

## Gender assessment of the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Project

Sarah Whitfield<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

#### Background

The Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) project is a regional climate change programme that seeks to enhance the resilience of Pacific Island countries and communities to the adverse effects of climate change. The project is funded through the Global Environment Facility's Special Climate Change Fund and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), and is executed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Samoa Multi-Country Office, and implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

has been extended until 2014. There have been challenges along the way and countries are in varying stages of progress. Pursuing a decidedly iterative approach, an important aspect of the project is to document and share lessons learned and good practices both within and between Pacific Island countries and the region.

#### Scope of the gender assessment<sup>3</sup>

The Government of Australia, through AusAID, provided additional funding to the PACC project, which included dedicated funds to strengthen the focus on gender. In 2012, a comprehensive gender assessment was undertaken to assess the level and degree to which the PACC project had addressed gender. Gaps, oversights and examples of good practices were given equal consideration in order to identify suitable entry points to integrate gender into the project. Findings and recommendations were provided in order to guide national and regional project management teams in the implementation of gender mainstreaming.<sup>4</sup>

#### Gender and climate change in the Pacific: The social dimensions of resilience and adaptive capacity

##### *What are the linkages between gender and climate change?*

It has been widely reported that climate change is expected to seriously affect Pacific Island communities. Women and men are critical actors of change, possess a range of skills and coping strategies, and are often key repositories of vital local and traditional knowledge. Consideration of the different needs and adaptive capacities of women and men ensures that everyone benefits from climate change initiatives.

Social and economic inequalities compound adverse impacts and decrease the ability of certain individuals and groups to cope and adapt to climate

"Acknowledging the different yet complementary roles of men and women in ensuring the well-being of their families and the development of their society, (the ministers) affirmed the necessity of taking into account the knowledge, experiences and priorities of both women and men in order to develop effective climate change strategies..."

Communiqué issued from the Pacific Women's Ministerial Workshop on Climate Change  
Nadi, Fiji July 2012

The PACC project involves 14 Pacific Island countries<sup>2</sup> and incorporates a range of support and activities at local, national and regional levels, including mainstreaming climate change into policy and planning; pilot adaptation demonstration measures; technical support and capacity building; and associated communication activities. Pilot adaptation initiatives at the local level are focused on one of three sectors: food production and food security, water resources management, and coastal zone management. The project began in 2009 and

<sup>1</sup> Gender, disaster risk reduction, and climate change consultant. Email: sarahwhitfield\_@hotmail.com

<sup>2</sup> PACC countries include Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

<sup>3</sup> For further details and to obtain the full document, contact Taito Nakalevu, Regional Programme Director, PACC Regional Program Management Unit, SPREP, taiton@sprep.org

<sup>4</sup> Additional aspects to the assessment included gender training and technical support for initial implementation of gender mainstreaming.

change and extreme weather events. Gender, along with many other variables such as socioeconomic status, age and physical ability are key factors that can heighten people's risk to the adverse impacts of climate change.

Countries around the world exhibit varying manifestations of gender inequality and the Pacific is no exception. While significant advances have been made to close gender gaps, and there is great variation within and between them, in all Pacific Island countries there remain differences between the opportunities available to women and men. Over the years, gender roles have been changing. However, despite these advances, throughout the region women continue to be under-represented in formal governance structures (at all levels) and often do not have equal opportunities to build capacity and develop skills, particularly in technical fields.

Excluding women from planning and decision-making processes relating to climate change can result in a loss of important perspectives and valuable expertise. These oversights can potentially result in practices and strategies that further damage resources and ecosystems, negatively impact livelihoods and incomes, and inadvertently entrench or exacerbate vulnerabilities and gender inequalities.

Community members should understand predicted climate trends and associated risks that are likely to affect their lives and livelihoods. The lack of representation by women in village development committees can result in limited access to climate data and information to plan and undertake effective adaptive activities that would benefit households and communities.

Policies and adaptation measures can and should be designed to bring benefits to both women and men. Policies and projects that fail to fully take into consideration gender issues can ultimately worsen outcomes for both women and men, whereas gender-aware policies, projects and programmes can lead to more sustainable adaptation, as well as contribute to a reduction in gender inequalities.

### ***Why should PACC integrate gender?***

PACC supports national efforts to develop and implement climate-related policies and adaptation measures that will enhance the resilience of Pacific Island governments and communities, and

build the adaptive capacity of community members at various levels. Sustained attention to the gender dimensions of climate change will enable PACC to provide more effective support to countries and communities. A strengthened focus on gender will ensure that climate change mainstreaming initiatives and adaptation measures ultimately benefit the women and men in the region that are, and will be, particularly impacted by climate change.

Throughout the Pacific there are increasing efforts to gather evidence of successful climate change mainstreaming and adaptation approaches. There is a need for additional evidence that demonstrates to policy-makers and practitioners how climate change will impact women and men differently and how sustained and comprehensive

### **Mainstreaming gender into climate change the Pacific way**

Throughout the Pacific, members of households and communities cooperate to achieve shared goals. Mainstreaming gender into climate change does not mean looking at women and men in isolation or necessarily developing separate initiatives to meet different priorities of women and men. In many cases, women and men are likely to reach a consensus about proposed adaptation measures, and both may ultimately benefit from the intervention. A focus on gender means recognising that climate change will not impact everyone in the same way. Climate change is likely to impact women and men differently, depending on a host of factors, including gender roles and gender divisions, and gender-specific uses of resources.

Households, communities and countries in the region have different cultural traditions that are important foundations of social cohesion. However, culture and tradition do not always favour all members of society. In some settings, women, or other socially or economically marginalised groups may not have the same degree of access to climate predictions, data from technical assessments and capacity building related to proposed adaptation measures. These groups may not be in a position to participate in climate change initiatives in a meaningful way or take part in decision-making that will directly affect their lives and livelihoods. While there may be efforts to include women and marginalised groups and provide an avenue for them to voice their concerns, their views and solutions may not have equal weight when it comes time to making decisions.

Taking into account different impacts, experiences and perspectives will not obstruct wider objectives to increase resilience at community level. Taking into consideration a diversity of views from women, men and potentially marginalised groups ultimately improves climate change adaptation by taking into account the different vulnerabilities and capacities of all family and community members.

attention to gender ultimately improves the effectiveness of climate change mainstreaming and adaptation measures.

By widely disseminating lessons learned in relation to its efforts to implement gender mainstreaming, PACC can make a significant contribution to enhance the knowledge and practices of government, climate change professionals and practitioners, and community members in the region. Through sustained efforts to substantively address the gender dimensions of climate change, PACC can act as a catalyst to strengthen the focus on gender in climate change in Pacific Island countries and throughout the region.

### Methodology

Using a gender mainstreaming approach,<sup>5</sup> all stages, components and aspects of the PACC project were examined to identify existing gaps and areas that would benefit from a strengthened focus on gender. A wide range of criteria was used to assess the extent to which the project had addressed gender, which included:

- attention to the gender dimensions of the impacts of climate change and gender-based vulnerabilities and capacities;
- the use of sex-disaggregated data, gender analysis and gender expertise;
- support for equal opportunities and benefits associated with technical capacity building and adaptation;
- participation and decision-making at all levels and in all stages;
- levels of gender awareness; and
- commitment and political will among staff and key stakeholders.

These factors were considered in relation to the existing local, national and regional context, as well as the current institutional environment of the project.

An extensive literature review was undertaken of relevant research, resource guides, toolkits and workshop reports dealing with gender and climate change (and to some extent disaster risk reduction) from the region and elsewhere. Additional

documents, including national and regional development strategies, relevant policies and plans, and recent communiqués from Pacific women ministers and Pacific Island leaders were reviewed to get a broader national and regional perspective.

A comprehensive desk review of all project documentation was undertaken.<sup>6</sup> Various technical reports for the pilot adaptation measures were reviewed, including vulnerability assessments, socioeconomic assessments, cost-benefit analyses, and design documents. Financial forms and tracking sheets were also examined to determine the level of resource allocation to gender.

Consultations were undertaken with key national and regional stakeholders from the various Pacific Island governments, as well as representatives of women's ministries or departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), regional agencies, the United Nations and donor agencies, as well as researchers and specialists involved in the project. Surveys were completed by national project coordinators and in some cases assisted by project teams.<sup>7</sup> Supplementary gender questions were provided in order to gather information for the regional climate change mainstreaming guidelines in development at the time. Interviews were held with coordinators, government counterparts and members of core project teams.

In-country consultations and site visits were undertaken in pre-selected countries according to geographic location, sectoral area of focus and stage of implementation.<sup>8</sup> Depending on the desired approach of the project teams, methodologies for the country visits included stakeholder meetings, a multi-stakeholder workshop, community consultations with village women, focus groups consisting of community representatives and CBOs, and household interviews and informal discussions with community members.

During the PACC Multi-Partite Review and Technical Workshop held in Nauru in August 2012, several coordinators and government representatives were interviewed and gender training was undertaken for participants and partners, including SPREP, UNDP and AusAID. The training introduced basic concepts related to gender and climate change,

<sup>5</sup> Gender mainstreaming is concerned with integrating a gender perspective and analysis into all stages of the project, policy and programming cycle. Gender mainstreaming aims to ensure that both women and men benefit equally from development processes, and seeks to address areas where inequalities have been identified in order to enhance sustainable development and promote gender equality.

<sup>6</sup> Documents reviewed included: the project inception report, project proposal, project implementation reviews, presentations, documents and reports from annual multi-partite reviews, annual project implementation reviews, the regional project logframe, quarterly progress reports, annual work plans multi-year work plans, annual reports, monitoring reports, trip reports, and minutes of meetings, as well as training and workshop reports.

<sup>7</sup> PACC Cook Islands did not complete the survey.

<sup>8</sup> Country visits were undertaken in the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Nauru, Palau and Tonga.

involved group work to examine potential gender-differentiated impacts of climate change within each of the sectors, and included an introduction to sex-disaggregated indicators. The meeting offered an important opportunity to observe PACC processes and gain insight into the institutional context of the project.

### **Limitations**

The biggest challenge for the assessment concerned the review of the large amount of un-collated project documentation. At the same time, gaps in documentation from some countries, as well as poor and uneven project reporting made it difficult to form a detailed understanding of projects, their progress and the lessons learned to date. This was further compounded by the fact that logframes had not been developed for the projects at the national level, and the directions and outcomes of several adaptation measures were still being refined.<sup>9</sup>

Although it was timely to undertake the training at the Multi-Partite Review, pressing and ongoing project management issues heightened the risk of potential backlash to gender. During the meeting, coordinators were required to complete various templates and only two coordinators managed to submit detailed information regarding the gender dimensions of climate change mainstreaming.

It was not possible to exhaust all avenues and meet with all stakeholders that could potentially collaborate with the project to support gender mainstreaming in climate change at national and regional levels. The exploration of these partnerships is an important next step for project staff, SPREP and donor partners.

### **Assessment findings**

#### **Project design and planning**

- ✓ Gender analysis and expertise should be included in the original design.
- ✓ Gender should be mainstreamed into the overall project goal, objectives, outcomes and results.
- ✓ Climate change initiatives should be informed by national and regional gender equality policies and strategies, as well as gender issues previously identified in the sector.
- ✓ Climate change adaptation requires an analysis of the vulnerabilities and capacities of women, men and other groups.
- ✓ Gender roles, gender divisions of labour and gender-differentiated resource uses are critical concerns in the identification of climate change impacts on men and women.

- ✓ Beneficiaries of climate change adaptation should be disaggregated by gender and other variables.
- ✓ Women and men should have equal opportunities to be involved in decision-making related to climate change initiatives and adaptation measures.

All efforts should be made to ensure that gender issues are substantively and comprehensively addressed in the project design and planning process. Although this did not occur in PACC, it is still worthwhile to consider in what ways the project should have addressed gender at the earliest stage and how this initial oversight affects the project's current efforts to mainstream gender.

The design of the adaptation measures did not take into consideration whether and how existing gender inequalities should be addressed while concurrently tackling climate change. The absence of gender analysis results in a lack of consideration of gender differences.

Gender language and concepts in the original design documents are confusing and, reportedly, poorly understood by project staff and technical advisors. Wording such as "gender-sensitive" and "gender-inclusive approach" is included without an appreciation of what the implementation of these concepts should entail. No subsequent references to gender are found in any other parts of the project documents. In recognition of this shortcoming, gender inputs were incorporated into the project proposal, but with limited clear guidance on comprehensively and substantively mainstreaming gender into the project.

The project principally aims to reduce vulnerabilities and enhance resilience and adaptive capacity of the following sectors: water resources management; food security and food production; and coastal zone management. There are few references in project documents to the social and economic impacts on community members. Project design and planning documents do not examine potentially vulnerable groups nor do they explicitly identify women or any other group as being particularly vulnerable to climate change. Project designs do not take into consideration gender roles and gender-differentiated resource uses. Adaptation measures are designed to broadly benefit families or the community as a whole. Projects do not explicitly consider whether and how the lives and livelihoods of men and of women are likely to be impacted, either negatively by climate change or positively through mainstreaming initiatives or adaptation measures.

<sup>9</sup> The Mid-Term and Technical Review for the project was being undertaken concurrently.

Given the lack of sex-disaggregated data and reporting, a definitive assessment of the numbers and nature of participation by women, men and specific groups in the project design and planning process is not possible, even though project photos and participant lists show that men often heavily outnumber women. Although they may have been involved in the planning stages of several PACC projects, there is no record of the inclusion of women, national women's ministries or departments, and women's NGOs and CBOs in stakeholder analyses, or in the identification of the priority sector and the proposed adaptation measures.

Consultation reports do not highlight different views or priorities that may have been expressed by different groups during community meetings and focus groups.<sup>10</sup> Perspectives about proposed adaptation measures were consolidated without any apparent attention to differences, which tends to obscure the perspectives and solutions identified by women, men, young people or other groups. The general lack of reporting in this regard suggests that gender or age-specific needs and concerns, experiences and recommendations are essentially inconsequential to the design of adaptation measures.

## Project implementation

### *Mainstreaming climate change*

- ✓ Climate change policy and legislation should be guided by national gender equality policies and strategies, as well as gender issues identified in regional, national and sectoral development frameworks.
- ✓ Climate change policy and legislation should consider the needs, aspirations and priorities of women, men, young people, and particularly vulnerable groups.
- ✓ National women's machineries (NWMs)<sup>11</sup> and women's NGOs should be meaningfully involved in the development and implementation of climate change policy and legislation.
- ✓ Gender should be comprehensively and coherently integrated throughout climate change policies and legislation.

In many Pacific Island countries, gender is increasingly being recognised as an important dimension of climate change policy development. PACC climate change mainstreaming outputs are in various stages of development, approval and implementation. Several PACC-supported policies have integrated gender in terms of process and content to

varying degrees, and this is principally a reflection of an existing supportive and enabling environment for gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

Some mainstreaming outputs demonstrate a good understanding of gender, and detail several strategies to achieve results for gender equality. However, in all cases, comprehensively integrating a gender perspective into policies remains a work in progress, with various gaps noted below.

Although mainstreaming outputs seek to ensure that in-country activities are consistent with national development priorities and objectives, policies do not draw on national commitments and efforts to address gender and climate change. Overall, PACC mainstreaming outputs do not refer to national gender policy and legislation, or gender equality commitments at national or regional levels. For example, the PACC Cook Islands project does not make any reference to the Cook Islands National Gender Equality Policy, which includes extensive coverage of climate change, and details the different needs of women in outer islands, young women and girls, and women with disabilities.

Several project outputs note the participation of women's organisations or list national women's machineries among the stakeholders involved in policy development although the extent of their participation and contribution remains largely undocumented. None of the projects note any specific constraints to the meaningful participation and decision-making among women or other groups in the policy-making process. Additional evidence is needed to determine if NWMs and women's groups are able to move beyond participation in isolated consultation events to being fully engaged in enduring partnerships throughout the implementation and monitoring phases of the policy.

In general, policies tend to note climate-related changes but not the possible effects that these will have on the daily lives and livelihoods of women and men. Although gender roles and gender-specific impacts of climate change were reportedly addressed during consultations and focus group discussions, there is no record or evidence to show that they were analysed or actually used to inform policies.

General statements about women or gender are not accompanied by clearly articulated gender equality goals. Where gender is identified as an area of concern, no references are made to underlying root causes of inequality and exclusion. In most cases,

<sup>10</sup> The only exception encountered was the consultation report for PACC Samoa, which included a brief list of different priorities for each of the groups.

<sup>11</sup> The term "women's national machineries" refers to national ministries, departments and/or divisions that deal with women and women's issues.

gender is referred to in isolation without any consistent relationship with the rest of the document. None of the policies identify capacity and resource requirements for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming or specific gender aspects.

### **Pilot adaptation projects**

- ✓ Adaptation measures should be underpinned by rigorous social science, particularly in relation to pilot communities.
- ✓ Sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis are needed to understand the gender dimensions of climate change.
- ✓ Women and men need relevant information, knowledge and skills to support adaptation measures and climate change initiatives.

There is little evidence that projects systematically made use of existing data, research and analyses that might guide the projects from a social perspective. Overall, projects devote limited attention to the social (let alone gender) dimensions of vulnerability, adaptation and resilience compared with the degree of detail afforded to infrastructure design aspects of adaptation measures.

None of the technical assessments undertaken to inform PACC pilot projects<sup>12</sup> address the social and gender dimensions of vulnerability, nor do they identify and consider existing or potential capacities and coping mechanisms among women and men in the pilot communities that might increase individual, household and community resilience to climate risks. Projects do not critically assess the challenging but equally critical sociocultural feasibility of adaptation measures. There is little recognition that there may be different economic costs and benefits for women and men or that the perceptions of these may differ. Preliminary environmental impact assessments undertaken for the project do not examine gender issues or collect sex disaggregated data in relation to gender-specific roles and resource uses.

Quantitative and qualitative data disaggregated by sex and other variables were not consistently collected for all pilot communities. Where small amounts of disaggregated data were collected, they were either not relevant or not analysed from a gender perspective. The general lack of relevant disaggregated data in the projects precludes a gender analysis and hinders an understanding of how climate change potentially impacts the lives and livelihoods of women and men, and how adaptation measures are expected to bring benefits to women or specifically vulnerable groups.



*Gender roles and gender divisions of labour are critical aspects of climate change adaptation*

### **Technical support**

- ✓ Women and men at all levels should have equal opportunities to build capacity, particularly in technical fields related to climate change.
- ✓ Women, men or specific groups may need to be specifically targeted for capacity development and behaviour change.

PACC supports the capacity building of a wide range of partners and individuals at all levels. Particular emphasis has been placed on training national counterparts in relation to key technical assessments. The exact proportion of male and female participants in these capacity building initiatives is not known because data were not collected on the gender balance of beneficiary support. However, the general consensus among those interviewed suggests that the majority of participants in technical training have been men.

The lack of data, analysis and reporting in terms of gender balance in capacity building suggest a lack of awareness regarding the existence of any imbalances or gender inequities that should be addressed through specific strategies or affirmative actions. It should be noted, however, that PACC Solomon Islands reported that it is now normal practice to actively promote gender balance, and projects

<sup>12</sup> These include vulnerability assessments, socioeconomic assessments, cost-benefit analyses, climate change modeling, preliminary environmental impact assessments, as well as other site-specific assessments.

specifically request the involvement of both women and men in capacity building activities.

According to project documents, training in pilot communities is generally targeted at households, community members, technical officers and selected farmers. With no references to either women or men, it is unclear whether the intention is to build capacity among women, men or both. Interviews with coordinators revealed that various activities and capacity building activities at the community level implicitly involve women, men or both, in keeping with traditional gender roles and without any intention to specifically address any gender issues per se.

### Communications

- ✓ Women and men, particularly at the local level, need to be well informed and motivated in order to adapt to climate change.
- ✓ Women and men may require different communication strategies in order to address climate change.
- ✓ Images about climate change should also aim to promote gender equality.

In many countries, community and household consultative activities, coupled with tangible infrastructure outputs has resulted in high levels of general awareness of PACC among both women and men, principally in relation to adaptation measures. General climate change awareness workshops and training have been undertaken in several countries, in some cases within the pilot communities, and often involving a number of communities without any particular link to the pilot adaptation measure. There was a notable lack of meaningful and sustained involvement in a few pilot communities, which precluded an examination of gender differences in the levels of awareness and understanding of climate change and PACC. However, communication activities were scheduled to begin in these sites in the near future.

Discussions during in-country visits highlighted that women and men in the pilot sites are largely familiar with climate change as a vague general concept. An understanding of climate change appears to be mainly connected to current realities and hardships rather than climate and risk projections for their locality, or actions and changes in behaviour at the household and/or community level to build resilience.

Consultations revealed that in many cases, technical data and detailed updates about the project had not consistently reached the wider population in the pilot communities, particularly women. Communication plans developed for the PACC project focus on activities and outputs, and lack a strategic focus



*Specific strategies may be required to ensure that women, who are not generally considered to be the head of the household, are able to share their views about proposed adaptation to climate change measures.*

on project outcomes and results beyond increased general awareness of climate change. Plans do not include stakeholder analyses that would identify and effectively target particular groups, such as women or women's NGOs and CBOs, which might require specific communication strategies.

A rapid review of PACC communication materials revealed a balanced photographic representation of women and men for some projects and photos mainly of men in others. Overall, photos featuring technical aspects of the demonstration projects tended to depict men. Few photos depicted the gender dimensions of the adverse impacts of climate change or the expected benefits that adaptation would bring, specifically for women and men, and none showed women or men undertaking non-traditional activities.

### Partnerships

- ✓ Effective partnerships at various levels can maximise knowledge and technical skills in gender and climate change among all parties.

The gender dimensions of climate change have become a growing concern throughout the region and there is a wide range of partners seeking to

integrate gender perspectives into climate change initiatives, yet few PACC coordinators are involved in gender and climate change activities and partnerships at the national level. Any collaborative efforts to date in this regard have been undertaken on a relatively ad hoc basis. There are a number of potentially promising partnerships at all levels that have yet to be pursued.

There is a dearth of formal mechanisms to enable PACC and partners at both the national and regional level to systematically share information, explore collaborative opportunities, and develop capacity in order to integrate gender more effectively into climate change initiatives. However, PACC is presently involved in a regional initiative to develop a Pacific Regional Gender and Climate Change Toolkit. This collaboration offers a valuable opportunity for PACC to contribute specialist knowledge and perspectives, and share initial lessons learned regarding the project's efforts to integrate gender into climate change mainstreaming and adaptation.

### **Lessons learned**

- ✓ More evidence is needed to up-scale and improve the integration of gender into climate change mainstreaming and adaptation.
- ✓ Pacific Island countries and the region as a whole need more evidence to support and advocate for gender mainstreaming in climate change mainstreaming and adaptation.
- ✓ Good practices and lessons learned about gender and climate change should be shared at national and regional levels.

An important aspect of PACC is to share lessons learned to improve climate change mainstreaming and adaptation. Lessons learned should convey how climate change initiatives might be designed and implemented to address a range of gender issues and gender-specific vulnerabilities. Given that gender has not been substantively addressed in the project to date, and general reporting has been inadequate, countries have yet to synthesise and share lessons learned in this regard.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

- ✓ Effective monitoring and reporting frameworks and systems are needed to synthesise lessons learned and good practices about gender and climate change.

Effective monitoring is needed to identify progress, problems and solutions, communicate technical, financial and capacity needs, and synthesise lessons and share good practices about effective climate change mainstreaming and adaptation. To date, measuring progress and results has been generally limited because work plans and reports focus

on activities, outputs and budgets, rather than outcomes, progress and results.

For various reasons, general reporting has been particularly challenging for the project, which also makes it difficult to examine even limited progress and lessons about gender. Available reports do not include sex-disaggregated data or report on any gender dimensions of the project. Project monitoring and trip reports also do not address gender. Terms of reference for project reviews or project evaluations do not systematically stipulate gender expertise or competencies related to gender analysis. In addition, there is no indication of explicit strategies to involve women and men, including in the pilot communities, in the monitoring and evaluation of PACC supported policies, or in adaptation measures.

### **Participation and decision-making**

- ✓ Women and men should have equal opportunities to participate and make decisions in project governance and management structures.
- ✓ Both women and men at the community level should be meaningfully involved in climate change initiatives.
- ✓ Women and men should be considered active agents of change of climate change adaptation.
- ✓ Climate change initiatives benefit from increased engagement with NWMs and women's NGOs and CBOs.

In many countries, women and other groups are excluded from planning processes, and implicit rules often limit women's ability to participate in community discussions and decision-making. Equal opportunities for meaningful participation and decision-making are important considerations for gender equality that cut across all areas of the PACC project.

Gender imbalances in formal governance structures are often an indicator of prevailing attitudes and cultural norms regarding women's role in planning and decision-making. Gender balance in PACC governance structures varies by level, but without exception all project steering committees and technical or operational working groups are composed of more men than women. Several local project governance structures teams include female members and closer gender balance occurs in countries where there is already a generally conducive environment for gender equality (i.e. sociocultural norms and practices, policies, institutional and political commitment). However, there is no record of the nature of women's contributions or the comparative level of their participation and decision-making in these structures, which makes it difficult to draw any conclusions regarding gender equality.



As is common practice in the region, widespread consultative activities and separate focus groups were undertaken as part of project activities. However, there is limited evidence or substantive reporting that highlights if and how different viewpoints or priorities among women or certain groups actually influence priority-setting or decision-making. While the norm is to build consensus, the absence of disaggregated reporting inadvertently re-emphasises homogeneity rather than diversity.

In general, there is not a strong emphasis on community members, either women or men, as *active agents* in climate change adaptation. There is limited attention to the concept of empowerment among community members generally,<sup>13</sup> and women specifically. NWMs, women's NGOs and CBOs in some countries have been involved in certain aspects of the projects. However, in general, these stakeholder groups are not formally represented in project structures nor are they consistently engaged as vital partners throughout the project.

### **An enabling environment for gender mainstreaming**

Effective integration of gender into climate change requires:

- responsive institutional arrangements;
- gender awareness, competencies and skills; and
- commitment, political will, and dedicated resources.

Success factors for gender mainstreaming include a supportive policy environment, adequate capacity and resources, as well as political will and commitment. It is, therefore, important to consider the institutional context in which PACC currently operates in order to assess the potential success of gender mainstreaming.

Gender awareness or "sensitivity" is not a required skill or competency for Regional Programme Management Unit (RPMU), coordinators or PACC team members. Several PACC teams had at least one member that had undertaken gender training. The vast majority of coordinators and stakeholders expressed support for the increased attention to gender in PACC. Interest generally reflected personal convictions for improved gender equality, as well as practical concerns to secure funding.

A few coordinators were more reticent about gender mainstreaming and stated that "gender is not

an issue". This mainly reflected prevailing misconceptions that: 1) there were no significant gender inequalities either within the pilot communities or at the national level, and/or 2) attention to equity issues, gender roles and resource use was not needed to effectively meet project objectives. Consultations highlighted that it is not widely understood that climate change affects women and girls differently from men and boys. Several people did not understand or necessarily agree with this basic premise.

Several stakeholders view gender as an externally driven process, a donor pre-condition for additional funding, and an additional layer on top of already onerous reporting. A small minority stated, "the donor push for gender has been too quick" and "they have not sufficiently considered the cultural context". They expressed concern that the rights-based approach had "done more harm than good" and felt it was important to "separate gender and climate change from politics".<sup>14</sup> One individual viewed the attention to gender and specific groups as a strategy of exclusion and separation that runs counters to Pacific culture: "can divide communities...takes place at the expense of the wider good... and once you start...you complicate issues and stretch capacity."

SPREP senior management have not provided a directive or actively pursued efforts to mainstream gender into SPREP's projects and programs. The SPREP Draft Gender Policy has reportedly been slated for redrafting for some time. The assessment revealed general uncertainty among various staff members regarding the existence of a policy and/or its current status. The SPREP Gender Committee had not met for over a year. Most, but not all, SPREP staff and UNDP and AusAID representatives had participated in some form of gender training but on the whole felt they did not have the necessary technical expertise to support gender mainstreaming. The SPREP Communications Team noted a high level of interest in mainstreaming gender into communications.

Global gender policies, strategies, plans and gender assessments from UNDP and the Global Environment Facility have not translated into concrete support for implementing gender mainstreaming in the PACC project. Project resources have not been allocated to gender mainstreaming or women's empowerment at either the national or regional level.<sup>15</sup> Funding authorisation and certificate forms do not include a budget line to support gender.

<sup>13</sup> PACC Fiji, however, noted plans to begin to support community empowerment in the pilot sites.

<sup>14</sup> This view was particularly prevalent where there was strong opposition to the ratification of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Several design documents refer to environmental human rights conventions, although none refer to CEDAW or examine climate change using a rights-based approach.

<sup>15</sup> PACC Vanuatu noted its participation in a short training session on gender facilitated by UNDP Samoa Multi-Country Office in 2011.

There was no record of UNDP Pacific Centre or UNDP sub-offices in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands or Fiji having provided support to PACC for gender mainstreaming. Given the lack of dedicated personnel and expertise to support gender, the Pacific-based AusAID offices, as well as the regional office in Fiji has also not supported PACC in this regard to date.

There appears to be a high level of commitment to gender mainstreaming within RPMU. However, gender is being addressed at a point when other project management issues have consumed all parties for some time. There have been ongoing discussions that existing human resource capacity within RPMU overall is insufficient, as well as a longstanding request from the project for dedicated personnel and expertise to support gender and community development. At present, RPMU and SPREP do not have sufficient expertise or capacity to effectively support gender mainstreaming.

### **Key recommendations**

Given the breadth and complexity of the project, a wide range of recommendations were proposed to strengthen PACC's focus on gender. These are summarised below.

#### **1. *Prioritise technical expertise and resources for gender mainstreaming***

PACC and SPREP will only be able to take on an active and potentially catalytic role in this increasingly important aspect of the regional and global climate change dialogue if sufficient resources, capacity and technical expertise are allocated. Project coordinators and RPMU will require regular guidance and ongoing technical support to effectively implement gender mainstreaming in PACC throughout the life of the project. Human and financial resources should be clearly allocated for gender, and coordinators should be informed about the available technical support and funding that is available for gender mainstreaming at the national level. Coordinators are encouraged to identify and source in-country expertise, including gender experts and researchers with relevant sector experience to support gender mainstreaming activities. RPMU should maintain a roster of experts who can support gender mainstreaming and gender analysis at both the national and regional level.

#### **2. *Significantly increase attention to social science***

PACC adaptation measures should be well grounded in the social context, as well as the physical and environmental setting. Increased effort should be made to underpin the projects with rigorous social science and these findings should be integrated with sound technical information and data.

Projects would benefit from in-depth social studies at the pilot sites that focus on the various and varied social and cultural aspects that can profoundly influence and even inhibit adaptation choices and behaviour. Should time allow, PACC should undertake detailed social and gender analyses in at least one pilot site for each sector and explore collaborative opportunities with in-country development partners that are undertaking more extensive social studies and research.

#### **3. *Collect sex-disaggregated data and undertake gender analysis to identify gender-differentiated benefits and impacts of adaptation measures***

Quantitative and qualitative data, disaggregated by sex and other variables, are needed, along with a gender analysis to demonstrate the potential adverse impacts of climate change on women, men and other groups. It is important not to make broad assumptions about gender-specific climate change impacts or roles. Disaggregated data are needed to clearly identify any benefits that adaptation measures might bring for certain groups, as well as any gender-differentiated impacts associated with pilot adaptation measures. Project teams are encouraged to identify and address existing data gaps related to gender-specific vulnerabilities, capacities, impacts and benefits in relation to adaptation measures. In countries where community engagement will continue or is planned, opportunities may exist to collect relevant sex-disaggregated data and undertake a gender analysis to better inform the project. Where communities are experiencing "assessment or consultation fatigue" other means will need to be identified to gather data. All attempts should be made to maximise the use of existing information and data. In some cases, it may be possible to extract data collected for the PACC socioeconomic assessments and vulnerability assessments or from other projects (i.e. participatory or community vulnerability and capacity assessments).

Environmental impact assessments (EIAs) present important opportunities to collect relevant sex-disaggregated data. Terms of references for EIAs should substantively address the range of locally specific social and gender issues relevant to the proposed adaptation measures. EIAs should identify the expected gender-differentiated benefits of adaptation measures and address any potential negative impacts faced by groups of women, men and others. Appropriate mitigation measures should be recommended and implemented to ensure that benefits and opportunities of adaptation flow equally to women and men, meeting both practical needs and strategic gender interests. Gender expertise should be sourced to ensure that EIAs and subsequent adaptation designs effectively

and comprehensively address social and gender impacts for improved project outcomes. Environmental monitoring and management plans should stipulate or strongly encourage gender balance and be designed to build capacity and leadership skills among women and men.

**4. Undertake research and develop case studies to identify the gender dimensions of climate change**

After its completion, the project should be able to collect and share lessons about the gender dimensions of climate change mainstreaming and adaptation. Data about gender and climate change are sorely lacking in the region. Planners, policy-makers and practitioners need quantitative and qualitative data to integrate gender into climate change mainstreaming and adaptation. A compilation of case studies at the regional level would be very useful. Where feasible, selected PACC countries could be identified for more in-depth analysis and used as case studies to highlight a range of gender issues relating to each of the three sectors: water resources management; food security and food production; and coastal zone management. Wherever possible, the analysis and research should use participatory approaches and aim to build capacity with national stakeholders and local pilot communities. PACC coordinators, partners, technical advisors, as well as women and men at the community level, should be involved in an exploration of the gender dimensions of climate change in order to build skills and knowledge. In this endeavour it may be worth exploring a collaborative undertaking with other partners.

**5. Develop a PACC Gender Action Plan (along with country gender action plans and gender scorecards where feasible)**

A PACC Gender Action Plan should be developed with well-defined objectives and agreed-upon roles and responsibilities. The plan will ensure accountability and effective and systematic monitoring of gender mainstreaming at national and regional levels. It will enable RPMU to support countries in their efforts to address gender in the context of climate change, and guide PACC's contributions in this regard at the regional level. Brief country gender action plans should be developed to guide and support the monitoring of gender mainstreaming at the national level.

A gender scorecard could be developed to standardise gender objectives (or gender goals) and assist RPMU and countries to monitor progress and measure overall results in gender mainstreaming. The scorecard would be aligned with national strategies

and actions, and allow flexibility according to different country contexts and sectors. The gender scorecard would be completed annually by RPMU and PACC teams and/or independent reviewers.

**6. Integrate gender into country logframes and work plans**

Gender mainstreaming is a process, not a compilation of single one-off activities. Ongoing strategies and key actions to strengthen gender should be integrated into all aspects of the annual work plans and logframes. Wherever possible, sector-specific sex-disaggregated indicators and data sources should be identified, along with a range of gender indicators.<sup>16</sup>

Along with adaptation measures, gender should be explicitly addressed throughout climate change mainstreaming processes and outputs in a coherent, integrated and comprehensive fashion. Where PACC-supported policies and legislation have already been drafted, these should be reviewed using a gender perspective, and the findings disseminated and discussed with policy-makers, implementers, partners and community members. Where documents have yet to be written or are still in draft form there is an opportunity to examine and incorporate relevant social and gender issues.

Gender dimensions outlined in national development strategies and related sectoral policies, plans and legislation should be highlighted, along with relevant aspects of national gender equality policies and legislation. Gaps and oversights in these documents should also be noted. Any lessons learned concerning the gender dimensions of PACC pilot adaptation measures should inform the mainstreaming outputs.

**7. Develop strategies to address gender imbalances in project structures and gender-based inequalities related to participation and decision-making at all levels**

Significant gender imbalance exists in various PACC project structures at national and local levels. Rather than automatically revert to traditional structures, Programme Management Units are strongly encouraged to initiate discussions with technical teams, steering committees and local project committees in order to address these imbalances. Where women from pilot communities are under-represented in decision-making processes, PACC coordinators and project teams, along with community members, are advised to critically examine and discuss how tradition and culture pose challenges to equality in participation and decision-making within the project's context. Any quantitative and

<sup>16</sup> It is expected that a list of pre-developed indicators will be included in the forthcoming Pacific Gender and Climate Change Toolkit.

qualitative changes regarding the participation and decision-making of women and any marginalised groups should be monitored and reported on.

Countries are encouraged to include, but also move beyond, broad-based consultations and separate focus groups as measurements of stakeholder involvement because these alone are insufficient to measure equality in participation. Consultative activities should be results-oriented, strongly linked to broader strategic outcomes of climate change adaptation, and accompanied by attention to the dimensions and degree of participation and decision-making by women, men and other groups. Records of PACC meetings should provide quantitative and qualitative data regarding the contributions and decisions made by women and men, as well as representatives of women's and men's groups. Minutes should highlight any gender-differentiated, and potentially conflicting, priorities.

In relation to overall project management, all future terms of reference for project staff and consultants should include evidence of a minimum level of gender awareness. Hiring processes should explicitly promote equality of opportunity and affirmative actions in order to address any gender imbalances.

**8. Strengthen partnerships, including with national women's ministries and departments and women's NGOs and CBOs, and regularly engage with gender focal points**

PACC is strongly encouraged to increase engagement and explore partnerships and mutually beneficial arrangements with NWMs, women's NGOs and CBOs. In several countries NWMs possess the necessary resources and technical skills to effectively address the gender dimensions of climate

change, and the project should immediately begin to draw on NWMs' knowledge, experience and contacts. In countries where capacities and resources of NWM may be limited, coordinators are encouraged to address any constraints relating to their involvement in the project.

"While some women and women's groups are participating more in developing national plans of action for the environment, climate change, disaster management and food security, overall they are still largely absent at national and regional decision-making tables, and rural women's needs and perspectives are not prioritised by government."

Communiqué issued from The Pacific Women's Ministerial Workshop on Climate Change  
Nadi, July 2012

Wherever feasible, project teams should ensure that NWMs, and representatives from women's CBOs and NGOs are involved in a meaningful way in all stages and components of the project. Where they exist, PACC teams are also encouraged to engage with relevant government gender focal points. Token representation by these individuals and groups should be avoided. Measurements of participation should move beyond attendance at meetings. Qualitative indicators should be used to record how NWMs, and representatives of women's NGOs and CBOs contribute to the project, both generally and specifically, to promote gender equality.

Where partnerships between PACC and NWMs or women's NGOs and CBOs are strong, factors of success and lessons learned should be documented and shared as good practices. Countries should note why these partnerships are important and how they make a difference to climate change mainstreaming and adaptation, as well as gender equality. Where new partnerships need to be established, PACC should systematically documenting the process, monitoring progress and sharing any challenges and lessons learned. Coordinators should also regularly seek feedback in this regard from partners.

**9. Share climate change knowledge and develop capacity (particularly technical knowledge and skills) among both women and men**

Project activities should ensure both women and men at all levels understand the science underpinning the adaptation measures, have equal access to technical data and assessment results, as well as equal opportunities to be involved in technical



National women's ministries, along with women's NGOs and CBOs are keen to increase their level of involvement in climate change initiatives.

aspects of the project. Affirmative actions should be considered where there has been, or is likely to be, a significant gender imbalance. Where required, affirmative actions should be undertaken to improve gender balance in relation to technical training and increase equal access to scientific data and information. In order to address existing stereotypes, efforts should be made to train both women and men in non-traditional roles.

Training at all levels should be examined to determine if it is “gender blind” and integrate a gender perspective into future training in terms of both process and content. Any training and extension services undertaken with pilot communities should comprehensively address the gender dimensions of adaptation. RPMU and countries should systematically collect and report sex-disaggregated data of participants in training and report on efforts undertaken, as well as constraints, to achieve gender balance and provide equal access to technical information and skills.

#### **10. Support capacity building in gender and climate change at various levels**

Ongoing capacity building is recommended for coordinators and project teams, RPMU, and key stakeholders including NWM, women’s NGOs and CBOs, and civil society organisations (CSOs) to acquire the knowledge and skills to substantively integrate a gender perspective into climate change adaptation.<sup>17</sup> Given the remaining timescale of the project, gender training should be demand-driven and align with work planning and activities at the country and regional level so as not to unduly interfere with project outputs. Where feasible, PACC should coordinate training at the national level with interested partners. A one-on-one mentoring approach has proven successful for other training and technical support and in some cases is recommended for RPMU and coordinators as part of an effective and efficient approach to capacity building in gender mainstreaming. Gender training at all levels should involve both men and women and project teams are encouraged to identify and mobilise local gender expertise to support capacity building initiatives.

Mainstreaming gender means trainers and technical support personnel in all areas should possess a certain level of gender awareness, commitment and skills to be able to address relevant gender issues. In this regard, future terms of reference should stipulate this requirement and all training should be reviewed to ensure it incorporates a gender perspective, particularly when it is assumed to be gender neutral.

#### **11. Undertake effective communication for development in climate change to support strategic gender-aware objectives**

PACC communication activities should be strategically designed and implemented to support the overall objectives of the project, which includes efforts to promote gender equality. Complex seasonal climate forecasts should be conveyed to local community members so that men and women understand the potential impacts of climate change on their lives and livelihoods. PACC communication activities should address the practical needs of women and men (e.g. improved water supply, more climate-resistant crops, improved access to basic services), as well as strategic gender interests (e.g. increased opportunities for women in planning and decision-making and leadership roles). Images and modes of communication, as well as knowledge products and information, education and communication materials, should concurrently promote gender equality and address strategic gender interests in the context of climate change. For example, IEC materials could feature women involved in technical aspects of the project or in decision-making roles, as well as men engaged in non-traditional areas to help to change stereotypes and alleviate inequitable workloads for women.

Moving beyond awareness-raising activities, PACC communication should aim to address socio-economic and cultural factors that can either support or hinder adaptation. Activities should focus on women and men as active agents in adaptation rather than simply passive beneficiaries of information. Communications at all levels should not only inform men and women about the gender dimensions of climate change adaptation but also motivate them to change behaviour and undertake actions to support existing good practices, alter inappropriate ones, and develop new adaptive capacities for enhanced resilience. PACC is encouraged to engage with existing communication structures, including those that are gender-segregated (e.g. *talanoa* sessions, women’s church groups) to support adaptive behaviour change.

Rather than blindly target women in the pilot communities, project teams are encouraged to identify constraints among women or other groups that might prevent equal access to information. Areas of concern might include language skills and levels of literacy, access to certain modes of communication and equitable participation in structures where information is transmitted. Additional or innovative strategies, messages, modes and channels of communication may be required that present

<sup>17</sup> It is expected that PACC and SPREP will be involved in future training of Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific agencies which will be supported by the Pacific Regional Gender and Climate Change Toolkit currently in development.



*Women should have equal opportunities to be involved in monitoring and evaluating “hard” and “soft” adaptation measures.*

alternatives to traditional settings and social structures where women and young people may be marginalised. Women and representatives of women’s groups should be explicitly asked about their specific information needs and preferred channels of communication. Strategies might include, for example: i) asking villages that normally select one (usually male) representative to select two representatives — one woman and one man; ii) creating time during meetings to explicitly allow women’s representatives an opportunity to actively contribute; or iii) ensuring all formal project team meetings or updates are followed up by meetings specifically held to debrief and discuss the project with women in the community.

Coordinators and project teams will require technical assistant to support gender-sensitive communications. PACC is encouraged to develop an effective working partnership with the SPREP Communications Team in order to support the substantive integration of gender dimensions into PACC communication materials and activities and materials at both national and regional levels. The Knowledge Management Officer may be required to play a key role to support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming in PACC communications and knowledge management. RPMU and coordinators are encouraged to make linkages with other partners addressing the communication aspects of climate change, as well as communication specialists and journalists in the region who are well versed in addressing gender.<sup>18</sup>

## **12. Integrate gender into project monitoring and evaluation processes**

Project reporting should be results-based, moving beyond the presentation of inputs, activities and outputs to focus on changes and benefits for communities and the women and men within them.

Wherever possible, the project should provide evidence to demonstrate whether and how the project brings changes and benefits for women, men, and other groups. Guidelines and activities for any replication and up-scaling activities should substantively and coherently address gender dimensions.

PACC steering committees and technical teams are encouraged to regularly address gender during meetings and submit detailed minutes to RPMU. Narrative and financial reporting should include technical and financial resource allocations, and highlight specific activities undertaken to support gender mainstreaming in the project. Reports should clearly demonstrate progress and outcomes in this regard, along with ongoing challenges and actions taken to address them. A short set of questions or a checklist could be developed to support more effective reporting related to gender.

RPMU and coordinators are strongly encouraged to substantively report on gender in future missions and trips, and in relation to PACC contributions workshops and conferences at all levels. Specific attention should be paid to any challenges and specific outcomes in this regard (as well as note where these are absent); this can be done even when the event does not specifically focus on gender, the contribution by PACC is relatively small, or the learning with regards to gender fairly minimal. Systematic reporting in this regard would enable RPMU to monitor and report on gender and climate change contributions made by PACC at national and regional levels. Consolidating data would also be useful as it gives an indication of the level of attention to gender and climate change that can be used to support advocacy for policy development.

Both women and men at community and national levels, including those from marginalised groups, should be fully consulted and meaningfully

<sup>18</sup> For example, Pacific Gender and Climate Change Coalition and Fem’Link Pacific.

engaged in monitoring and evaluation activities. Women, men and young people at the community level, women's groups, NWMs and other groups should have the opportunity to independently monitor and evaluate their own participation and decision-making in the project, as well as their levels of increased knowledge and adaptive capacity attributable to PACC.

Gender criteria should be included in technical reviews and be consistently monitored. All project reviews and evaluations, including the terminal evaluation, should comprehensively and coherently address gender.

### **13. Collect and disseminate lessons learned and good practices relating to the gender dimensions of climate change mainstreaming and adaptation**

Coordinators and project teams should regularly discuss and document lessons learned, good practices and challenges related to gender mainstreaming at all levels. Countries that are making progress in addressing gender should to share their experiences with national stakeholders and other PACC countries, particular those working in the same sector. Countries that are encountering challenges to address gender are also strongly encouraged to share their experiences.

PACC experiences and learning with regards to gender and climate change should be clearly highlighted and showcased on the project website. The site could feature photos and short synopses organised around key thematic areas such as "the use of sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis", "participation and decision-making at the local, national and/or regional level" and "meaningful involvement by NWMs and women's NGOs and CBOs". PACC should seek the support of SPREP communications staff in this regard.

Coordinators and RPMU are also encouraged to substantively incorporate a gender perspective into presentations and contributions at national, regional and international climate change and disaster risk reduction events.

As the project nears completion it would be worthwhile to make a compilation of these experiences and lessons learned. There may be an inclination to report solely on successful examples of gender mainstreaming in the project although it would be equally important to document examples of maladaptation and gaps in policy and practice that have resulted from a lack of attention to gender. Gathering the whole range of experiences for the final project evaluation is important. PACC will



*Strategic partnerships, for example with women's marketing associations, can strengthen PACC's focus on the effects of climate change on food security and food production.*

have made a significant contribution if the project is able to document and disseminate a whole range of lessons learned, good practices, and ongoing challenges related to gender and climate change mainstreaming and adaptation.

### **14. Disseminate resource material and information about gender and climate change at the national and regional level**

National stakeholders and regional organisations need relevant resource materials and tools to help them mainstream gender into climate change. A wide range of climate change and disaster risk reduction projects, initiatives and networks have been established at the national and regional level with either a strong or partial focus on the gender dimensions of climate change. PACC should contribute to a more structured, streamlined and effective regional approach to consolidate information about gender and climate change activities, partners, and networks and networks.

PACC should actively ensure a range of information related to gender and climate change is included and specifically highlighted on the site.<sup>19</sup> RPMU should ensure that PACC coordinators receive timely updates about gender-related additions to the site, particularly in relation to capacity building opportunities.

<sup>19</sup> This might include, for example, gender assessments, research studies, relevant project and policy updates, tools and resources, as well as a roster of gender specialists and sectoral experts with gender expertise.

A regional gender and climate change guide or toolkit is currently being spearheaded by SPC and GIZ (German aid for sustainable development). PACC should continue to play an active role in this regional collaborative initiative.

**15. Explore national and regional partnerships, and strengthen collaboration and coordination in order to address the gender dimensions of climate change**

PACC is strongly encouraged to explore the full range of potential partnerships at both the national and regional level that will help to strengthen the project's focus on gender. Immediate first steps to strengthen the project's focus on gender should include enhanced engagement and active collaboration with UNDP and AusAID country offices, as well as the UNDP Pacific Centre. Reflections about the effectiveness of donor support for gender will provide important lessons for both PACC and donor partners and executing agencies.

Coordinators are encouraged to engage with existing in-country gender and climate change and/disaster risk reduction networks. Where these networks do not exist, PACC should consider developing a coordination mechanism to engage more systematically with partners and donors to address the gender dimensions of climate change. At a minimum, RPMU and coordinators should widely disseminate updates and information about PACC progress in gender mainstreaming with all potentially interested partners.

**16. Undertake advocacy for gender and climate change at all levels**

In view of a proposal put forward by some of the countries, an appropriately worded "directive" about gender could be sent by RPMU and SPREP in order to raise the profile of gender and increase the level of commitment and support for gender mainstreaming in climate change at the national level.

Ultimately, the integration of gender into PACC will be heavily reliant on the initiative taken by RPMU and project coordinators. Countries are encouraged to undertake suitable actions to advocate for a strengthened focus on gender in climate change mainstreaming and adaptation. For example, this might include encouraging water and climate change champions to include a focus on gender issues or approaching key climate change decision-makers to advocate for gender equality.

PACC and SPREP are strongly encouraged to consider how they can make a play a more strategic role to support gender equality in the wider regional context. In particular, PACC should collaborate with national and regional partners to ensure that gender is comprehensively and coherently integrated into

the new regional road map and strategy on climate change and disaster risk management.

**Concluding remarks**

Given the belated consideration of gender in PACC there may be a desire for immediate action and results. However, gender mainstreaming is not a "quick fix" solution but a process that takes place over time. In some countries and communities, introducing gender or enhancing women's role in decision-making may be relatively straightforward. In other cases, involving women may prove to be exceptionally challenging. Increasing awareness of gender inequalities and building commitment and political will to address personal convictions and long-held beliefs about gender is no easy task. Gender training is an important aspect of building awareness and commitment although it is not a panacea for gender equality and it may take time to address deeply rooted structural inequalities.

Several countries have addressed gender to some extent in the policy-making process and outputs, while others have overlooked these dimensions altogether. Some village committees have strong representation and participation by women and men, while others comprise mainly male members and decision-makers. It will not be possible to integrate gender into all components in all countries in the same way. All countries should address gender in a substantive way, meet minimum levels of compliance, and take concrete steps to improve the focus on gender equality. However, the expected results of gender mainstreaming will vary and implementation should proceed according to the particular context of each country and pilot community.

The current workload and priorities, resources and capacities within RPMU, and project teams, along with the broad scope of the project contribute to an exceptionally challenging environment to introduce gender mainstreaming. Addressing gender should not become an added burden for coordinators or RPMU. Wherever possible, gender should be integrated into existing project frameworks, as well as current and planned activities and strengthened reporting mechanisms. Any additional tools and frameworks will need to be simple and practical.

Given the stage of the project, it will be important to focus efforts at both national and regional levels where there is a high probability of progress and results. It would be worthwhile taking a strategic approach that focuses on selected countries, communities and project components with the greatest likelihood of successful implementation and where there is adequate capacity to examine the lessons learned about the gender mainstreaming process.