



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique

15TH TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF PACIFIC WOMEN 8TH MEETING OF PACIFIC MINISTERS FOR WOMEN

22 – 25 July 2024 – Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands (and virtual)

OUTCOMES DOCUMENT





OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Endorsed on 25th July 2024

PREAMBLE

1. The 15th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women ('the Conference'), convened by the Pacific Community (SPC) and hosted and chaired by the Republic of the Marshall Islands, was held from 22 to 24 July 2024. The Conference was conducted in-person and online, bringing together over 300 participants in Majuro and 100 participants online to reflect on the region's continued commitment towards progressing gender equality in the Pacific. Participants included Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) government delegations, civil society representatives including from organisations of persons with disabilities, youth and elders, traditional and faith leaders, development partners, academia, private sector and other stakeholders from within the Pacific region and beyond¹.
2. The theme of the Conference ***An piliñliñ koba kōmman Lometo for a Resilient and Sustainable Pacific*** translates to 'droplets of water creating an ocean'. The droplet symbolises the individual person, and when united with others, has the strength of the ocean. The individual (or droplet), when nurtured, possesses the qualities necessary to operate as part of a societal collective. A mother, *Jined ilo Kobo*, helps to nurture the individual and weaves the society, building a nation. This concept extends beyond individuals. Pacific nations, too, are like droplets. By combining our strengths and working together, we build a more resilient and sustainable Pacific for all.
3. The 8th Meeting of Pacific Ministers for Women ('the Ministerial') followed the Conference on 25th July 2024 and was attended by Ministers, senior officials and observers from 22 SPC member countries and territories: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia (online), New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, United Kingdom, United States of America and Vanuatu.
4. This Outcomes and Recommendations document represents a summary of the issues that were discussed, and actions agreed at the Conference to progress gender equality in PICTs and was endorsed at the Ministerial. A summary report on the Conference is forthcoming.
5. The Conference and Ministerial recognised and reaffirmed national, regional and international commitments to advance gender equality by PICTs. Pacific governments acknowledged the challenges of implementing these commitments and the importance of collaboration and partnership among all stakeholders, including PICT governments, civil society organisations including organisations of persons with disabilities, academia, the private sector, traditional and faith leaders, youth and communities, to achieve progress on gender equality.
6. The Conference and Ministerial tracked progress made against the Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights 2018 –2030 (PPA), and reaffirmed commitment to the PPA, the Revitalised Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED) and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

1. The Conference was attended in person by representatives from the following countries and territories: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, United Kingdom, United States of America, Vanuatu. Representatives from New Caledonia joined remotely.



7. The Conference and the Ministerial acknowledged the Micronesian sub-region's leadership in progressing gender equality and commitment to regional gender equality frameworks, and affirmed support for the **Añ Towepo Declaration** – the Outcomes of the 2nd Micronesian Ministers for Women Conference.
8. The Conference and the Ministerial reaffirmed that the Pacific Island countries and territories must be nuclear weapon free and independent, and continues to encourage regional cooperation on the legacy of nuclear testing². The Conference and Ministerial further supported ongoing action on outstanding issues, including unexploded ordnance and World War II relics³.
9. The Conference and Ministerial also reaffirmed the call from the PPA from 1994 that within PICTs there is a need to ensure the identity, rights and self-determination of indigenous women are upheld in all aspects of the PPA.
10. The Conference and Ministerial reaffirmed a commitment to ensuring leadership and resources at the local, national and regional level to enable the full, effective and meaningful leadership and participation of women and youth-led networks and women-led mediation at every stage of peacebuilding, prevention and resolution.
11. The Conference and Ministerial recognised the urgent need to understand and address, using intersectional tools, the multiple, severe and converging crises impacting women in the Pacific region – including the climate crisis, gender-based violence and deterioration of physical and psychosocial health for women and girls.
12. The Conference and Ministerial focused on three priority areas: health of women and girls, gender-responsive climate justice, and the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV). The cross-cutting themes included: women's leadership and shared decision-making; poverty reduction and social protection; economic empowerment; gender data and statistics; gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting; social norms change; information and communications technology; disability inclusion, equity and rights; inclusion of Pacific women and girls in all their diversity⁴ throughout their life cycle; and peace and security.

30TH ANNIVERSARY of the PACIFIC PLATFORM FOR ACTION ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

13. The year 2024 marks the 30th anniversary of the PPA, the Pacific's regional blueprint to advance women's human rights. Adopted in 1994, the PPA was the first regional instrument for promoting gender equality by PICTs. The PPA formed the basis of the Pacific region's contributions to the development of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA), which will celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2025.

2. Drawing from the Communique of the 52nd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting (2023) and the 1994 PPA.

3. Communique of the 49th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting (2018).

4. The term women and girls in all their diversity is taken from the Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights 2018-2030, and the Outcomes of the 14th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and the 7th Pacific Ministers for Women Meeting. This was subsequently endorsed in the revitalised Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration. It is drawn from CEDAW Article 1: 'discrimination against women' shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. 'All Pacific women' and 'all women' thus are used throughout to mean all groups and age groups of Pacific women, including indigenous women, elderly women, girls, women living with disabilities, lesbian and bisexual women, urban poor women, women in rural and maritime areas, and women on the climate frontline.



14. Reflecting on the Noumea Declaration (1994), the Conference and Ministerial celebrated and reaffirmed the legacy of all those who drafted and adopted the Pacific Platform for Action. This includes their visionary call to accelerate all efforts for gender equality and women's rights as we rise to the challenge to meet contemporary social, economic and political challenges.
15. Pacific governments provided updates on progress towards implementation of the BPA and PPA through their BPA+30 reports. These actions, contributions and interventions were shared during the Conference and Ministerial. The Conference committed to undertaking a situational analysis to ascertain the status of gender equality work in the region given the backdrop of the 30th anniversary of BPA and PPA.
16. The actions agreed at the Conference and the Ministerial set out the regional and national actions countries have committed to, to progress the PPA and will be reported on at the 16th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and the 9th Pacific Ministers for Women Meeting.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE KEY ISSUES AND PROPOSED ACTIONS

17. The Conference and Ministerial identified key issues and proposed actions to be undertaken over the next three years, and committed to prioritising implementation, monitoring, and review. The implementation of these commitments will be supported by the Secretariat.

PRIORITY AREA 1: HEALTH OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Summary of key issues

18. The Conference acknowledged that gender inequality and discrimination against women and girls significantly impacts their health and well-being. Gender barriers restrict the ability of women and girls to make decisions about their own health, including sexual and reproductive health, and harmful social and cultural norms prevent their enjoyment of full bodily autonomy. Women and girls experience an added burden as the primary caregivers for children, sick family members, the elderly and those with disabilities. Women also make up the bulk of the health workforce in the region, placing them on the frontline of addressing pandemics and community care needs. Pacific lived realities, such as the worsening climate crisis and the nuclear legacy, have profound negative impacts on the health of women and girls. Gender inequalities in health are further exacerbated during crises and disasters, placing women and girls at increased risk of harm.

Recommendations

The Conference committed to:

19. creating robust legal structures to uphold the health rights of women and girls in all their diversity, including through the establishment of national human rights institutions.
20. eliminating barriers for women and girls with disabilities including by improving access to assistive devices and technology, and health information in accessible formats, providing comprehensive training for SRHR and GBV service providers, and ensuring timely health prevention and response services.
21. implementing targeted disability rights and inclusion campaigns, awareness programs and initiatives that combat stigma, harmful stereotypes and discrimination, ensuring greater autonomy and self-determination for women and girls with disabilities to achieve health equity outcomes.
22. regional solidarity with the Republic of the Marshall Islands and French Polynesia/ Maohi Nui in addressing the disproportionate health and care burden impacts of the nuclear legacy on women and



girls, and support comprehensive health services for those affected, inclusive of downwind countries and territories⁵.

23. supporting menstrual health and hygiene, including by ensuring safe and accessible distribution of menstrual products and education inclusive of women and girls in all their diversity, and supporting programs targeting the elimination of stigmas surrounding menstruation.
24. partnering with Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) agencies, development partners and health providers to ensure accessible and affordable diagnostic tools and prevention resources tailored to women's health needs.
25. strengthening implementation of existing regional commitments to address non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including in the Healthy Islands Framework and the MANA Dashboard, to prioritise the health and well-being of women and girls in all their diversity. The strategy should account for gender-specific risk factors and the impact of NCDs, including women specific cancers, on women and women's role in unpaid care work.
26. strengthening efforts to address and prevent cervical cancer among Pacific women in all their diversity through the provision of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines, high-precision testing, low-cost early cervical cancer treatment modalities and follow up care, including actively seeking partnerships to support these initiatives with development partners, CROP agencies and other PICTs⁶.
27. the full realisation of sexual and reproductive health and rights, ensuring all women and adolescent girls have access to confidential, comprehensive, and culturally safe health information and services.
28. enhancing culturally sensitive mental health services for women and girls by increasing the number of trained female counsellors who can provide comprehensive, accessible, inclusive and effective care⁷.
29. meaningful youth leadership and participation in sexual and reproductive health education and services by investing and sustaining youth engagement including leadership opportunities.
30. strengthening quality comprehensive sexuality education policies in the Pacific, addressing cultural taboos and using positive expressions of culture to ensure accessibility to this education for all girls and boys, particularly in rural, remote and maritime areas.
31. the development and promotion of initiatives that engage men and boys as allies in supporting SRHR for all, by addressing harmful gender norms and behaviours.
32. ensuring all women and girls can access gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) information and services, including in times of disaster, acknowledging the link between climate change, disaster risks, GBV and SRHR.
33. policy implementation to promote decent work for both women and men including in the health sector, while closing gender gaps in leadership roles.
34. strengthening health information systems that collect sex, age and disability disaggregated data and establishing joint research initiatives, information sharing mechanisms and capacity strengthening

5. Drawing from paragraph 5 of the revitalised Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration.

6. Drawing on commitments in the **Añ Towepo Declaration** and the 12th Triennial Outcomes.

7. This was a key recommendation from the Republic of the Marshall Islands Young Women's Triennial Pre-Conference.



programmes on the health needs and barriers faced by women in all their diversity, including those affected by the climate crisis and those impacted by the Pacific nuclear legacy. This would contribute to regular reporting of disaggregated health data against the relevant Sustainable Development Goals and through the 2050 Strategy for a Blue Pacific Continent monitoring processes.

PRIORITY AREA 2: GENDER-RESPONSIVE CLIMATE JUSTICE

Summary of key issues

35. The Pacific has led the world in calling for climate justice, recognising the unequal and gendered impacts of climate change. Pacific small island states are particularly affected, with women and girls in all their diversity, including women and girls with disabilities, bearing the greatest burden of these impacts. The climate crisis adds to women's burdens as primary caregivers, affecting subsistence food sources and the marine environments that sustain their communities, and exacerbating existing inequalities in health, education and access to livelihoods. Despite this, women and young people have been leading movements for change, joining PICT governments in demanding climate justice in international fora. Pacific governments have also taken action at the national level with policy reform and implementation to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis, including by prioritising the need to address economic and non-economic loss and damage and secure accessible finance. Pacific governments recognise that gender-responsive climate justice requires deep, rapid and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in line with the 1.5C temperature limit, including emissions peaking by 2025 and net zero by 2050 in line with Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) pathways and reaffirmed the commitment to the COP28⁸ for all countries to submit 1.5oC aligned next nationally determined contributions⁹. They also acknowledge that mitigating global greenhouse gas emissions will have a positive impact on women and girls, who are disproportionately at risk as a result of the climate crisis.

Recommendations

The Conference committed to:

36. sustainable programs to address gender equality and climate justice by investing in the recommendations agreed to at the 14th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women, acknowledging that these recommendations, adapted below, are still relevant and require ongoing action.
37. increased implementation of climate mitigation measures, transformative adaptation strategies, and funding and action responding to loss and damage, adopting a gender equitable and inclusive approach for limiting global average temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius. This requires reformed financial architecture and innovative financing mechanisms that prioritise gender equality to reflect the scale and urgency required to implement the objectives of the Paris Agreement.
38. advancing gender responsive strategies to tackle the climate crisis by enhancing girls' agency, knowledge and leadership, and facilitating women's active participation and leadership of women and girls in all their diversity, and actively promoting their participation in climate change decision-making platforms at regional, national and community levels.
39. the meaningful participation of women and girls in all their diversity throughout every stage of national and sectoral policy design and implementation related to climate change and disaster risk management, incorporating gender-responsive elements and specific indicators.

8. 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

9. 10th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM10) 2024 Declaration, para. 22.



40. enhancing education and awareness among young people, including young people with disabilities, regarding the gendered impacts of climate change and the critical importance of women's participation and decision-making in developing early warning and disaster management systems.
41. implementing gender-responsive and inclusive budgeting within all climate change and disaster risk management policies, strategies, and plans to ensure financial resources support initiatives addressing the impacts of climate change on women and girls in all their diversity; and enabling special and simplified access to climate finance for women and youth organisations, local communities and indigenous peoples to ensure their effective participation in climate solutions.
42. incorporating a human rights-based and gender responsive approach at the legislative, policy and programme level on climate change that is culturally contextualised, acknowledging the interconnectedness of gender equality and climate change impacts.
43. valuing and incorporating the traditional knowledge and expertise of local and indigenous women and girls in all their diversity, in conjunction with other scientific knowledge, in climate action and disaster resilience initiatives.
44. prioritising the participation of women in all their diversity in the low- and zero-carbon economy and energy transition, promoting their inclusion in all sectors of the economy including those that have been traditionally male dominated.
45. mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion as one of the most effective approaches for building climate and disaster resilience into responses to the climate crisis, including early childhood development and climate change policies and programmes to support adaptation and resilience in our communities, in particular for women and girls, parents and caregivers.
46. strengthening coordination and capacities on gender and human rights, including integrating them into climate and disaster risk management policies, through the utilisation of existing mechanisms to promote a holistic approach to addressing the gendered dimensions of climate change and other crises.
47. securing technical support for PICT governments to meet social and environmental safeguards when applying for the Green Climate Fund and other climate financing mechanisms.
48. implementing a systems-strengthening approach to ensure national women's machineries are collaborating with ministries responsible for climate change and disaster management to enhance the integration of climate change and gender equality, leading to greater resilience and reducing the negative impacts of gender inequalities in times of disasters.
49. ensuring national women's machinery and women's organisations are partners in the implementation of climate resilience activities and are provided with appropriate levels of support for work in this regard.
50. appointing and supporting UNFCCC national gender and climate change focal points in all PICTs for climate negotiations, implementation and monitoring.
51. urging all PICTs to continue to advocate through progressive statements in the next phases of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) climate change advisory proceedings to specifically emphasise the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women and girls in all their diversity in the ongoing ICJ proceedings, thereby ensuring their rights are prioritised in international discussions.



52. investing in culturally contextualised, disaggregated data collection and analysis to provide concrete evidence of the gendered impacts of climate change to enable gender-responsive climate finance and budgeting; including support for the implementation of national surveys that measure aspects of the gender–environment nexus and training for gender data gatherers; and committed to the convening of a Pacific Group on Disaster-related Statistics to share better practices on disaster-related data disaggregation, monitoring and application.
53. investing in knowledge hubs and appropriate and accessible platforms (in indigenous and local languages, for example), including digital platforms, and particularly those that demonstrate local women-led innovation, to increase inclusion and access to and dissemination of knowledge to all Pacific women on the climate crisis and responses.

PRIORITY AREA 3: PREVENTION OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Summary of key issues

54. The rates of gender-based violence in Pacific Island countries and territories remain among the highest in the world, with an average two out of every three Pacific women experiencing violence in their lifetime. This level of violence has a devastating impact on all Pacific women, girls and their communities. The most marginalised women and girls are likely to experience higher rates of violence with the least access to services, including women and girls with disabilities. This includes new and emerging modalities of violence, such as technology-facilitated gender-based violence, where perpetrators make use of mobile and digital platforms to enable in-person violence, and further harass, intimidate, exploit and stalk women and girls online. Pacific governments and women’s movements have worked hard to respond with legislation and provision of services to survivors, while also addressing harmful gendered social norms to prevent the violence before it happens. Intervention and prevention are a top priority for all PICTs, recognising that a combination of response and prevention activities is crucial to ensure positive, lasting change to the safety of Pacific women and girls. This includes interventions from early childhood, in communities, educational institutions, and faith-based institutions.

Recommendations

The Conference committed to:

55. investing in GBV prevention alongside response, including by:
- a. implementing inclusive gender-based violence (GBV) policies and programs that prioritise both response and prevention efforts effectively;
 - b. increasing investment in GBV prevention interventions and integrated response with strong monitoring, evaluation, research and learning frameworks and capabilities, to identify effective strategies for preventing and responding to GBV against women and girls in all their diversity across diverse Pacific contexts, including targeted interventions for perpetrators alongside addressing substance abuse (drugs and alcohol).
56. increasing awareness and education about GBV, including by:
- a. implementing widespread, targeted educational campaigns across various platforms (traditional media, social media, community events) to raise awareness about GBV in all its forms, including technology-facilitated GBV, and its impacts on health, education and employment.
 - b. sensitising and engaging traditional and faith leaders, along with communities, civil society organisations and faith-based organisations, to work across and within traditional structures in addressing the root causes of GBV and prevent all forms of GBV through advocacy campaigns against GBV, and promoting culturally relevant messages aimed at transforming harmful attitudes and norms within Pacific communities to prevent all forms of GBV.



- c. strengthening formal and informal education systems, starting from early childhood education, by incorporating teacher training modules on gender equality, healthy relationships and addressing GBV, and promoting culturally appropriate teaching and learning approaches that change harmful gender norms, promote human rights, social inclusion and prevent violence against women and girls, including technology-facilitated violence.
 - d. developing and promoting initiatives that engage men and boys as allies and advocates in preventing GBV and investing in programmes, including behavioural change communications, which challenge harmful gender norms and behaviours to bring about equitable and generational change.
 - e. creating opportunities to increase the visibility and representation of women in sports and enhance women's leadership in the field, fostering positive social norms, ensuring safeguarding, and addressing harmful norms that enable GBV.
 - f. expanding partnerships to prevent GBV by working collaboratively with organisations and institutions, including first responders, governments, private sector, media, faith-based organisations, CSOs and non-traditional stakeholders.
57. greater focus on technology facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), including by:
- a. integrating technology facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) in national laws and policies to protect women and girls, while advocating for the development of a common international legislative framework that is survivor-centred and human-rights based, with appropriate funding;
 - b. enhancing response and prevention mechanisms by building the capacity of service providers across sectors and ensuring adequate financial, human and technical resources are available to address TFGBV, including through education programmes for children, youth and parents;
 - c. addressing technology-facilitated harmful representations of women, which hinder their participation and advancement in leadership positions;
 - d. reviewing to strengthen the current terms of reference of the Regional Working Group on the Implementation of Family Protection and Domestic Violence Legislation, to ensure TFGBV is a priority area, develop joint strategies around the development and review of laws and policies, and to engage with regulatory agencies and technology companies and hold them accountable to ensure comprehensive protection against TFGBV for women and girls in all their diversity.
58. targeted research and improved GBV data collection, including by:
- a. collaborating with diverse stakeholders, including governments, civil society including organisations of persons with disabilities, academia, and development partners, to create a coordinated research agenda focussed on preventing GBV, which could inform the development of a Pacific framework on the prevention of GBV and transformation of harmful social norms;
 - b. investing in the development of comprehensive sex, age and disability disaggregated data and evidence-based research on technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) from a Pacific perspective, to better enhancing our understanding of its prevalence, drivers and impacts on all Pacific people, particularly women and girls in all their diversity, and identify effective prevention and responsive strategies;
 - c. establishing routine national GBV prevalence data surveys to be jointly implemented by national women's machineries, women's organisations and national statistics offices to ensure a consistent, safe, ethical and culturally sensitive approach to capture GBV prevalence. This initiative would include training for enumerators and the establishment of robust, and culturally sensitive and inclusive standardised protocols for data collection that prioritise safety and ethical considerations;
 - d. partnering with GBV service providers and development partners to create centralised GBV administrative data systems that securely record data from GBV service providers, facilitating informed policy changes and improved reporting on national, regional and international commitments;
 - e. mobilising financial, technical and partnership resourcing for national gender-based violence prevalence studies requested by PICTs.



REPORTING OF RESULTS

The Conference calls on:

59. Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) agencies and their member governments to ensure the collaborative development of an effective regional gender equality ecosystem through the current Review of Regional Architecture (RRA) that takes into account the resource and capacity constraints of smaller island states, to ensure the delivery of these recommended actions to progress gender equality and women's human rights and ensure that these are elevated to the attention of Pacific Leaders for guidance in the implementation of the revitalised PLGED and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.
60. The Pacific Community (SPC), other CROP agencies and development partners to continue assisting PICTs in evaluating their efforts to promote gender equality in the region.
61. Pacific governments, civil society, development partners and other entities to work in partnership to monitor progress in the implementation of these recommended actions for the three priority areas under the PPA discussed at the 15th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and 8th Meeting of Pacific Ministers for Women, and to report on this progress at the 16th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and the 9th Pacific Ministers for Women Meeting.

ENDORSED BY:

American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

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