chance to learn from similar agencies in the state of Victoria, while also sharing their challenges, lessons, opportunities and progress with each other.

Past exchanges have increased participants' confidence, knowledge and experience, as well as provided useful, practical information to help in every stage of designing and implementing projects. The exchanges also provide UN Women staff and the Australian Government – which funds the Pacific Fund – with a deeper insight into the grantee organisations, their challenges, successes, commitment and vision.

The 2014 workshop was no different. Victoria is considered Australia's most progressive state for its holistic, multi-sectoral approach to ending violence against women that has the support and involvement of government, police, justice system, media, civil society and service providers. Representatives from most of these stakeholders presented to the Pacific grantees, who also got to spend the day with one of the organisations to see firsthand how they work.

The experience was an eye-opener for many of the grantees. Okoro luka, project officer with Kiribati Family Health Association spent the day at McAuley Community Services

for Women, which provides services to survivors of domestic violence, and was impressed by the number and diversity of services the centre offers. "It was inspiring ... it's something I have to take back home with me."

Victoria has the kind of multi-sectoral approach that many Pacific countries are working towards, but it wasn't always that way and it took a lot of people, time and effort to turn things around. The Pacific participants reported that hearing this gave them hope because it showed what is possible.

"When I first started 'behind closed doors' was a really strong theme around family violence," explained Michael Brandenburg from Child and Family Services in Ballarat. "You didn't talk about it, neighbours didn't do anything about it, the police didn't do anything about it. Now it's all over the newspapers, everyone is active in it, whether it's the police, the community, welfare services; everyone is playing a role in stopping violence against women."

As a principal funder of the Pacific Fund, a representative from Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade also actively participated in the workshop, gaining a deeper understanding of the programme and its grantees.

The connections and relationships that the participants and UN Women staff developed with the presenters and practitioners, as well as with each other, will lead to mutual support, mentoring, training and collaboration on projects and campaigns.

## VOICES FROM THE FIELD



### SAMOA VICTIM SUPPORT GROUP

In 2005 SVSG was set up to help victims of violence who did not have support from family members. Ten years later the organisation offers a variety of services to survivors of violence against women and their families, including a 24-hour helpline, a community alert system in rural areas, short-term shelter services, and legal assistance. In 2014, SVSG reached almost 43,000 people. SVSG received a Pacific Fund grant for its helpline, which launched in 2013. Staffed by a roster of 25 trained counsellors, the helpline was originally conceived to give survivors access to services and information. In reality, it attracts calls from across the community; including parents wanting help with their children, children who feel they can't talk to their parents, informers concerned about violence or child abuse, and even perpetrators asking for help.



### SOLOMON ISLANDS FAMILY SUPPORT ORGANISATION

"I am here today for my children's sake, and because I care for others. I always want to help people, especially women who face violence. I see people who are very good people in the community but are very different in the house. I want to help to change that. With perpetrators I sometimes sit down with them and their family and provide a listening ear and give practical advice when asked. And I am happy when I see some changes, even when small changes." Leanne iking Ataria (pictured) attended a workshop run by Family Support Organisation in Gizo, Solomon Islands, in 2014. Family Support Organisation is a Pacific Fund grantee that helps train people like Leanne to advocate against violence against women in her community.



## ENDING VIOLENCE IN SAMOA

"The central element in domestic violence in intimate partner relationships is an ongoing pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling one's partner. Through intimidation, isolation, degrading their self-esteem AND physical abuse. Its NOT about "how many times did he hit you?"

Sina Retzlaf  
EViS Roundtable Speaker  
Samoa

Started in 2013, the EViS Roundtable events provides a safe space for community activists, service providers and members of the public an opportunity to discuss, learn and share different means of addressing violence against women in Samoa. Broadcast on national television, the events have featured speakers such as Lemalu Sina Retzlaff, sharing her personal experience of violence, and Maiava Iulai Toma, Samoa's Ombudsman and the head of the Human Rights Institute speaking about the responsibility of men to stand up and speak out on the issue.



2 IN EVERY 3

women in the Pacific have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime<sup>3</sup>.

87%

of women in Tonga have to report their whereabouts to their partner, limiting their freedom of association<sup>4</sup>.

76%

of women in Kiribati believe that under certain circumstances a man is justified in beating his wife<sup>5</sup>.

70%

of ever-partnered women aged 15-49 in Solomon Islands who reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence never sought help<sup>6</sup>.

## WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

Gender equality is at the heart of human rights; it is a fundamental principle of the UN Human Rights Charter and discrimination by sex is prohibited under almost every human rights treaty. Despite this, women across the Pacific and the world continue to experience legal, social, economic and political discrimination, ranging from laws and policies that deny them equal access to land, property and housing, to unacceptably high rates of gender-based violence, and the denial of their sexual and reproductive rights.

Harmful gender stereotypes continue to define what a woman “should” do and be, rather than recognising their individual rights as a human being. These stereotypes inform and reinforce formal and informal restrictions on women’s active participation and involvement in all aspects of public and private life – from decision-making in the home to political representation, from having access to their earnings to owning land and businesses, from feeling safe in public places to being able to trust the formal justice system.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) provided the first globally agreed definition of discrimination of women. Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, it sets out a framework for achieving gender equality, as well as placing obligations on states to eliminate discriminatory practices and incorporate gender equality into law.

CEDAW has since been ratified by 188 states, including all but two of the Pacific Island countries and territories – Palau and Tonga\*. While the convention is a binding agreement, and its ratification is therefore a critical signal of a commitment to achieving gender equality, effective implementation and timely reporting continues to be an issue in the Pacific.

There has been progress, especially in 2014. Technical and financial support from UN Women and its partners helped three countries complete their CEDAW reports – the first for Solomon Islands and Federated States of Micronesia, the latter after a delay of almost 10 years, and the combined fourth and fifth report for Vanuatu. Vanuatu submitted its report during in 2014 and it is expected that Federated States of Micronesia will submit theirs in early 2015.

Samoa also took significant steps towards implementing CEDAW through its legislation, as well as achieving the CEDAW Committee’s recommendations set during its constructive dialogue in 2012, including the establishment of a Family Court.

After submitting their first progress report in 2013, Solomon Islands government and civil society representatives participated in a constructive dialogue with the CEDAW Committee, in Geneva, which monitors the Convention’s application, in October 2014. To help representatives prepare, UN Women held two mock-CEDAW sessions in collaboration with the European Union, the National Council of Women and the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, as well as financially supporting the Solomon Islands delegation to travel to Geneva.

The second session was held in the capital of Honiara, a month before the constructive dialogue, and was facilitated by the CEDAW Committee’s vice-chairperson Pramila Patten, giving the 25 key stakeholders from government and civil society the ideal opportunity to glean technical advice.

Ethel Sigimanu, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Women, Children, Youth and Family Affairs, said having access to someone

of Ms Patten's experience and position at the training and mock session was invaluable.

"I couldn't believe it when I received the news [that she was coming], I thought it was a mistake. It really does hammer home the message that even though Solomon Islands is a developing country, even if we are poor by international standards, even with the challenges that we face in terms of CEDAW, we are as important as the UK or Australia, or any other country that is party to CEDAW. It's not just CEDAW here, the UN there and then Solomon Islands; we are in this together as a team."

Ms Sigimanu added that the mock session had given her and the team confidence ahead of facing the Committee; giving a sense of what was involved and what was expected from countries that have ratified CEDAW.

"We are doing this for the women of Solomon Islands and the reporting is about their stories. If we don't take their issues of concerns into account, if we fail to take their stories on board, if we don't see their pain or the strengths and potential they have, then we have failed as a state party to CEDAW.

The Committee's recommendations were released towards the end of 2014 and Audrey Micah Manu, UN Women's programme coordinator for its Advancing Gender Justice in the Pacific programme in Solomon Islands, commented that the CEDAW reports and recommendations are essential when it comes to holding Solomon Islands accountable for the commitments the government made when it ratified the Convention.

"Signing a treaty is just the first step, the real progress comes from making changes that have a real effect on women's lives. Ending discrimination against women is a key step in achieving gender equality and it is great to see Solomon Islands taking ownership of its commitment to CEDAW and its mandate for gender equality."

UN Women continues to work with Solomon Islands government and civil society on the implementation of the Committee's recommendations.

To date, six Pacific Island countries and territories – Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu – have submitted at least one CEDAW report, with Tokelau reporting as part of the New Zealand report.

Another example of UN Women's work in CEDAW and human rights reporting is its support – alongside the UN Human Rights Office (UNOHCHR), the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community-Regional Rights Resource Team – for the establishment of Vanuatu's first Human Rights Committee. The Committee is responsible for overseeing and monitoring Vanuatu's implementation and compliance with the reporting obligations of all the human rights conventions that it has ratified.

\* Palau and Tonga have both signed CEDAW and in early 2015 Tonga's Cabinet agreed to ratify it.



Photo: UN Women/ Elle van Baaren

“We all know for a fact, of course, that only a fraction of domestic violence offending gets [to the courts]. Most cases of domestic abuse are not reported to anybody, they are borne in secret by the victims in silence and in secret because fear and control are intrinsic elements in domestic violence.”

Maiava Iulai Tomo  
Samoa Ombudsman and  
EViS Roundtable Speaker



Photo: UN Women/ Audrey Pina Liti



184

cases of violence against women reached the courts in Solomon Islands in the 10 years to 2008<sup>7</sup>.

17%

of women in Solomon Islands have access to legal aid<sup>8</sup>.

2

The number of countries in the Pacific that have not ratified CEDAW.

70%

of women aged 15 to 49 in Solomon Islands who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner never sought help and only 17% sought help from formal services<sup>9</sup>.

## ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Laws and justice systems shape our societies through providing accountability, stopping the abuse of power and creating new norms about what is acceptable; when functioning effectively, they can be vital mechanisms for women to realise their rights. Unfortunately, women's legal entitlements on paper do not always translate into equality and justice in reality.

In many countries women face poor services and hostile attitudes from the very people whose duty it is to fulfill women's rights, including the infrastructure of justice itself – the police, the courts and the judiciary. Inadequate laws and loopholes in legislative frameworks, poor enforcement and gaps in implementation of existing laws all have an impact on women's everyday lives. Laws and justice systems can be biased against women's interests and reinforce unequal power relations between men and women.

Gender-responsive justice involves giving both women and men equal access to the justice system, as well as adopting legislation that reflects international standards regarding human rights and women's rights. This relies on implementing existing laws aimed at achieving gender equality, transforming discriminatory laws and helping women access the justice systems.

At present, women's groups across Pacific Island countries and territories report bias in the implementation of laws, affecting women's capacity to be free of violence and provide for their children. For example 74 per cent of domestic violence survivors in Solomon Islands do not go to the police, with many instead preferring to defer to community or religious leaders<sup>10</sup>. Many others are reluctant to report abuse at all.

In some countries customary law has constitutional status, which mean customary practices – many of which discriminate against women – influence formal criminal and civil procedures. For instance in Solomon Islands constitutional rights to freedom

from discrimination, including on the basis of gender, are also applied subject to customary law, even where customary law has discriminatory effects.

Through its Advancing Gender Justice in the Pacific (AGJP) programme, UN Women works in collaboration with government and civil society partners to analyse domestic law across the Pacific to assess how well it complies with international CEDAW standards and domestic practice both from a legal standpoint and in practice, as well as to determine what relevant socio-cultural and legislative steps can be taken to ensure it does.

In July, approximately 50 practising judges, lawyers and family health service providers in Samoa – including the Chief Justice, Hon. Patu Falefatu Maka Sapolu – took part in the country's first Family Law Forum. Jointly organised by UN Women, the Samoa Judiciary and the Samoa Law Commission, the two-day forum provided an opportunity to discuss the best ways for the newly established Family Court and Family Violence Court to play their part in dealing with family violence and its effects on Samoa's communities. Guests from Samoa and from the New Zealand Family Court system, on which the Samoa system is closely modelled, presented on their areas of expertise, including: the importance and role of Fa'a Samoa in the justice process; giving all parties a voice; the rights of children; and the importance of restorative justice and rehabilitation.

Samoa's Family Violence Court is the first of its kind in the region and as such represents an opportunity to develop a best practice example to follow and adapt. In this vein, UN Women also supported the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system for the Family and Family Violence Courts to help measure how well they are functioning based on international human rights standards and best practices for specialised courts. UN Women is working closely with the courts to build capacity to monitor the court outcomes in this way.



# WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Increasing women's participation in leadership and decision-making has proven to be good for economic and social development around the world. Studies have found that longer exposure to women's political representation increases women's overall labour force participation, the share of public employment opportunities allocated to women and women's increased access to public goods such as roads and health services.

The Pacific region has the lowest rates of women in parliament in the world and is home to three of the five countries in the world without any women in their lower or single houses of parliament<sup>14</sup>. While women have the right to vote and stand for election in all Pacific countries, to do so they must often challenge and overcome negative gender stereotypes, as well as the cultural norms that support them.

The small size of most Pacific parliaments, and the correspondingly low number of ministerial and public official positions available, can present additional barriers for women, especially when combined with unequal access to resources and inherently biased structures or regulations.

The continued absence of women in decision-making and leadership only reinforces these perceptions both amongst potential candidates and the general public, undermining efforts to build the skills, networks and confidence women need to change the statistics.

Through its Advancing Gender Justice in the Pacific Programme UN Women works with regional partners to address country-specific barriers to women's full political participation; working with government and civil society organisations to help create an environment that welcomes and supports women's political participation, as well as strengthening the pipeline of women candidates.

In 2014 there were four general elections – Cook Islands, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tonga – and overall representation in national parliaments increased from 3.2 per cent to 5.5 percent. While this is a far cry from the global figure of 22 per cent and the critical mass target of 30 per cent, there have been a number of signs that the years of advocacy and hard work are starting to bear fruit and that mentalities are finally shifting.

Four of the seven women who stood for election in the Cook Islands were successful in the July election, the country's highest level of women in government. This was added to when Hon. Nikki Rattle was appointed from outside of parliament as Speaker.

Samoa got its third female member of parliament through the Gag'ifomauga by-election in August 2014. Faimalotoa Kolotita Stowers was the only woman to stand and said the UN Women-supported Candidate Guide from the Office of the Electoral Commissioner played a critical role in her decision to contest the by-election.

Eight years after the military coup of 2006, in September 2014 Fiji returned to the polls for a general election. A total of 44 women stood as candidates for parties on all sides of the political spectrum, together receiving 15.65 per cent of the total votes cast<sup>15</sup>. Eight women were elected to parliament, one of whom was then appointed as Fiji's first female Speaker of the House; two more were appointed ministers and one is the leader of the opposition. At 16\* per cent, Fiji now has the region's highest percentage of women in parliament<sup>13</sup>.

A record 16 women ran for parliament in Tonga's election. Although none were successful, they received more votes than at previous elections and the overall result led the newly elected Prime Minister to publicly open the door to considering temporary special measures in order to ensure women are represented in



## MEET MERI AND HER FAMILY

When Meri was first approached about standing in the national elections, she wasn't sure she could do it and when she asked her husband Billy what he thought, he was far from on board.

Meet Meri. She works as an Agricultural Extension Officer and has been active in national associations, speaking out on issues related to agriculture and chairing important committees. She is also the star of a new radio drama called "A Time to Stand" that follows her journey as she decides to stand for parliament for the first time.

Meri is a fictional character, as is the Pacific Island country she calls home, but her story has been created to reflect the challenges women considering standing for election across the Pacific region face – both in making that initial decision to stand and in getting enough votes to win. The aim of the series is to encourage Pacific Islanders to engage in political participation and to encourage more women to stand up and have a voice in key leadership and decision-making positions.

Created by UN Women, the European Union and Vois Blong Mere, a civil society organisation in Solomon Islands, the radio series launched online in 2014 with a Pidgin version available for broadcasting across Solomon Islands ahead of the country's national election in November 2014.

The 10-episode series follows Meri through her own and her family's reservations about standing through to her first campaign speech and the need to balance her personal concerns with the rigours of campaigning.

While women have the right to vote and stand for election in all Pacific countries, they must often overcome negative gender stereotypes and socio-cultural norms. Due to these barriers, the Pacific region has the world's lowest levels of women in parliament, with an average of just 5.5 per cent – the global average is 21.8 per cent – and two of the three countries in the world that currently have no women in parliament are in the Pacific.

Nicolas Burniat, UN Women's Deputy Representative at the Multi-Country Office in Fiji, says that radio is a powerful medium in the Pacific and hopes that this innovative series will help start discussions about women and leadership across the region.

"With this radio drama UN Women wants to encourage Pacific societies to reflect on what a leader looks like and the roles that women can and should play in politics. Radio is such a powerful medium here in the Pacific, and we hope that this innovative series will help start discussions about women and leadership in every house, village and community across the region."

The stories about Meri, her family and Isabelle, a first-time voter, is being developed into comic book form which will be available in early 2015.

"A Time To Stand" has so far reached an estimated 430,000 people through being broadcast in Honiara and more than 5,000 rural villages around Solomon Islands via Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation, as well as exposure through traditional and social media.

parliament. UN Women partnered with UNDP in holding a Practice Parliament earlier in 2014 and several candidates publicly credited the experience with helping them to decide to stand for election.

In Solomon Islands Freda Tuki became the second woman ever elected to parliament and the first non-incumbent to do so through a general election. She was one of 26 women to stand for parliament, making up 6 per cent of the overall candidate list and garnering almost 5 per cent of the overall votes – almost double the 2010 result.

Increasing women's participation in leadership and decision-making relies on a shift in the public's perceptions of what a leader looks like, as well as in building the skills and confidence of women candidates and enlisting male champions who can speak publicly about the importance of women in parliament. UN Women's Strongim Mere project in Solomon Islands targeted all of these areas during 2014. Supported by the

came second in their electorates. Freda Tuki attended two of the workshops, as well as the Practice Parliament held earlier in the year. One of the key objectives of UN Women's Strongim Mere project was to increase the number of women running with party support, a result that was reflected in the increased number of votes and the number of women who ran in rural constituencies.

The Strongim Mere project also ran a number of events focused on showcasing role models and highlighting the importance of women in parliament as part of its Empowerment Series. The first event was held in Tonga in partnership with UNDP and the Australian Government-funded Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships project. It featured former Australian Speaker Anna Burke, Tonga's Deputy Speaker, Lord Tu'iha'ateiho, and Samoa's Minister of Justice and Courts Administration, Hon. Fiame Naomi Mata'afa, all of whom encouraged participants to take on leadership roles.



[The training] really helped me a lot. It helped me to understand what is expected of me as a politician. Helps me develop my political career daily, step by step. If I did not attend this training, I would not understand my role as an MP and discussion in parliament and cabinet. I believe that in the second sitting in March I will be able to speak on my Ministries' policies

Hon. Freda Tuki Sariucumua  
Solomon Islands Minister for Ministry of  
Rural Development and transformational  
leadership participant.

European Union and implemented in partnership with local non-governmental organisation Vois Blong Mere, the project incorporates empowerment workshops for media and secondary and tertiary students, leadership training for women candidates and technical support for the government. It also enlists female parliamentarians to share their experiences and male parliamentarians to speak out about the need for, and advantages of having, women in leadership roles.

To help prepare women candidates ahead of the 2014 election in Solomon Islands, UN Women held three Transformational Leadership training workshops. Based on the approach that leadership starts with the individual, the workshops focused on technical skills such as understanding the basics of registration and leading a successful campaign, as well as personal leadership capacity. More than 70 people participated, including 20 of the 26 eventual parliamentary candidates, two of whom

A further week of events were held in Solomon Islands with Samoa's Electoral Commissioner Papali'i Malietau Malietoa as the key speaker. Instrumental in the passing of the Samoan Constitutional Amendment reserving 10 per cent of seats for women, Papali'i spoke to students and journalists about the importance of women in leadership, and later worked with the participants in the Transformational Leadership workshops. Both male and female students involved expressed support for women in leadership and their teachers reported an increased understanding of the need for their students to be aware of women's roles in leadership and what part they, as the future generation, can play in improving it.

A 10-part radio drama series following the twin stories of a first-time woman political candidate and first-time woman voter was also produced under this project and broadcast across the country in Pidgin ahead of the election (see page 24).



## EMPOWERMENT SERIES

Role models are significant in all walks of life, and with this in mind, UN Women developed the Empowerment Series to help change the perceptions of what a leader looks like in the Pacific. To do this it promotes the development of informal networks among women interested in political participation and encourages men to share their experiences – as well as why they believe women’s political participation is critical to their country’s development – with students, the general public and the media.

The first Empowerment Series event of 2014 was held in Tonga with UN Women, UNDP and the Pacific Women’s Parliamentary Partnerships. Samoa’s Minister of Justice and Courts Administration, the Hon Fiame Naomi Mata’afa took part in the event and encouraged those present to be courageous and take a role in their country’s leadership. Participant, Melenaite Sisifa Fili, expressed how lucky she felt to be around so many extraordinary women. Hearing the stories and experiences of the other participants had strengthened her resolve and confidence in her ability to contribute to her country’s development.

“The power is in your hands” said Samoa’s Electoral Commissioner Papali’i Malietau Malietoa, the chief guest at the series’ second event in Solomon Islands, speaking to youth. He called on the students to answer their “generational calling”. He explained that as the champions of independence were called before them, it is the burden of this generation to be the champions of equality for women. Papali’i also spoke with media, youth, as well as aspiring female political candidates taking part in UN Women’s Transformational Leadership workshop, during the week-long event.

The Empowerment Series is part of UN Women’s Strongim Mere Project and is made possible by funding from the European Union.

# 5.5%

The percentage of women representatives in parliaments in the Pacific region.

16 %	Fiji*
15 %	Niue
12.5 %	Cook Islands
10.3 %	Palau
8.7 %	Kiribati
6.7 %	Tuvalu
6.1 %	Samoa
5.3 %	Nauru
3 %	Republic of Marshall Islands
2.7 %	Papua New Guinea
2 %	Solomon Islands
0 %	Tokelau
0 %	Federated States of Micronesia
0 %	Vanuatu
0 %	Tonga

At the end of 2014, the official figure for women in parliaments in Fiji was 14 percent, however in early 2015 with the resignation of a male member of parliament, a women member replaced him, raising in the total to 16 per cent. All statistics can be found at [www.pacwip.org](http://www.pacwip.org)<sup>14</sup>





5

The number of market vendor associations that have been set up as a result of UN Women's Getting Started Workshops in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

16/19

The number of women market vendors on the Auko Market Vendors Association Executive Board in Solomon Islands.

20

The number of market sites that UN Women's Markets for Change project works in, in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

90%

of Getting Started Workshop participants in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are women.

## WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Participating in economic activities allows women to make positive changes in their own lives and their communities, with positive ripple effects for the whole nation. Historically, however, gendered norms, behaviours and social relations have played a big part in disadvantaging women economically. Institutions, systems and structures often restrict women's economic opportunities, while gendered roles and status can limit women's voices and choices when it comes to household and community decisions. Women also often have reduced access to education and marketable skills, as well as other resources such as savings and credit schemes.

Pacific populations are mainly rural and rely largely on subsistence activities, so overall labour force participation is lower than in other regions, however, the rates for women are particularly low. The rates in the Pacific range from 23 per cent in Samoa to 65 per cent in the Cook Islands, compared to 58 per cent (Samoa) and 77 per cent (Cook Islands) for men<sup>15</sup>.

Women are over-represented in informal, unregulated, low-wage and low-skilled jobs, often in sectors that are most vulnerable to global economic shocks as well as the effects of climate change. They perform a greater share of food growing and in-shore fishing activities, which, along with discriminatory and traditional practices, often limits their availability for formal employment. Women are also responsible for the majority of household and care work, which continues to be largely unremunerated.

Markets provide great opportunities for increasing women's economic empowerment because they are central to livelihoods in many Pacific Island countries and territories, and most of the vendors are women. UN Women's flagship economic empowerment project in the Pacific is the Markets for Change project, which officially launched in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in 2014. Principally funded by the Australian Government through its Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development programme, Markets for Change is a six-year initiative that focuses

on ensuring markets are safe, inclusive, and non-discriminatory, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

"Imagine if quality services were available to women at the market?" asked Ethel Sigimanu, Solomon Islands' Permanent Secretary for Women's, Children's, Youth and Family Affairs, at the launch in May. "Too often markets are poorly planned and managed consisting of rudimentary and often breakdown facilities. Markets do not cater to the specific needs of women and children. The governance and management of markets are not gender-sensitive."

Given this, the Markets for Change project focuses its support in four areas: inclusive, effective and representative marketplace groups; improving women market vendors' socio-economic security; gender-responsive, effective and accountable local government and market management; and physical infrastructure and operating systems.

The project officially launched in all three countries during 2014: in Fiji on 29 April; Solomon Islands on 16 May; and in Vanuatu on 29 July. The launch events themselves were an opportunity to celebrate with key stakeholders, but also to introduce the project and raise public awareness of the issues that women working at the markets face. The first activities to be rolled out were the "Getting Started" workshops (see page 30 for more information), which were rolled out across all three countries. More than 400 market vendors participated, 90 per cent of whom were women.

During each of the two half-day workshops, vendors were introduced to the concept of a market vendors' association and taught new skills about how they could work collectively in order to have a say in how the market is run. It gave them a safe space where they could voice their opinions openly, without fear of victimisation, as well as providing an understanding of the roles UN Women, the council, and market management play.

As part of each workshop, participants went out into their market



## GETTING STARTED IN MARKETS

Despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of market vendors in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are women, they are often not part of the decision-making processes that govern their workplaces. To help change this, UN Women's Markets for Change project has rolled out its "Getting Started" workshops.

The workshops focus on supporting market vendors in getting organised so they can effectively raise issues and concerns with market management, and have an influence over the processes that govern the marketplaces – from physical infrastructure to bylaws and security. An important part of this process is inclusive, representative and democratic market vendors' associations; particular emphasis and training is therefore given to encouraging the formation of new associations where none exist, strengthening those that do, and facilitating greater cooperation between them.

By the end of 2014 these workshops had been held in 10 of the 20 market sites included in the project, with more than 400 vendors from Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu taking part, 90 per cent of whom were women. Four new markets vendors' associations are in various stages of forming, while existing organisations have seen increased membership and more women being elected to their executive committees.

"Women vendors play a very important role in the market but many times they are never given an opportunity to be heard," explains Ana Biusavu, a market vendor from Labasa in Fiji.

Ana has worked at Labasa market for the past 15 years and was one of 38 market vendors who attended the Labasa "Getting Started" workshop in 2014. Just weeks later she put herself forward as a candidate for the executive committee of the newly formed market vendors' association; on 14 October she was elected president. The market vendors were so determined to vote that they asked the market management to close the market for two hours, something that hadn't happened before.

"I believe women should be involved in the marketplace because they contribute a lot to the income of the market, income of the family, and to meeting their social obligations," Ana explains. "I know the task ahead won't be easy but I am confident that my committee will work together with the Town Council and UN Women to bring about changes in Labasa Market."

The markets for Change project is principally funded by the Australian Government and receives support from UN Women's National Committees of Australia and New Zealand.

where they interviewed other vendors, gathering information on their work at the market, as well as what changes they would like to see happen. Between them, the workshop participants interviewed almost 1,000 vendors, and it proved to be one of the most popular parts of the workshop. The information gathered also had an added value – it will be used by market vendors' associations to guide their action plans, while UN Women, local government and other stakeholders can use it to strengthen their understanding of current challenges in market working environments.

As a result of the workshops several new associations have been set up, with more to follow, while existing associations have experienced increases in membership, awareness of benefits and have started working with other associations to share challenges, solutions and opportunities. The Suva Market Vendors' Association in Fiji now has women in 40 per cent of its executive positions, a 100 per cent increase, while the Nausori association,

Women's support – attracted registrations from 136 market vendors in just the first two hours. There are now more than 250 members.

Following on from these workshops, the UN Women team in Solomon Islands held the first Transformational Leadership and Communications workshops for the executive committee members from both markets. The workshops introduced the 39 participants to the concept of gender and what gender inequality/equality might look like, as well as different leadership styles, steps to identify their own leadership style and the attitudes and skills needed to be positive and inclusive leaders. It was an opportunity for participants to build practical skills for communicating with other vendors, as well as market management. Similar workshops are planned for Fiji and Vanuatu as the different associations are formed or hold elections.

As part of the Markets for Change project, UNDP and Westpac, has also initiated financial literacy training for market vendors in Fiji.



"I asked the city council to build a house for the vendors, but they refused so I found a piece of land on the outskirts of town that was not owned by the council and got the market vendors to sell from there. This meant that the council didn't get any revenue from the market, and we kept it up for 40 days and 40 nights. Then the council changed their minds! Now we have a big beautiful market in the city. That was the start of the market vendors association; I'm still running it 45 years later."

Makareta Rika  
Lautoka Market Vendor Association President  
Fiji

also in Fiji, is intending to enact a 50-50 quota ahead of their elections to ensure equal representation from women and men.

Neither of the two Solomon Islands market sites – Honiara Central Market and Auki Market – had market vendors' associations before the workshops were held. By the end of 2014 both had established associations and had held democratic elections to fill the positions on their executive committees. Women market vendors were elected as presidents of both executive committees as well as for 10 out of the 16 positions in Auki and 16 out of the 19 positions in Honiara. With the encouragement of UN Women, members of the two Executive Committees represent a wide range of sectors at the markets with the expectation that all sectors will be represented.

At the first recruitment drive for Honiara Central Market Vendors' Association – led by the executive committee members with UN

The four training sessions held so far have been attended by 175 market vendors, almost a third of whom were from rural areas.

From an infrastructure perspective, the most significant project was a new market house in Marobe, Vanuatu, complete with sanitation and shower facilities for women vendors, as well as an office space for market management. A partnership between UN Women and the Shefa Provincial Government Council, the market received funding from UN Women's National Committee of Australia and was officially opened in June 2014.

By targeting market vendors, the Markets for Change project has an opportunity to help improve working conditions, leadership capabilities and earning power of women, which has positive effects on entire communities.



# 13%

The estimated annual cost of climate change to GDP in the Pacific by 2100<sup>16</sup>.

# 80%

of all land in Majuro atoll in the Republic of Marshall Islands could be vulnerable to erosion if the sea rises by 1m<sup>17</sup>.

# 12% TO 15%

The expected increase in the intensity of tropical cyclones in the north-west Pacific if the temperature rises by as little as 2%<sup>18</sup>.

# 10,000

The estimated number of deaths from weather-related disasters in the Pacific since 1950<sup>19</sup>.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is a global issue; it is also a gender issue. Many Pacific Island countries and territories are already experiencing its impacts, including an increase in extreme weather events, rising sea levels and increased soil and water salinity. These, and other effects, could jeopardise and even reverse development progress; they can also deepen gender inequality and undermine women's economic empowerment. Inversely, gender equality and women's economic empowerment lead to positive development outcomes.

Women, men, boys and girls are differently affected by climate change, finding different ways of coping and adapting. Socially constructed gendered roles mean women are often more vulnerable than men, while inequality can limit their ability to adapt.

Viewing women as victims only exacerbates this vulnerability. In fact, women have critical knowledge of their environment, economy and society, as well as practical skills that can be effective in responding and adapting to climate change. If women have a limited voice in decision-making and their skills are not used, it means half the Pacific region's population is unable to meaningfully contribute to climate change adaptation, making the overall response less effective.

UN Women's IREACH programme (Increasing Community Resilience through the Advancement of Women to address Climate Change) is designed to ensure that Pacific women become full, equal partners in and beneficiaries of all disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts, as well as overall sustainable development.

In the lead-up to the Third International Small Island Developing States Conference in September, UN Women provided support to ensure Pacific representatives effectively advocated for gender equality concerns to be integrated throughout the conference's official outcome statement.

In early June UN Women provided financial, technical and communications support for the Pacific Partnerships – Gender, Climate Change and Sustainable Development workshop in Nadi, Fiji. The week-long workshop brought together civil society activists, national women's machineries and government ministers to increase knowledge and understanding of the linkages between gender and climate change, as well as build capacity around effective advocacy at international levels.

At the final prep-com for the Small Island Developing States Conference in New York later that month, UN Women hosted a lunch for the outcome document negotiators, providing Pacific civil society and government representatives another opportunity to advocate for Pacific gender equality and climate change concerns. These efforts helped ensure the inclusion of substantial gender language in the final outcome statement, including a specific section on the gendered effects of climate change.

The Pacific Gender Climate Change Toolkit was launched on International Day of Rural Women in Suva, Fiji in October 2014. A collaboration between UN Women, GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), SPC, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, and UNDP, the toolkit has been developed to support practitioners in mainstreaming gender in the design and implementation of climate change programmes.

A session on the toolkit was also conducted with UN agencies, Red Cross, civil society, donor and government partners, and other humanitarian stakeholders at the annual Pacific Humanitarian Team meeting. Feedback from the training shows that around 40 per cent of the attendees did not currently have access to these kinds of tools, and that almost 80 per cent would be likely to use the toolkit in the future.



# DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Pacific Island countries and territories are particularly vulnerable to disasters and extreme weather events, as are the people who live there. As with climate change, women and men, boys and girls experience the impacts of disasters differently and therefore have different needs in the aftermath.

Globally there were three times as many disasters around the world from 2000 to 2009 than there were between 1980 and 1989<sup>20</sup>; in the Pacific, the aggregate number of people affected by disasters has increased by 16.8 million since 1980<sup>21</sup>. The socio-economic impacts of disasters can erode development gains and threaten sustainable development. They can not only cause death and injury, but they also destroy homes, crops, infrastructure such as hospitals and schools, and other assets, as well as undermining food security and ruining livelihoods.

Global research has shown that women and children are 14 times more likely than men to die or be injured during a disaster. This is often compounded by the number of secondary, intangible impacts they face in the aftermath, including an increased risk of gender-based and sexual violence, unequal access to food, water, medical and humanitarian assistance, a loss of economic opportunities and an increase in their workload. Most of these challenges are rooted in existing gender inequalities and discriminatory social norms that also mean the skills many Pacific women have when it comes to sourcing clean water, food preparation, and agriculture, are often not utilised during the recovery phase.

Pacific women tend to be home bound, looking after their children and homes. In cities, where the poor live on marginal lands, women and children are more likely to be swept away from their homes in a flood-related disaster, whereas men are often away from their homes pursuing economic activities in public places. Furthermore, women and children often do not receive timely early

warning information, undermining their ability to take steps to minimise the impact. This is often because resources that provide access to critical early warning information about impending disasters, such as radios, mobile phones and television, are often controlled by men.

Recurrent and expensive climate-related disaster relief, recovery, and reconstruction also drain resources that could otherwise be used for social and economic development, including the advancement of gender equality.

Despite this, gender is not systematically considered in the Pacific region's humanitarian responses, either at the national or regional level. Data is not sex or age disaggregated, humanitarian assistance is often functionally inaccessible to, or fails to meet the needs of women and girls. Women are also not consistently consulted, nor are their particular strengths and coping mechanisms utilised in recovery and resilience measures.

Under UN Women's IREACH programme, UN Women works to ensure the protection of women and girls through effective gender-responsive disaster risk reduction mechanisms, humanitarian response and needs assessments. The Pacific cyclone season runs from November to April each year and often brings extreme weather and resulting destruction to the region. The 2014 season brought four major disasters: Tropical Cyclone Ian in Tonga, Tropical Cyclone Lusi in Vanuatu, king tides in the Republic of Marshall Islands and flash flooding in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

Tropical Cyclone Ian was the biggest storm ever recorded in Tonga, and hit the islands of Ha'apai on January 11, 2014, bringing with it 200km winds with gusts of up to 300km an hour. When the clouds cleared, around 5,000 of Ha'apai's 6,100 people had been directly affected, with 3,500 left homeless.

In the aftermath, UN Women provided technical assistance to the Tongan Government under the Pacific Humanitarian Team and the Pacific Protection cluster. This included the deployment of a gender and protection adviser through the UN Gender Surge to assist in conducting a gender-sensitive protection assessment on the impact on affected women and girls.

UN Women also provided remote technical assistance to the national authorities in Vanuatu following tropical cyclone Lusi, including reviewing assessment tools and providing templates for collecting sex and age-disaggregated data. UN Women's team in Vanuatu assisted in the formation of the gender and protection cluster on the ground, as well as leading an assessment team to affected areas in order to complete assessments after the cyclone.

Through its IREACH programme, UN Women has focused on building the capacity of national protection clusters, in particular on increasing the gender sensitivity of disaster response efforts within clusters, as well as gender mainstreaming. This has involved supporting the development of assessment and reporting tools for protection and cluster assessments, as well as conducting or contributing to a number of capacity-building measures for national humanitarian responders, including workshops in Solomon Islands and Palau.

Drafting support has been provided to Solomon Islands and Tonga protection clusters on key documents such as standard operating procedures, terms of reference and Humanitarian Action Plans, and national clusters are now demonstrating the ability to undertake these tasks more independently. UN Women

also supported UNICEF and North Pacific governments in the drafting of a set of minimum commitments for child protection in emergencies for Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands and Tonga.

In partnership with UN OHCHR and UNHCR, UN Women supported the national protection clusters in Solomon Islands and Tonga in conducting their first formal protection assessments and ongoing monitoring. In addition, UN Women supported the development of tools, institutional structures and documents, as well as mainstreaming processes and capacity building for national protection cluster staff, all of which were in line with priorities identified by the national authorities.

Tonga's Safety and Protection Cluster was in particular able to identify issues affecting women and girls after Tropical Cyclone Ian, including risks of declining livelihoods for women (the primary income earners in the affected province) following destruction of pandanus crops, risks and entry points for advocacy on gender-based violence in emergencies, and barriers for female heads of household when it comes to accessing transitional shelter assistance.

IREACH supported four representatives from Tonga and Solomon Islands – both of which were affected by disasters in 2014 – to attend the annual Pacific Humanitarian Team meeting in Suva, Fiji. The participants all had leading roles in national clusters or sub-clusters and were therefore able to participate in strategic planning for the 2014/2015 disaster seasons, as well as exchanging the lessons learned during the protection responses in their respective countries earlier that year.



Photo: UN Women / Olivia Owen

“I believe that women are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change given their already lower social status in many developing countries. For example, in Solomon Islands we already see women who are in positions where they have very low power to influence decisions, we see situations where gender violence is on the increase. Now with climate change, when sea levels rise and people have to move away from their land, there will be more stress on our gender roles.”

Christina Ora  
Climate Change Activist, Honiara Youth Council  
Solomon Islands

# 68%

of all disasters are climate change related<sup>22</sup>.

# 14

The number of times more likely it is for women and children to die or be injured during a disaster than men<sup>23</sup>.

# 18m

The aggregate number of people living in the Pacific Islands who have been affected by weather-related disasters in the past 20 years<sup>24</sup>.

# 300%

The increase in new domestic violence cases reported by the Tanna Women's Counselling Centre after two tropical cyclones hit Tafe Province in Vanuatu in 2011<sup>25</sup>.

Photo: UN Women / Leanne Hunter





# INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Global and intergovernmental processes around gender equality provide the countries of the world with opportunities to agree on, and measure progress towards, global norms and standards; the commitments they entail serve as catalysts for adopting and enhancing laws, policies and programmes that bring about equality between women and men. The Millennium Development Goals, the Beijing Platform for Action and the post-2015 development agenda provide detailed roadmaps for governments, civil society and non-governmental organisations to follow, as well as highlighting ways in which to measure progress at all levels, from local to global.

The Millennium Development Goals expire in September 2015 and UN Member States have started to negotiate a new set of priorities and indicators that will shape the global development framework for the years that follow. The new high level summit at United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York – at which the new framework of sustainable development goals will be adopted – will be the culmination of an unprecedented UN-led global consultation process that has connected more than 1 million people across the world.

Gender inequality remains the most pervasive form of discrimination globally, and it is therefore critical that the new development agenda focuses on the voices, choices and safety of women.

Pacific countries command 12 votes at the UN General Assembly, and in 2014 the Pacific delegations presented a strong united front in its support for a stand-alone goal for gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as the need to mainstream gender in all the new sustainable development goals. At a number of key intergovernmental processes such as the 56th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Sustainable Development Goals Open

Working Group, the Third International Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) conference negotiations and the Beijing +20 Asia-Pacific Regional Review conference, Pacific representatives pushed for the inclusion of stronger language around gender and human rights. This covered sexual and reproductive health and rights, the contribution of women's human rights defenders, sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as gender and climate change.

UN Women, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat and other development partners worked together to provide coordinated technical and financial assistance to Pacific government and civil society organisation delegates in order to strengthen their efforts to strategically engage in, and meaningfully contribute to, these processes.

The year 2015 also marks the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which was adopted at the Fourth World Conference of Women in 1995. It set out 12 critical areas of concern in the achievement of gender equality and women's rights, and the 20th anniversary provides a key opportunity to review global progress and reaffirm commitments.

In the Pacific, 11 of 13 countries and territories submitted either Beijing +20 national reviews or regional surveys thanks to the technical and financial support of UN Women and development partners. The reviews and national surveys were undertaken through country-based consultations held, wherever possible, with the national women's machineries. The reviews tie in with the post-2015 development agenda and will be evaluated at the 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in early 2015.

UN Women further supported government delegates from Nauru, Tonga and Vanuatu to attend the Beijing +20 Asia-Pacific



“In order for us to have some meaningful outcomes for the Pacific people over the next 30 to 50 years, and they are setting the agenda now, so we have to be there in force, we have to be there in strength. As well as this, our leaders have to be showing very clearly that we care about gender issues, we care about climate change and sustainable development issues, and most of all, that we are interlinking all of them.”

Noelene Nabulivou  
Pacific Feminist Activist

## BEIJING MEETING

Representatives of governments and civil society organisations from across the Asia-Pacific region gathered in Bangkok in November to review progress and gaps in their implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action ahead of next year’s 20th anniversary.

During the conference government delegations first negotiated and then adopted the official ministerial statement that will be presented at the 59th Commission on the Status of Women in March 2015.

In the lead-up to the conference proper, UN Women organised training around Beijing +20 for youth representatives from around the Pacific region. UN Women also supported the civil society sessions where organisations negotiated their own statement to present to the government delegations. Further, UN Women supported delegates from several Pacific government delegations and civil society organisations to attend the conference.

The majority of Pacific countries were represented during the proceedings, presenting a particularly vocal and united front in pushing for the use of stronger language, including the phrases “sexual orientation and gender identity” and “sexual and reproductive health and rights”, as well as the impacts of climate change.

Regional Review Conference in Bangkok, Thailand in November 2014. The conference was a chance for the region’s delegations to review the progress the region has made in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as identify the remaining gaps.

In her statement on behalf of Palau, Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs, Baklai Temengil said her government was working hard to mainstream, strengthen and enhance the inclusion of gender in Palau. In his country statement, Vanuatu’s Minister for Justice, Alfred Carlot, highlighted ongoing harmful practices including bride price and sorcery-related killings, and spoke of deep-rooted beliefs that have led to Vanuatu being one of the few countries in the world without any women in parliament.

Young people represent the future generation of leaders and it is therefore crucial that they are involved and included in

Throughout the SIDS conference, UN Women ran a series of interactive information sessions on gender equality and the empowerment of women at the conference’s off-site youth tent. More than 300 young people from schools around Samoa attended the sessions, which were presented by UN Women staff members and covered topics such as ending violence against women, leadership and decision making, gender and climate change, and women’s economic empowerment. UN Women also hosted a booth at the Youth Tent, giving out information and knowledge products to students, youth and teachers, as well as answering their questions around gender equality and women’s empowerment.

In November, ahead of the Beijing +20 Asia-Pacific Regional Review Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, UN Women held a transformational leadership training and supported young women from eight countries – Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Nauru, Solomon Islands and



“We should not fragment gender equality; we need to approach it holistically....Youth representatives are often included in the preparatory stages of high-level conferences; however, when the outcome documents are released there is often little mention of youth concerns. That is the difference between being included and being involved. What are the signs they are really listening to us?”

Tahere Si’isi’ialafia  
Pacific Youth Council member  
Samoa

intergovernmental processes. In 2014, UN Women supported a number of activities, organisations and individuals in an effort to help support the development of a pipeline of young people with the interest and skills to take on the challenge of sustainable development.

Among these was Samoan youth delegate Tahere Si’isi’ialafia. With UN Women’s support, Tahere attended CSW 58 and undertook an opportunity with the UN Women Cambodia country office to take part in a youth learning programme. In August and September, UN Women’s support also enabled Tahere to attend and participate in the SIDS conference held in Apia, Samoa. During the conference, Tahere participated in the youth forum and made an intervention at the UN Women side event on Beijing +20 in the Pacific, as well as recording a series of video blogs on her experience and interviewing other youth participants as part of UN Women’s communications efforts.

Tonga – to attend. The three day workshop looked at leadership skills, communications and advocacy techniques, as well as providing background to the Beijing Platform for Action and Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. Most of the young women went on to attend the regional civil society Beijing +20 conference, and several were also part of their governments’ official delegations that attended the official ministerial meeting.

“I was one of the people that thought of gender as just male and female,” said Evelynna from Kiribati after attending the workshop. “I think I am just starting to understand the depth of what it actually means. I know that many people in my country have the same attitude as when I came, so maybe I can help them understand more.”



# SIDS 2014

The Third International Small Island Developing States Conference was held in Apia, Samoa in September and attracted delegations from across the globe in order, all looking to ensure their unique and particular vulnerabilities are considered within the global sustainable development agenda.

As part of a wider effort to ensure gender issues were highly visible and actively covered, UN Women was particularly active both in the lead up and during the conference proper. The delegation included UN Women's Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, as well as Roberta Clarke, the Regional Director for the Asia-Pacific region and staff from the Fiji MCO, the Papua New Guinea country office and the Samoa field presence.

Under the overarching theme of partnerships, the Markets for Change (see page 29) and Safe Cities Port Moresby projects were a particular focus for UN Women, working as they do with a wide variety of stakeholders. The cocktail evening on September 1 was well attended and gave the spotlight to stories from those best placed to tell them – the women themselves.

More than 250 people turned up for UN Women's official side event on looking beyond Beijing +20, held on September 2. One of the prominent themes that emerged from the high-level panel and the questions that followed was that while there has been considerable progress when it comes to gender equality in SIDS regions, implementation has been decidedly "mixed". The panel included the Prime Minister of Tuvalu, the Director-General of SPC, the Minister of Foreign Affairs from St Vincent and the Grenadines, and UN Women's Executive Director.

Other events for the UN Women team included a site visit to Samoa Victim Support Group, a UN Women Pacific Regional Ending Violence against Women Facility Fund Grantee; a UN Women photo exhibition highlighting Pacific women; meetings with key civil society partners; and interactive presentations and a booth in the youth tent.

Photos:

1 Petrina Dikin from the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary speaks at UN Women's Markets networking event: UN Women/Olivia Owen | 2 UN Women's Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka being interviewed by Radio New Zealand: UN Women/Ellie van Baaren | 3 UN Women's Asia Pacific Regional Director, Roberta Clarke, Samoa's Minister for Justice and Courts Administration, Hon. Fiame Naomi Mataaata and UN Women's Samoa Country Programme Coordinator Mele Mualauvau at UN Women's side event: UN Women/Olivia Owen | 4 The ED and Petrina Dikin at Samoa Victim Support Group site visit: UN Women/Olivia Owen | 5 Youth delegates at youth forum: UN Women/Olivia Owen | 6 The ED and UN Women staff and partners at Samoa Victim Support Group site visit: UN Women/Olivia Owen | 7 The ED and UN Women staff and civil society partners: UN Women/Ellie van Baaren | Shirley Tangi playing at the Major Group cocktail event: UN Women/Olivia Owen | 9 The ED at UN Women's photo exhibition: UN Women/Ellie van Baaren | 10 UN Women staff and friends at UN Women Market's Networking Event: UN Women/Olivia Owen | 11 Pacific youth delegate at youth forum: UN Women/Olivia Owen | 12 The ED and UN Women staff and partners at Samoa Victim Support Group site visit: UN Women/Olivia Owen | 13 Mele Mualauvau speaking to youth groups at the youth tent: UN Women/Olivia Owen.





# PARTNERSHIPS

Since its inception, UN Women has emphasised the importance of partnerships as it is only through working together that gender equality and women's empowerment is achievable. When we bring our expertise and resources together, we become a powerful force for progress. Partnerships are especially important in the Pacific given the challenges of the region in terms of size, often limited resources and capacity. UN Women's Fiji MCO works with a number of partners to complement and support each other's work through a consistent people-centered, gender-sensitive and rights-based approach.

At the UN level, UN Women co-hosts the Gender Group to provide comprehensive gender mainstreaming through the UN system, as well as led development on joint programmes to end violence against women. In Solomon Islands and Kiribati, UN Women is working with five other UN agencies (UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, WHO and ILO) on ending violence against women and girls. The programmes leverage the specific strengths and experience of the different agencies to provide a holistic, multi-sectoral approach to ending gender-based violence. UN Women and UNDP will develop a joint programme on increasing political participation in Samoa in 2015.

Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) agencies and civil society partners are critical in UN Women's work on the ground. In the lead up to 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and finalisation of the post-2015 development agenda, UN Women has been working closely with regional organisations and civil society groups to ensure Pacific voices are heard at the global level. This includes SPC, PIFS and UNFPA, as well as members of the Pacific Civil Society Steering Committee, such as Fiji Women's Rights Movement, Development Alternatives for Women in a New Era, FemLINK Pacific and DIVA for Equality.

UN Women is grateful for the continued support of its donor community and looks forward to widening and deepening its partnership base. The Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the European Union and UN Women's

National Committees are just some of the donor partners vital in providing funding and support to UN Women's work in the Pacific. The Australian Government has provided substantial funding for the Markets for Change project as well as the Pacific Fund, while the EU is a key partner in the Strongim Mere project on political participation and CEDAW in Solomon Islands.

The partnerships with UN Women's National Committees continue to develop and the National Committees have been extremely active and supportive of the work in the Pacific region. A number of UN Women projects have benefited from funds raised by the National Committees in Australia, New Zealand and Japan, especially in the areas of women's economic empowerment, ending violence against women and political participation.

In 2014, UN Women explored a number of partnerships with the private sector in support of both programme activities and the work of the Pacific Fund grantees. Westpac joined the Markets for Change project to implement financial literacy training with UNDP, and a partnership with Digicel in Fiji and Samoa on the 16 Days of Activism campaign resulted in massive outreach on ending violence against women to their networks.

UN Women also continues to develop its partnerships with a number of key volunteering agencies in the Pacific. Volunteer Service Abroad in New Zealand and Australian Red Cross through the Australian Volunteers in Development programme, have provided volunteers to support UN Women's programme work and strengthen the capacity of UN Women's staff and partners. 2014 saw five new volunteer placements, increasing the total number of volunteers to nine across four countries, with several more due to arrive in early 2015, including the first American Peace Corps volunteer. UN Women assignments offer volunteers the opportunity to contribute through a range of different roles and specialities, from humanitarian support in emergencies, to project coordination, communications and media.



# COMMUNICATIONS

Effective communications activities not only help raise the visibility of UN Women's work in the Pacific, they also help build an understanding of the issues facing women in the region by painting a picture of what women's lives are like; the challenges they face, the contributions they make, the support they receive and the organisations they work with. Effective communications can highlight what can be done to help achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, can support and drive advocacy for change, and demonstrate the impact of interventions on the ground.

Too often women's rights issues are embraced and debated within smaller, specialised audiences, and often predominantly among women. The Pacific is no exception. Part of UN Women's role from a communications perspective is to help drive and support the broadening and deepening of these conversations and debates, so that they begin to occur regularly at home, in public places, at community meetings, in businesses and governments.

The global communications environment is highly dynamic. The plethora of new online channels has brought about dramatic changes in the way people receive information, the information they seek, the types of information they can access and the ways they interact with it, and with each other. While online media offers a lot of opportunities to reach more people far quicker than ever before, we also need to take into consideration the disparities in access to them both between and within countries. This is a particular concern in the Pacific region where a majority of the populations live in rural areas.

Radio is an especially effective medium in Pacific – community radio is often one of the only forms of media/communications available for more rural areas/countries, and there are at least two regional radio programmes produced by media outlets in New

Zealand and Australia (two major donor countries) that are widely broadcast via radio and online. The cellular phone network has also reached a point of critical mass across many countries in the region, providing another avenue for investigation when it comes to new communications options in the Pacific.

In 2014 the Fiji MCO strengthened its communications efforts significantly, bolstered by the arrival of new specialist staff members. The team focused on building the recognition and visibility of UN Women's activities and presence in the Pacific through online and traditional media outreach, production of a suite of communications materials and boosting media coverage of gender equality issues and UN Women's work across the region.

During 2014, 150 media articles specifically mentioning UN Women's work in the Pacific appeared online via national print or broadcasting agencies in eight of the 14 countries. Seventy of those appeared in Fiji outlets, while 50 appeared in Solomon Islands. There was also an increased focus on international media outlets, especially in two of the region's main donor countries (Australia and New Zealand). As a result 18 articles appeared via international media agencies, including the Huffington Post, Radio New Zealand and Radio Australia.

Two of the major events that captured media attention were the Third International Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Conference held in Samoa in September (see page 43) and the 16 Days of Activism to End Gender-Based Violence in November (see box on page 48).

To maximise the visibility of UN Women and of gender as a cross-cutting issue for SIDS countries, UN Women entered a partnership with the Stakeholders Forum for the Outreach magazine and

newsletter, which resulted in eight articles published across seven issues. More than 2,200 copies of the issues were printed and distributed to conference delegates, while the email newsletter was sent out to more than 29,000 international subscribers. The article entitled “Women: The first and last lines of defence”, published in the issue focused on climate change received the most interest of any article published in any of the seven issues of Outreach, with 49 retweets and 1,273 hits on the website.

Good photographs add power and emotion to any communications materials – especially for media outreach – so in order to improve the number, variety and quality of the photographs representing women in the Pacific, UN Women held a photo competition calling for pictures that showed the variety of roles women play in Pacific societies, as well as women and men challenging traditional gender roles. The competition received 120 entries from across eight countries, as well as receiving regional media coverage.

A total of 17 were chosen to be part of a prominently displayed and popular photo exhibition at the SIDS conference, and are now a resource for the Fiji MCO. As a result of the publicity of the competition via social media, Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand is now displaying the exhibition, clearly attributed to UN Women, in their boardroom.

The office also produced a suite of communications materials to help increase the understanding and awareness of UN Women’s programmes in the region and the issues facing women. These included a series of briefs centred on the gendered impacts of climate change, including disasters, gender-based violence,

economic empowerment, and food security, as well as UN Women programme briefs, project booklets, a brochure and notebook with information, photos and statistics.

Social media and online channels have become an integral part of UN Women’s communications strategy in the Pacific, complementing more traditional media and communications efforts. The regional Asia-Pacific website is an important portal for sharing information and resources, while the Flickr page is an easy way to share photos.

In March 2014 UN Women Fiji MCO, with the Papua New Guinea office, launched the UN Women Pacific Facebook page. Facebook is an increasingly popular channel in the Pacific, especially with local organisations and young people, and by the end of 2014 the page had attracted more than 12,500 likes, with significant increases in engagement through comments, shares and likes on individual posts – the highest reaching over 33,000 people.

Looking forward, UN Women is working to expand its online presence by establishing a Twitter profile to be able to reach a wider audience, including those outside the Pacific and those in donor countries.

UN Women Fiji MCO also continues to work with the UN Women Regional Asia Pacific office and Headquarters around global advocacy campaigns, such as the Beijing+20, Step it Up and HeForShe campaigns and has plans in place to launch HeForShe in the Pacific in 2015.

## ORANGE YOUR WORLD IN 16 DAYS

The UNiTE 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaign takes place every year from the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, 25 November, to International Human Rights Day on 10 December, and challenges people around the world to raise awareness and end violence against women and girls. In 2014, the theme was “Orange your World” which was celebrated across the globe and the Pacific was no different.

In Solomon Islands UN Women was part of a joint effort to raise awareness of the recently passed Family Protection Act. UN agencies also ran an interactive stall at the Youth Market. In Papua New Guinea, more than 700 people participated in an event run by Pacific Fund grantee Eastern Highlands Family Voice, while 20 men raced wearing traditional women’s dress and pledged an oath to fight against violence against women. In Samoa a highly visible campaign that included the Ending Violence in Samoa Roundtable event took place. Both Fiji and Samoa partnered with Digicel to launch Facebook competitions, social media campaigns and national media coverage.

The challenge now is to maintain and build on the momentum and visibility gained through the campaign, turning it into meaningful action towards eliminating violence against women.

## BY THE NUMBERS

12,543

Number of likes on the UN Women Pacific Facebook page at the end of 2014.

950

Number of subscribers to the UN Women in the Pacific newsletter.

150

articles specifically mentioning UN Women Fiji MCO’s work appeared online via national print or broadcast agencies in eight Pacific countries.

120

entries in UN Women Fiji MCO’s photo competition, which produced a popular exhibition at SIDS.

49

number of retweets received for “Women: The first and last lines of defense” article published in Outreach magazine at the SIDS conference. The most of any article the magazine printed.

18

articles specifically focused on UN Women Fiji MCO’s activities appeared online in international media agencies including the Huffington Post.



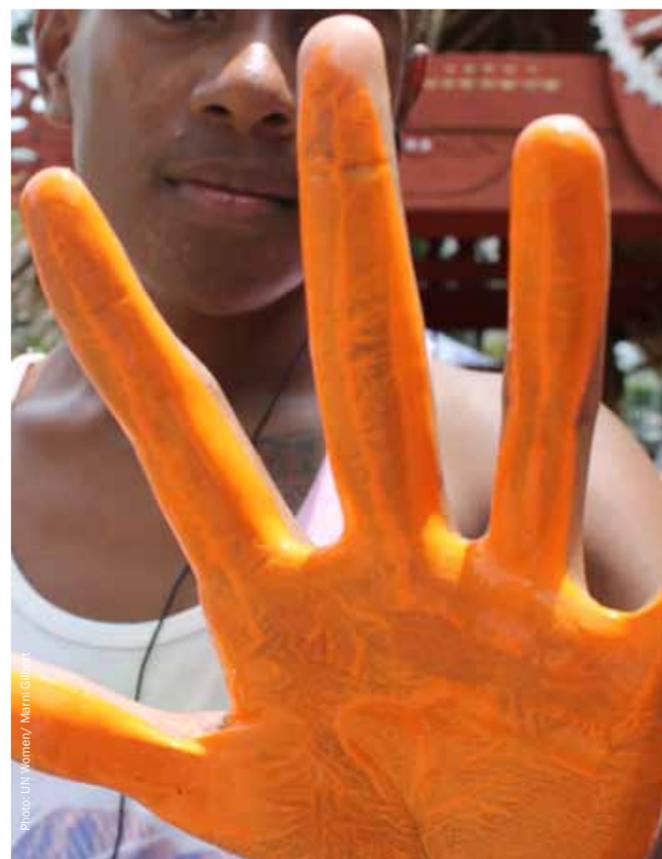
## NEWSLETTER

In June 2014 UN Women Fiji MCO launched a newsletter to enhance both internal and external communications. Covering recent activities and events, as well as profiling staff, partners, stories from the field and social media updates, the newsletter is sent out to more than 950 people in the Pacific and beyond. It has proved to be an important and popular method of keeping stakeholders, partners, donors and UN Women staff up to date with what we are doing and in promoting a better understanding of how we work.

Distributed via email and also loaded onto the website, the newsletter is available to anyone who wants to receive it. It is shared on Facebook and by country offices, as well as through online communications networks such as PacWin and NesianTok. The design template has been well received as a good practice and has been shared with other UN Women offices to serve as a template where requested.

UN Women also contributes to the Pacific UN Communications Partnership group’s quarterly newsletter through providing inputs and coordinating contributions from other UN agencies. The newsletter aims to show the collaborative efforts of the “one UN” in the Pacific, highlighting wherever possible, joint programmes and international advocacy days and campaigns such as UN Day and 16 Days of Activism.

For more information and to sign up to the UN Women Pacific newsletter: <http://bit.do/4Fd7>





# THE FUTURE

After a period of growth, programme development and expansion, UN Women's Fiji MCO is looking to solidify the progress that has been made and increase concrete results on the ground. This relies on a renewed focus on project and programme implementation, as well as exploring new strategic opportunities and partnerships that will advance the situation of women and girls in the Pacific region.

The key to the success of our Ending Violence against Women programme is the broad range of approaches it involves. The Pacific Regional Ending Violence against Women Facility Fund's 2014 formative evaluation showed that the Fund is hitting its stride and is now in the perfect position to deliver maximum results. The legislative and policy advances achieved in 2014, combined with the establishment of joint ending violence against women and girls programmes in the region, provides a unique basis for not only continuing but accelerating work in this area.

Several Pacific Island countries have national and local elections scheduled for 2015 and 2016, providing an opportunity to sustain and build on the progress achieved in 2014. The 2016 elections in Samoa hold a particular importance as it is the first in the region to employ a legal measure to ensure minimum levels of women's representation in its national parliament. As such, the election has the potential to show that other similar moves such as temporary special measures are compatible with Pacific cultures. UN Women will continue to work with development partners to support potential women candidates and male champions, as well as to advocate for a change in cultural perceptions around women in leadership.

The Markets for Change project provides UN Women with a remarkable tool for reaching a large number of women market vendors across Melanesia, and it is through working closely and directly with market vendors and management that the project will have a real impact on the ground. The immediate focus is on supporting them in being actively involved in market governance in order to help shape the development of the markets they work

in; improving their livelihoods and economic outcomes through capacity building and financial literacy training, as well as supporting the development of safe and inclusive marketplaces through infrastructure that takes women's needs into account.

In 2015 and beyond, UN Women is looking to promote and support widespread participation from Pacific women in the global climate change and humanitarian processes, several of which will culminate in 2015. The Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and the World Humanitarian Summit will both provide opportunities for the Pacific to be involved in shaping global commitments that will have a meaningful impact on the region and its ability to respond to those commitments. UN Women will also continue to support efforts on the ground to ensure women are actively involved in discussions and decision-making processes on setting regional priorities and policies around climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The year 2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. UN Women is looking forward to supporting the strong participation from a diverse range of Pacific women at the 59th Commission of the Status of Women, in both the government and civil society delegations in March 2015. UN Women will also continue to support Pacific governments in developing commitments for the global Step It Up for Gender Equality campaign ahead of the UN General Assembly's adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015. Beyond Beijing, we will also continue to support Pacific Island countries and territories in their efforts to prioritise and frontload gender equality commitments to encourage early progress towards the new development goals.

Achieving gender equality in the Pacific is a joint project. UN Women will continue to work with our partners and Pacific women themselves, especially through finding innovative ways to engage new groups in the campaign for gender equality in the Pacific, including faith-based organisations, sports and men and boys, including through UN Women's HeForShe campaign.



## ACRONYMS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women	SVSG	Samoa Victim Support Group
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women	UN	United Nations
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit	UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
ILO	International Labour Organisation	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
MCO	Multi-Country Office	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
Pacific Fund	Pacific Regional Ending Violence against Women Facility Fund	UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PIFS	Pacific Island Forum Secretariat	UNOHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
SIDS	Small Island Developing States	WHO	World Health Organisation
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community		
SPC-RRRT	Secretariat of the Pacific Community-Regional Rights Resource Team		

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To see more photos from UN Women in the Pacific: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/unwomenasiapacific/collections/72157635295823702/>



“HOW CAN WE ADEQUATELY ADDRESS THE ISSUES THAT AFFECT OUR SOCIETY IF WOMEN ARE NOT PART OF IT? THEY HAVE TO BE PART OF THE SOLUTION.”

Helen Beck  
Counsellor, Solomon Islands Mission to the United Nations

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