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Working Paper

WORKING PAPER NO. 5.C: GENDER EQUALITY FLAGSHIP PROGRESS UPDATE

(Paper presented by the Secretariat)

Paper summary

1. This paper provides an update on the Pacific Community's (SPC) efforts to promote and lead gender equality efforts across the Pacific region. It highlights the value proposition of the Gender Equality Flagship and its contributions to gender equality outcomes as articulated in the 2050 Strategy Implementation Plan, Pacific Platform for Action (PPA), Revitalised Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration, and the Pacific Community's Strategic Plan 2022-2031. It discusses the need for coordinated resource mobilisation and partnership efforts to accelerate gender equality actions and sustainable development outcomes. It concludes with a review of existing anchor investments in SPC that support the flagship's design and the implementation of gender equality and women in leadership strategic actions across the organisation and into member countries and territories.

Key points

2. **Value proposition of the Gender Equality Flagship:** It represents a transformative approach to integrating gender considerations into all of SPC's development work. It serves as a cohesive framework to tackle critical issues within and external to institutional systems, such as gender-based violence, economic empowerment, leadership, health, education and climate resilience. This comprehensive scope allows for a structured pathway to drive systemic change and fosters a deeper understanding of the multi-faceted nature of gender inequality in the Pacific.
3. **Sustainable financing and resource mobilisation:** Achieving gender equality across the Pacific region demands not only commitment but also sustainable financing mechanisms. Effectively mobilising and allocating resources within institutions and across sectors is essential. By integrating gender analysis into fiscal planning and policies, budget management, and procurement systems, the flagship addresses the structural barriers that hinder gender equality and ensure that financial resources are allocated in ways that support women and girls in all their diversity.
4. **Coalitions and partnerships:** The success of the Gender Equality Flagship hinges on forging strong coalitions and partnerships among a diverse range of stakeholders, including government institutions, CROP agencies, sub-regional mechanisms, private sector, local organisations, and communities. Engaging various actors is crucial to addressing the

intersectionality of gender-based issues, which are deeply embedded in broader socioeconomic conditions and cultural contexts. Collaborative approaches can enhance collective efforts towards gender equality by leveraging resources, sharing insights, and fostering a collective commitment to transformative change.

5. Catalyst for strategic policy discussions and action: The Gender Equality Flagship is positioned not only as an initiative for empowering women and girls in all their diversity but also as a catalyst for strategic policy discussions and actions on gender equality across the Pacific. By prioritising coalition-building and multi-stakeholder engagement, the flagship encourages a convergence of ideas and resources aimed at dismantling barriers to gender equality.

Recommendations

6. CRGA is requested to:
 - i. acknowledge the value proposition of the Gender Equality Flagship in implementing the ambitions and strategic actions outlined in the Revitalised Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration 2030, the 2050 Strategy Implementation Plan, the Pacific Platform for Action, and regional sectoral plans;
 - ii. invite donor partners to commit to flexible programmatic investments to bolster the Gender Equality Flagship's initiatives; and
 - iii. task the Secretariat to continue providing progress updates on the implementation and outcomes of the Gender Equality Flagship.

Background

7. SPC plays a leading role in advancing gender equality and women's leadership across the Pacific region. As a regional intergovernmental organisation, SPC is mandated to support its member governments and administrations to convene key sectoral engagements such as the Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and the Meeting of Pacific Ministers for Women. These gatherings are instrumental in driving strategic dialogue and actions around gender-related issues and formulating collective responses to the challenges faced by women and girls in all their diversity.
8. The creation of the Gender Equality Flagship recognises the critical need for innovative approaches in the region that can accelerate gender equality. With persistent challenges such as gender-based violence, socio-economic and political inequalities, and underrepresentation in leadership roles, there is an urgent need for a concerted effort to address these issues holistically. The Flagship aligns with existing frameworks such as the Revitalised Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED), Pacific Platform for Action (PPA), and SPC Strategic Plan 2022- 2031, all of which offer structured pathways for achieving gender equality through varying levels of governance and community engagement.
9. The flagship's value proposition is designed to be more than just a set of initiatives. It seeks to create a cohesive framework that integrates gender considerations into all development efforts throughout the region. The Flagship will be the vehicle to drive SPC's capabilities, policies, processes, funding, and resources to address critical challenges facing Pacific women and girls in all their diversity, identified through its dimensions.
10. The design of the Gender Equality Flagship is supported by anchor investments through the Australian government, namely the Pacific Women Lead (PWL) programme¹ and the Women in Leadership (WIL) project². These programmes, in collaboration with other sectoral programmes and flagships, provide a foundational structure for the flagship by addressing key gender issues within SPC and across region. This demonstrates not only the commitment of SPC and its partners to gender equality but also provides key insights into what works in different contexts, thereby informing the overarching strategies of the Gender Equality Flagship.

Analysis

11. The implementation of the Gender Equality Flagship signifies a momentous step towards addressing the entrenched issues surrounding gender equality in the Pacific region. By encompassing a comprehensive scope that addresses leadership, gender-based violence, economic empowerment, health, education, climate/resilience, organisational operations, and regional governance, the flagship offers a multifaceted approach designed to create systemic change.
12. Advancing gender equality requires sustainable programmatic financing, including the mobilisation and effective allocation of resources internally and across SPC's thematic sectors of work. For example, integrating gender analysis into fiscal policy, and planning (financial and non-financial) systems can enhance allocation of public resources and address structural barriers to gender equality.
13. The success of the Gender Equality Flagship will depend on its ability to forge strong coalitions and partnerships across various levels, sectors, agencies, and sub-regions.

¹ For more information: <https://hrsd.spc.int/pacific-women-lead>.

² For more information: <https://www.spc.int/WIL-programme>.

Empowering different stakeholders—from public to private to local organisations, regionally and sub-regionally—will be essential for nurturing a collective effort towards gender equality. It is crucial to recognize that gender-based issues are not standalone development challenges; they intersect with broader socioeconomic conditions, cultural norms, and historical contexts present within member states.

14. Furthermore, by prioritising the empowerment of women and girls in all their diversity not only leads to improved health and economic outcomes but also strengthens holistic community resilience. The Gender Equality Flagship serves as a catalyst to accelerate sustainable development outcomes across the Pacific. It is a vehicle to catalyse strategic policy discussions and actions on gender equality. By prioritising partnerships, coalition-building, and multi-stakeholder engagement, the flagship encourages a convergence of ideas and resources aimed at dismantling barriers to gender equality externally and within SPC.

Conclusion

15. The Gender Equality Flagship represents a fundamental shift for gender equality within the Pacific region. Through a comprehensive scope, the Flagship highlights the critical areas needing resources and intervention to achieve systemic change. It builds on proven strategies and demonstrates commitment and effectiveness by anchoring the Flagship in existing strategic initiatives such as the Pacific Women Lead (PWL) programme and the Women in Leadership (WIL) project.
16. It is imperative to mobilise active engagement from members, partners and communities to maximise the Flagship's potential. Collectively, we need to coordinate to ensure that the goals of the Gender Equality Flagship align with the aspirations of the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration, 2050 Implementation Plan, and the Pacific Platform for Action (PPA), leading to the realisation of the region's gender equality vision.
17. The Gender Equality flagship provides a conceptual framework that underpins a commitment to transformative change that will define future generations. It is a call to action for all stakeholders to work together, champion gender equality, and create a Pacific community where every woman and girl in all their diversity can thrive, lead, and shape their futures free from discrimination and violence.

Recommendations

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