SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

SIXTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF PACIFIC WOMEN
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 2 – 4 May 1994)

REPORT

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II. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

Official opening of Conference

1. The Representative of American Samoa delivered an opening prayer.

2. The Secretary-General of the South Pacific Commission (SPC), Ati George Sokomanu MBE, welcoming delegates to the Conference, noted that its main task was to finalise the Pacific Islands Platform of Action in preparation for the UN World Conference of Women (Beijing, September 1995). He stressed the need for the Platform to be concise and to address the need to achieve more balance in the roles of men and women, rather than focusing on women as a separate group. Reminding the Conference that 1994 was the Year of the Family, he emphasised the role of the family and the home in shaping the attitudes of children and thus of future generations.

3. The Representative of Kiribati, on behalf of delegates, thanked the Secretary-General for his address and hoped that SPC would continue seeking funds for attendance by Pacific Island women at the World Conference.

4. The Conference then heard a message from Mrs Gertrude Mongella, Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference of Women, expressing regret that she was unable to attend the Conference and encouraging delegates to keep in mind the following ten critical areas of concern identified by the Commission on the Status of Women, as the Preparatory Body for the World Conference, in 1994: the persistent and growing burden of poverty on women; unequal access to education, health and related services; violence against women; effects of armed or other conflicts on women; lack of economic empowerment; inequality in political empowerment; insufficient mechanisms for promoting the advancement of women; lack of awareness of and commitment to women's human rights; insufficient use of mass media to promote women's positive contribution to society; and inadequate recognition and support for women's contribution to managing natural resources and safeguarding the environment. Mrs Mongella highlighted the need to strengthen financial and institutional arrangements for the implementation and monitoring of the Platform. She emphasised the importance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and of ensuring that all discriminatory attitudes and practices were eliminated.

5. The Conference then adjourned to hear Sister Caroline, a Kanak nun noted for her work with disadvantaged women and youth in New Caledonia, officially open the exhibition of women's handicrafts held in conjunction with the Conference. In her opening address, Sister Caroline, paying tribute to the hard work of Pacific Island women, congratulated them for the way in which they had developed over past years.

Election of officers

6. By consensus, the Conference appointed the Representative of Western Samoa, Mrs Fo'isagaasina Eteuati Shon, to be Chairperson. The Conference also confirmed the appointment of the Representative of Guam; Ms Mae Tenorio, as Vice-Chairperson.

7. The Conference agreed that its Drafting Committee should consist of one representative each of the four sub-regional caucuses, namely the Representatives of Papua New Guinea (Melanesian Caucus), Palau (Micronesian Caucus), Cook Islands (Polynesian Caucus) and French Polynesia (Francophone Caucus). The Conference appointed the Representative of Fiji as its rapporteur.

8. The Conference then adopted its Agenda and hours of work.

Report to the Sixth Triennial Women's Conference on action taken by the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau since the Fifth Regional Conference of Pacific Women

9. The Women's Development Adviser presented Working Paper 1 on action taken by the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau on the recommendations of the Fifth Regional Conference of Pacific Women (Agana, Guam, 2 – 5 December 1991). In so doing she expressed appreciation to the small Pacific Island countries which had voluntarily assisted the Bureau in its work through contributions in both kind and cash, namely: Guam, French Polynesia, Tonga, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, Western Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia and Papua New Guinea; to the Government of New Zealand for funding the work of the Bureau, and to the Government of Australia for its financial assistance to the Credit Scheme for Women.

10. The Conference:

- Commending the action taken by the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau on the recommendations of the Fifth Conference,

- Expressing appreciation of the valuable role played by the Bureau in bringing the women of the Pacific together and assisting them to focus their activities,

- Applauding the efforts made by the women of Pacific Island countries to prepare and implement national plans of action,

- Expressing its pleasure at the growing links now being forged between government women's focal points and NGOs,

- Noting the financial and staffing constraints from which the Bureau continued to suffer,

(a) Urged the women of the Pacific to sustain their efforts to implement their national action plans for the well-being of all women;

(b) Recommended that the SPC Secretariat, the South Pacific Conference and donor countries and agencies give high priority to the provision of adequate funds and staff for the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau in order to enable it to fulfil its important role as a regional catalyst for the unity and development of Pacific women.

Rethinking sustainable development for Pacific women towards the year 2000

11. The Chief Economist presented Working Paper 2 on 'Rethinking sustainable development for Pacific women towards the year 2000' – the main theme of the Conference.

12. The following points were raised by delegates during discussion of the working paper:

- The need for economists to develop appropriate indicators that would enable planners to recognise the wealth of knowledge and skills possessed by women;

- The need for attention to be given in discussion of male and female roles to the special problems of female-headed households;

- The desirability of developing statistical methods that would quantify the contribution of women's income-generating activities to GNP;

- The importance of unpaid activities (production, reproduction and community management) undertaken by women and the difficulty of including these in national accounts. The Conference noted that SPC and ESCAP would shortly be holding a meeting to work on this problem. It also requested SPC to undertake case studies of women's unpaid activities and to disseminate the results;

- The need for SPC to be gender-sensitive in planning all its programmes;

- The need to sensitise decision-makers at all levels, including the lowest, to the needs of women;

- The need to reconcile women's traditional and modern roles;

- The fact that women tended to rear sons differently from daughters, which was felt to be partly responsible for maintaining the insensitive attitudes of men towards women's issues.

13. The Conference emphasised the need for all women to work together in unity, as in the past women had too often been their own worst enemies.

Overview on the status of Pacific women

14. An SPC consultant, Dr Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop, Head of Extension Services at the Alafua Campus of the University of the South Pacific, presented Working Paper 3, a discussion paper on the status of South Pacific women.

15. The consultant explained that the paper was designed to report on progress made by Pacific women in implementing the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies, in preparation for the Beijing Conference.

16. She highlighted the need for Pacific women to present a united view to this world conference and to seek regional commonalities rather than highlighting differences between sub-regions or countries. She also drew attention to the difficulty of finding reliable statistics that could be compared across the region and to the need for better gender-disaggregated data to be collected in the future.

17. The Conference expressed appreciation to the consultant for her excellent and comprehensive paper and requested that it be published for distribution to a wider audience.

18. A number of delegations indicated that they had more recent statistics which they could make available to the Secretariat. Some delegations also suggested minor amendments to the paper.

19. Responding to a suggestion by the Representative of France that the present sub-regional caucuses were linguistically discriminatory, the Women's Development Officer explained that they had been established, at the request of Pacific women, to facilitate communication. Francophone women would be welcome to attend the appropriate anglophone caucus groupings if they so wished; there was no intention to separate them from their sisters in other countries.

20. Other points mentioned during the discussion were:

- Methods of recognising and quantifying the value of traditional food exchanges and women's reproductive work (e.g. breastfeeding);

- The need for women to have equal participation with men in paid employment, rather than merely being complimented on the value of their unpaid activities;

– The need for further consultation with countries to be undertaken if the paper were to be the true voice of all Pacific women.

The Pacific Draft Platform for Action

21. Ms Barbara Wahl, an SPC Consultant and Communications Specialist in the Office of the Governor of Guam, presented Working Paper 5, the Pacific Region Draft Platform for Action.

22. She explained that the Platform was intended to give Pacific women a clear voice at the global level. Too often, in the past, the needs and problems of Pacific women had been lost or not given adequate attention because they had been grouped with those of Asian women. The Platform had been developed on the basis of national plans of action, sub-regional caucus reports, the discussions of the Pacific NGOs at their meeting in February 1994 and the information given in Working Paper 3. It listed 12 critical areas of concern, proposed measures to address each issue, and suggested what role SPC could play in each area. The issues were identified as community issues, rather than women's issues, in order to focus on partnership between women and men in meeting the goals of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies.

23. The Conference, noting that institutional and financial frameworks for action at the global, regional and national levels needed to be identified, then broke into sub-regional caucus meetings to discuss the Draft Platform.

Draft Declaration on Women and Sustainable Development

24. The Women's Development Adviser introduced Working Paper 4 Rev. 1. She explained that this was an amended version of the Draft Declaration on Women and Sustainable Development distributed to delegates as Working Paper 4. The amendments had been made to follow the format set by organisations such as the United Nations.

25. Several delegations stressed that the terminology used by UN organisations is not appropriate at the regional and caucus level and is difficult for people to understand. They also suggested that a glossary be added to all UN documents.

26. The Conference then discussed whether indigenous peoples' rights should be added to the areas of critical concern listed in the Draft Declaration and the Platform of Action and agreed that it should be included as the 13th area.

27. The Conference adopted that the following declaration on women and sustainable development:

We the women of the Pacific region,

Recalling the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women,

Recognising Principle 20 of the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 Chapter 24 of the UN Resolution which stresses women's vital role in environmental management and further calls for the full participation of women in sustainable development programmes,

Further recognising the extensive efforts being made at the regional and international level to ensure continued interest and understanding among policy-makers, ministers and non-governmental organisations, and those affected by their decisions in the area of women and sustainable development,

Noting the invaluable contributions of donor countries, multilateral agencies and non-governmental agencies in the provision of technical and financial assistance for women's programmes in the Pacific region,

Appreciating that despite the diversities and differences in our social, economic and political status as well as our cultural and religious values, the countries and territories of the Pacific share certain common concerns in regard to women and sustainable development,

Mindful also of the vital importance of a clear and consistent level of political support and a continued commitment to the effective implementation of policies and programmes for women and sustainable development,

Reaffirming the need for closer co-operation and continued mutual respect amongst countries and territories of the Pacific region, regional and international organisations, non-governmental organisations and governments in their efforts to address and solve the problems detrimental to achieving the goal of sustainable development,

Convinced that the women of the Pacific region have a unique identity which has been and continues to be shaped by the interaction of our people with our particular oceanic geographical environment and historic events. The resultant richness and diversity in culture and gender roles through out the island region is highly valued and constitutes the referent-guide for the inevitable change and development that we wish to bring about in our societies.

Recognising that we, the women of the Pacific region, know that while we share the responsibility for both the material and moral well-being of the people of the Pacific region, we have not been accorded due recognition in this regard. While we find this state of affairs unacceptable and wish to see it change we are mindful of the cost to our societies of too abrupt a change in gender roles.

Emphasising the uniqueness of our region as reflected in:

- *the central role of custom and tradition,*
- *the primacy of the family,*
- *the strong affinity of our people with the land,*
- *the unique challenges we face as a consequence of our history, demography and geography,*

Reviewing the progress made by governments of the Pacific region in implementing the recommendations and achieving the goals of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies,

Addressing ourselves to the theme of the Fourth World Conference on Women, 'Action for Equality, Development and Peace',

Acknowledging the efforts made by Pacific Island countries and territories to promote the goals of Equality, Development and Peace, and the commitment and leadership they have shown in the creation and implementation of programmes to meet these goals,

Proposing a Pacific Region Platform for Action to accelerate our full and equal participation in achieving sustainable development in the Pacific region,

Identifying the following critical areas of concern:

- *health,*
- *education and training,*
- *economic empowerment,*

- *agriculture and fishing,*
- *legal and human rights,*
- *shared decision-making,*
- *environment,*
- *culture and the family,*
- *mechanisms to promote the advancement of women,*
- *violence,*
- *peace and justice,*
- *poverty,*
- *indigenous people's rights,*

We, the women of the Pacific, adopt this Pacific Region Platform for Action as our statement of commitment towards achieving the goals of Equality, Development and Peace, and as a regional contribution to the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women.

Plenary session on the Pacific Platform for Action

28. The Conference considered amendments to the draft Pacific Platform for Action (Working Paper 5 and Working Paper 5 Rev.1) proposed by the four sub-regional caucuses and adopted the amended text which is appended as Annex 1 to this Report..

SPC Pacific Women's Resource Bureau proposed work programme 1995 – 1997

29. The Women's Development Adviser introduced Working Paper 6, the proposed work programme of the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau (PWRB) for 1995 – 1997.

30. The Post-Harvest Fisheries Adviser introduced Information Paper 1, which described the status of the Women's Fisheries Development Project.

31. The Conference:

– Noting with appreciation that the proposed work programme of the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau was closely tied to the critical areas listed in the Pacific Platform for Action,

– Noting also that its implementation required support and action at the national level,

– Highlighting that the Bureau's activities were presently hampered by lack of staff and insufficient funding,

– Emphasising the need for the Bureau to coordinate its activities closely with those of other organisations working in the field of women in development,

(a) Complimented the staff of the Bureau on their well-prepared paper;

(b) Requested the Bureau to:

(i) incorporate in the programme those priorities and additional activities identified by delegates during discussion of the paper;

(ii) produce a revised version of the programme that would incorporate, for each objective, a list of proposed activities, the time-frame for these, the inputs required and the outputs expected, in order to give donors a clear picture of what was needed;

(c) Urged the Bureau to continue networking with the women of the region through the most effective and cost-efficient means possible, particularly PEACESAT;

(d) Urged the Bureau, in implementing the proposed work programme, to collaborate closely with other sectors of the South Pacific Commission and other organisations working on women's development issues;

(e) Requested the Bureau to prepare an annual calendar of events which would enable the women of the region to take full advantage of its projects and activities.

32. The Conference further:

(a) Endorsed the proposed work programme of the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau for the period 1995 – 1997;

(b) Recommended to the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations and the Thirty-fourth South Pacific Conference that:

(i) The work programme be approved as a high-priority component of the integrated work programme of the South Pacific Commission;

(ii) Urgent consideration be given to all possible means of strengthening the staffing and budgetary allocation of the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau to enable it to implement the work programme;

(iii) The SPC Secretariat be requested to investigate all possible sources of funding for the programme;

(c) Commended the programme to the attention of donor agencies and governments for funding.

33. Finally, the Conference, noting the generous contributions in cash and in kind made by some Pacific Island countries and territories to the work of the Bureau in past years, requested member Pacific Island governments and administrations to:

(a) Study the programme with the close attention that it merited;

(b) Make every effort to provide additional funding specifically earmarked for the programme's implementation.

34. Noting that the SPC Community Education Training Centre (CETC) in Fiji currently had no Principal, the Conference expressed the hope that this post would swiftly be filled, by a Pacific Island woman.

35. The Conference, expressing strong support for the Women-in-Fisheries Development Project, recommended that:

(a) This project and funds to implement it be given priority;

(b) On request, it be extended to as many Pacific Island countries and territories as possible;

(c) It be carried out in close consultation both with the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau and with Pacific Island women's focal points and fisheries departments.

36. Noting the importance of women's role in agriculture, the Conference recommended that the SPC Secretariat develop a women-in-agriculture project.

Seminar on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

37. A consultant, Ms Mere Pulea, introduced Information Paper 2 and outlined the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. She explained that since the 1920s and the subsequent adoption of the UN Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 there had been more than 20 different International Conventions and Declarations which related specifically to women. This demonstrated the concern of the international community that women should be treated separately and their particular problems codified in order that solutions be found to remedy them. The international consensus had been built under the auspices of the United Nations or one of its specialised agencies.

38. She noted that each Convention drafted reflected international consensus on particular problems in the way women are treated. The content of these Conventions required study as statements of international agreements based on differing assumptions about women and their role in society. The international codification of issues affecting women, the standards set, the solutions adopted and the reaching of consensus at the international level was a tremendous achievement.

39. She then discussed the Convention on the Elimination on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in relation to some of the earlier Treaties affecting women. She noted that:

(a) Some provisions and principles found in earlier Treaties were repeated, incorporated or elaborated in the Convention; and

(b) Some Pacific countries were already Contracting Parties to some of these earlier Treaties.

40. She provided an analytical framework to discuss the Convention by separating those provisions that:

(a) Treated women separately through specific protective provisions;
(b) Directed measures to improve the treatment women are receiving; and
(c) Did not identify or perceive women as a separate group.

41. She indicated that the substantive provisions in the Convention contained different assumptions about women and each provision reflected a different conceptualisation of what was a fair and just status of women in society.

42. The Conference commended the consultant for her interesting and comprehensive presentation.

43. Representatives of the four sub-regional caucuses then briefly outlined their views on strategies by which countries that had not already done so could become parties to the Convention.

NGO Caucus and Government Officials' Caucus

44. The Conference heard reports by a representative of the NGO Caucus and a representative of the Government Officials' Caucus on their discussions of ways in which NGOs and government officials could collaborate in implementing the Pacific Platform for Action.

45. The Conference noted that, while working relationships between NGOs and government officials had improved, there was still room for more exchange of information and better coordination. The links that had already been forged now needed to be strengthened.

Adoption of Report

46. The Conference adopted its Report as amended.

Other business: venue for the next Conference of Pacific Women

47. The Conference accepted with acclamation an offer by the Government of the Cook Islands to host the Seventh Regional Conference of Pacific Women.

Closing

48. The Representative of Australia congratulated the Chairperson on her efficient conduct of the Conference.

49. The Chairperson thanked delegates for their unstinting support.

50. The Director of Programmes delivered closing remarks in which he congratulated delegates on their achievements.

51. The Chairperson thanked the South Pacific Commission for providing the women of the Pacific with this opportunity to develop a Pacific perspective in time for the Djakarta meeting. She expressed appreciation to the Secretariat for its assistance to the Conference.

52. The Representative of Tuvalu also thanked the Secretariat and those who had provided food for the degelates.

53. The Representative of Palau thanked New Caledonia for its welcome.

55. The Women's Development Adviser informed the Conference that the Secretariat was working with donors on arrangements for Pacific representation at the Djakarta Conference, but these had yet to be finalised.

56. The Representative of Guam closed the Conference with a prayer.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sixth Regional Conference of Pacific Women made the following recommendations:

Action taken by the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau since the Fifth Regional Conference of Pacific Women

The Conference:

(a) Urged the women of the Pacific to sustain their efforts to implement their national action plans for the well-being of all women;

(b) Recommended that the SPC Secretariat, the South Pacific Conference and donor countries and agencies give high priority to the provision of adequate funds and staff for the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau in order to enable it to fulfil its important role as a regional catalyst for the unity and development of Pacific women.

SPC Pacific Women's Resource Bureau proposed Work Programme 1995 – 1997

The Conference:

(a) Requested the Bureau to:

(i) incorporate in the programme those priorities and additional activities identified by delegates during discussion of the paper;

(ii) produce a revised version of the programme that would incorporate, for each objective, a list of proposed activities, the time-frame for these, the inputs required and the outputs expected, in order to give donors a clear picture of what was needed;

(b) Urged the Bureau to continue networking with the women of the region through the most effective and cost-efficient means possible, particularly PEACESAT;

(c) Urged the Bureau, in implementing the proposed work programme, to collaborate closely with other sectors of the South Pacific Commission and other organisations working on women's development issues;

(d) Requested the Bureau to prepare an annual calendar of events which would enable the women of the region to take full advantage of its projects and activities.

The Conference further:

(a) Endorsed the proposed work programme of the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau for the period 1995 – 1997;

(b) Recommended to the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations and the Thirty-fourth South Pacific Conference that:

(i) The work programme be approved as a high-priority component of the integrated work programme of the South Pacific Commission;

(ii) Urgent consideration be given to all possible means of strengthening the staffing and budgetary allocation of the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau to enable it to implement the work programme;

(iii) The SPC Secretariat be directed to investigate all possible sources of funding for the programme;

(c) Commended the programme to the attention of donor agencies and governments for funding.

Finally, the Conference, noting the generous contributions in cash and in kind made by some Pacific Island countries and territories to the work of the Bureau in past years, requested member Pacific Island governments and administrations to:

(a) Study the programme with the close attention that it merited;

(b) Make every effort to provide additional funding specifically earmarked for the programme's implementation.

Noting that the SPC Community Education Training Centre (CETC) in Fiji currently had no Principal, the Conference expressed the hope that this post would swiftly be filled, by a Pacific Island woman.

The Conference, expressing strong support for the Women-in-Fisheries Development Project, recommended that:

(a) This project and funds to implement it be given priority;

(b) On request, it be extended to as many Pacific Island countries and territories as possible;

(c) It be carried out in close consultation both with the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau and with Pacific Island women's focal points and fisheries departments.

Noting the importance of women's role in agriculture, the Conference recommended that the SPC Secretariat develop a women-in-agriculture project.

IV. LIST OF PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE CONFERENCE

SPC/Women 6/WP.1	Report to the Sixth Triennial Women's Conference on action taken by the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau since the Fifth Regional Conference of Pacific Women, Guam, 1991
SPC/Women 6/WP.2	Rethinking sustainable development for Pacific women towards the year 2000
SPC/Women 6/WP.3	Discussion paper: the status of South Pacific women
SPC/Women 6/WP.4	Draft Declaration on Women and Sustainable Development
SPC/Women 6/WP.5	Pacific Region Draft Platform for Action
SPC/Women 6/WP.6	Pacific Women's Resource Bureau proposed Work Programme 1995 – 1997
SPC/Women 6/WP.7	The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Outline for discussion)

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ANNEX 1

THE PACIFIC REGION DRAFT PLATFORM FOR ACTION

The Platform for Action is a regional statement developed utilizing the following reports: National reports, National prioritized Plans of Action, Sub-regional caucus reports, Pacific Women NGO Draft Program of Action for Beijing UN Conference and the Pacific Overview Paper. Each key issue identified in this Pacific Platform for Action is necessary if the goals of Equality, Sustainable Development and Peace are to be realized.

The key areas of concern have not been prioritized and following each discussion statement are listed some examples of measures which might be included in national plans of action.

The key issues are separated into 13 areas for ease of discussion, however, it must be emphasized that the key issues impact on each other:

- Health
- Education and Training
- Economic Empowerment
- Agriculture and Fishing [1]
- Legal and Human Rights
- Shared Decision Making
- Environment
- Culture and the Family
- Mechanisms to Promote the Advancement of Women
- Violence
- Peace and Justice
- Poverty
- Indigenous People's Rights

Although 'poverty' was not identified by the sub-regional caucuses as a key issue, regional data (as health, education, economic activities and data about the changing composition of the family) foreshadow that poverty is becoming a major issue through the region.

The following overarching statements concerning the Pacific Platform for Action must be noted:

1. The key issues are not just women's issues but are family issues and must be addressed in an integrated, holistic way. As a result, interventions at the 'formal' arena alone are not sufficient. Interventions must take place across a broad front, i.e. within the family, in the community, church and nation.

2. The issues encompass both societal structures and attitudes.

3. Measures to address each issue will require:

Data collection to develop databases on women's participation across all sectors, including particularly the dissaggregation of available data, the gender-oriented data in all development planning and the social as well as structural factors that affect women.

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1. 'Fishing' as used in this document has an all-encompassing sense. It includes **all** marine resources and post-harvest activities related to them.

Gender sensitization education within families, communities and national institutions for men, women and children. In particular, decision-makers must be sensitized about the crucial importance of gender sensitive planning.

Affirmative action in selected areas of critical concern.

I. STATEMENT OF MISSION

The Pacific Platform for Action focuses on the partnership necessary between women and men in order to achieve the reality of sustainable development for the region.

The issues brought forth are not just women's issues, but are community issues. As women play an integral role in Pacific society, the issues that affect women in turn affect society.

The Pacific region emphasizes that the family and family institutions are central to what development should be.

The Pacific Platform for Action aims to accelerate full and equal partnership of women and men in all spheres of life, including economic and political decision-making; to protect human rights, and address all critical areas of concern, so that Pacific women and men can work together for equality, development and peace.

Pacific Island countries and territories are called upon to undertake strategic action to implement the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women.

II. REGIONAL AND GLOBAL FRAMEWORK

Since the adoption of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women in 1985, the Pacific region has been experiencing a restructuring of political, economic, social and cultural relationships. This restructuring process has had a dramatic impact on the Pacific region and in the quest for Equality, Development and Peace.

We are beginning to experience and assert a "Pacific' identity. Although we share commonalities with the global community and with the Asian region with which we are most commonly grouped by the United Nations, our Pacific experiences are different. Our uniqueness is reflected in our different geographical, historical and cultural backgrounds, more specifically, in the central role of customs and tradition in our Island countries and territories, the primacy of the family, and the strong affinity of our people with the land. The majority of land is held in customary tenure.

Our fragile resource bases are our second point of uniqueness. Ocean, land and labour are the region's major resources with the exception of mineral rich countries such as Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and New Caledonia. The employment pattern in most countries is comprised of three sectors; a small formal sector dominated by government jobs, small family businesses, tourism enterprises, and more recently a spread of factory-type jobs brought about by the encouragement of Free Trade Zones and incentives; an increasingly visible informal sector; and agriculture. In the latter, families are the main production units, producing goods for family use, sale and for use in cultural exchanges and ceremonials.

The introduction of a cash economy, legal systems of justice and democratic forms of government are placing serious strains on the traditional ways. Pacific nations are being forced to examine the appropriateness of customary institutions and laws in the light of changing social conditions. Further disruption may also occur as nations presently in political relationships with major powers continue their quest for self-determination and self-government. The attaining of sustainable development depends heavily on the decisions we make now with regard to the management of our human, physical and cultural resources.

With these decisions come inevitable changes in the relationships between women and men and especially changes in gender roles. There lies an importance of women's and men's customary status but at the same time there is a need to concentrate on the changing roles to work toward re-establishing the partnership and power sharing relationship between female and male.

It is recognized that within the Pacific region there are unique differences between Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia; and differences still within the sub-regions. But despite these differences there exists a unique bond that defines the 'Pacific' experience. It is within these commonalities that lies the strength to make this Platform of Action a reality.

At the same time Pacific countries do not exist in isolation. Pacific peoples cannot help but be influenced by changing economic as well as ideological global paradigms.

III. CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

HEALTH

Health needs remain as the basis of a successful community, nation and world. In order to strive to meet higher aspirations of political and economic gains and freedoms, it is necessary to first meet the basic needs of health for all people. The goal of economic development is prosperity and securing the health and welfare of our people. Health is both the means to achieve sustainable development and the end result. Our objective is to increase education for better health to enable women to contribute their maximum potential at all levels from family to regional.

It is a recognized fact that the poor health situation of women in the Pacific is detrimental to the development of family, community, nation and region. The health of women is crucial not only to themselves but also to economic and social development. If women are to be actors in this regard, basic health needs must be addressed to remove any constraints to unlocking their full potential.

Throughout the Pacific, women's health varies considerably among regions, within countries, and between rural and urban areas. In general, the picture of women's health painted by the data is alarming. Major issues contributing to this situation have been identified to include high fertility rates, high infant mortality rates, low immunisation rates, short birth intervals, early childbearing, maternal mortality, lack of knowledge on hygiene, infectious disease and proper nutrition, and relinquishing the rearing of children to others. Other key issues include the availability of potable water and the need for proper management of environmental health.

The worst conditions for women are in Melanesian countries, followed by high fertility regimes in parts of Micronesia and Polynesia. High fertility rates hold a strong correlation with economic, social and health disadvantages for women and also hold consequences for natural resources and environment. Child-rearing tasks occupy a significant portion of most Pacific women's lives, thereby limiting their participation in other spheres of society. The health needs of women in the Pacific must be met if she is to continue her role as care giver, educator, and full and equal participant in her society.

Positive steps have already been taken to rectify this situation through program development on health education/ awareness-raising, nutrition education and family planning. Because of the underlying basic importance of a healthy community for a healthy nation, it is vital to continue and improve upon the programs and services already in place. At the same time, it must be stressed that health is not a women's issue alone but a family issue and must be addressed at the family level.

Strategic Objective: To ensure women's reproductive and other health needs are addressed, and adequately resourced.

Action Plan:

1. Adopt a more holistic approach to health care and wellness that focuses on people-centered needs and rights, with gender sensitive programs that involve both women and men. This must emphasize the importance of people-guided health services and clinics.

2. Revitalize and reinforce existing primary health care and encourage community-based health care services.

3. Ensure better access to health education such as user-friendly materials including translation of health materials into vernacular.

4. Ensure access of affordable health services to rural and urban women.

5. Provide technical assistance to national governments aimed at improving the quality of medical institutions and services.

6. Seek funds from available interest groups to ensure that regional countries continue to meet, share and assist one another on health issues, through conferences and other forms of appropriate services.

7. Encourage the training and employment of female health practitioners at all levels.

Regional Level

- Reduce maternal mortality rates by one-half (from 1993 levels).
- Reduce infant mortality rates by one-half (from 1989 levels).
- Reduce fertility rates by one-half (from 1993 levels).
- Reduce teenage pregnancy rates by one-half (from 1993 levels).
- Promote sexual/ reproductive health services for all women.
- Prevent the spread of AIDS in the Pacific region and to reduce by at least one-half the prevalence of other Sexually Transmitted Diseases.
- Make sex education universally available to girls and boys throughout their education.

SPC Role

- Seek funds from interest groups including donor countries to ensure that regional countries continue to meet, share information and assist one another on health concerns.

- Provide training of trainers through CETC or other appropriate agencies/programs.

- Provide an annual update on the health status of women in the Pacific.

- Facilitate the access of regional expertise for training programs, conferences and workshops on women's health concerns

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education is the key to progress. It determines access to paid employment, earning capacity, health control over fertility and most important, provides women with options and enables them to make choices.

The data confirms Pacific women's participation in formal school systems to be similar to that of women in developed nations: fewer women compared with males enter the schooling system and the attrition rate for women is higher than males; the higher the educational level the lower the women's participation; women are concentrated in the social sciences while males are predominant in the basic sciences. This pattern of

participation is partly due to financial constraints, however, participation is also determined by social and cultural beliefs about gender roles.

Illiteracy is a major problem in the Pacific. The fact that female figures are higher than males in all countries underlines that males have received favored treatment in the allocation of school places for some years. Female illiteracy figures can rise as high as 80 percent in some countries. These data emphasize the crucial importance of adult learning programs, the majority of which in the past have been carried out by NGOs.

Women must have equal access to formal education at all levels (primary, secondary and tertiary), and through all subject areas, particularly maths/science and maths/science-related subjects, and to vocational education. At the same time, functional literacy must be promoted at adult level with emphasis on health, nutrition and economic skills and legal literacy and, decision-making. Equity of provision between rural/urban areas must also be a target goal.

Strategic Objective: To give priority to the issue of illiteracy amongst women and to ensure equal access to formal and non-formal education, to intensify the availability of non-formal education and to work towards the elimination of gender bias in educational curriculum and materials.

Action Plan:

1. Research be done to identify the factors influencing women's participation in formal education systems (access and provision) and by subject areas (maths/science and maths/science-related subjects) in all sub-regions of the Pacific region. Research should be area and level specific and include longitudinal studies. For example: In Melanesian countries the initial research could target the transition period between primary and secondary school, while in Polynesian and French territories the key area of study would be transition between secondary and tertiary education. The research should include the examination of social as well as structural factors influencing women's ability to participate. Participatory research strategy should be used so that the research becomes an educational, empowering experience.

2. Data-bases of this material has begun so as to facilitate monitoring of progress in specific areas. Regular monitoring of these indicators is necessary.

3. Encourage and promote gender balance in the allocation of educational scholarships.

4. Devise special adult literacy programmes to cater for the needs of women, especially rural women.

5. Initiate a concerted regional effort to end illiteracy among females. Ensure measures to promote functional literacy with emphasis on health, nutrition and viable economic skills and opportunities for women.

Regional Level

- Gender balance should be encouraged in all training programs conducted by regional organizations.

- Increase literacy rates of females by 50% (from 1993 levels).

- Affirmative action to ensure balanced gender enrollments at every level, through scholarship quotas for women, the provision of equal and appropriate boarding facilities for women.

- Textbooks and media representations of women must be examined and modified at all levels to ensure gender balance in textbooks and other materials.

- Promotion of women educators as teachers for the formal systems, training and re-training of trainers for formal and informal settings levels (outreach potential) and parenting education for families (family literacy).

- Provide opportunities for and support adult education to strengthen the full participation of women in development.

SPC Role

- Emphasize training of trainers through CETC- curriculum changes to mirror the concerns expressed through this platform of action
- Support current in-country training of trainers courses and develop others in fields not being covered (e.g. legal literacy).
- Support development and distribution of training material between countries.
- Support the development of databases on the status of women in education.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Ocean, land and labour are the region's resources, with the exception of mineral-rich countries such as Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and New Caledonia. The emerging industrial zones and commercial sectors in French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Guam, Fiji and Papua New Guinea mean that these countries now have a wider range of employment opportunities than the smaller Pacific countries. However, the employment pattern in most countries is comprised of three sectors: a small formal sector dominated by the government jobs, small family businesses and more recently, factory-type activities, and those associated with the promotion of tourism; a small, but increasingly visible informal sector; and a large agriculture and fishing sector- agriculture and fishing activities provide for the subsistence needs of the bulk of the people of the region, the goods used in ceremonial exchanges, as well as a significant proportion of national exports.

Conventional data collected and processed do not capture the range and extent of women's work. However, recent research and small case studies are documenting the fact that Pacific women play a crucial role in each of these sectors of work. This contribution should be recognized in women's access to the knowledge and material resources necessary to fulfill and develop their roles and women's participation in decision-making processes so as to be in a position to influence the definitions of economic structures and policies. Pacific women must be empowered to gain access to productive assets, and to control and manage the gains from their labour in the interests of family, community and national development.

Formal sector

Women's participation in waged employment is increasing in all countries. However, women's overall participation is still low compared to males. There are more women in professional, technical and management positions in all countries today: women form over 45 percent of the professional and technical workers in America Samoa, Guam Nauru, New Caledonia, Palau, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu. However, women are still mainly in the 'traditional' women's occupations such as nursing, teaching, secretarial and services. Not only are women concentrated in certain jobs, women are under-represented at higher levels within an enterprise. Figures available show Pacific women to be over-represented in the lower wage earning brackets.

While labor force participation is related to educational attainment, social and cultural attitudes to women and careers are also crucial factors influencing women's participation.

Entrepreneurs

Pacific countries are marked by a proliferation of small businesses many of which are the major/ sole income earners for families. These businesses rise and fall in response to family need and market demand, which makes demarcation between entrepreneurial and informal sector difficult. For example, data show a quarter of women workers in all countries to be 'self-employed,' but it cannot be determined which would belong in the entrepreneur/ informal category.

An increasing number of Pacific women are emerging as successful entrepreneurs across a wide range of activities such as commercial farming, broiler chicken business, clothing, arts and crafts industry and food franchises. These women appear to have followed a similar path, building profits from small income-generation activities through home-based to commercial operation, and each has utilized and relied on family networks and support systems to develop their businesses. Identified needs for this group include: business courses with flexible course scheduling, flexible loan policies, feasibility studies on market outlets and day care facilities in areas where the extended family support system is no longer viable.

Informal Sector

The importance of the informal sector activities in Pacific economies is just being realized. The little available data show the predominance of women as market and street vendors, and in sales to commercial outlets such as stores and hotels. A Solomon Islands study shows a significant proportion of these informal sector activities are agriculture-related (agriculture 38 percent, food catering 21 percent, arts and crafts 15 percent and textiles 11 percent).

Strategic Objective: To increase the participation of women in the formal economy, and to recognise and support women's contribution to the informal sector.

Action Plan:

1. Collect the necessary data.
2. Provide appropriate support systems - educational, informational, financial and other.
3. Provide a system to ensure that women are educated to enable them to participate in **all** areas of the workforce.
4. Collect and have data pertaining to women accessible to assist in the development process.
5. Provide assistance for micro enterprise.
6. Provide information on financial institutions.

Regional Level

- Increase the number of women in higher wage earning brackets (i.e., professional and technical management positions) to at least 45 percent (from 1993 levels).
- Enact positive policy measures to enable women to participate freely and more effectively in commerce both as employees and entrepreneurs.
- Establish a network for women entrepreneurs.
- Strengthen human resource development through management training and capacity building courses.
- Ensure the continuity of household food security (nutrition) and sustainable development.

SPC Role

- Publish a comprehensive directory of women in the region to include: organizations, skilled women (to act as consultants) and businesswomen to promote the exchange of information.
- PWRB continue to assist in in-country training in management development.
- Develop appropriate indicators to register women's activities in development production.
- Improve the Revolving Credit Fund to be extended to all countries.
- Locate funding to assist women in their economic activities.

AGRICULTURE AND FISHING

The family is the main unit of production in the Pacific, usually practicing multi-cropping semi-subsistence farming on small parcels of land held in customary tenure. Women's agricultural work has always been crucial in these family systems, as producers of the hand-crafted goods used in ceremonial exchanges and essential household items; food for the family, particularly in Melanesian countries where women have customarily been responsible for food cropping; and crops for sale.

Despite its avowed importance, agricultural production has been declining in regional countries for some years. The neglect and degeneration of the traditional subsistence sector has been noted as has the alarming increase in food imports. This situation has implications for national food security, and has been linked to the serious increase in the incidence of malnutrition and nutrition related diseases through the region. Nor is this solely an 'urban problem' as proposed in the past: malnutrition amongst rural children was found to be 'much worse' in Vanuatu (Yates 1987), more particularly those areas remote from the sea. While the question of poor nutrition can be treated as an education rather than a production issue, the fact that people are selling the foods they should have eaten, and eating cheaper substitutes reinforces that the need for cash is determining choices.

Efforts to rejuvenate the agricultural sector include the promotion of food gardens and a search for 'niche' crops, such as kava and squash in Tonga, and ginger and pineapple in Fiji, to replace the drop in world prices for the staple goods the Pacific has specialized in in the past. Each of these changing emphases results in an increase in women's agricultural activities, particularly when occurring hand in hand with the migration of labor, schooling and a noted reluctance in the Pacific to do agricultural work.

Women's agricultural work has not been recognized in measures such as access to agricultural information and resource, or inclusion in decision-making processes. Hence national programs continue to emphasize cash cropping activities. Such planning, as for example logging enterprises, over fishing and destruction of the reef, impact on women and the family.

Strategic Objective: To recognise, promote and support women's participation in agriculture and fishing - both paid and unpaid activities - particularly to recognise women's role in food security.

Action Plan:

1. Agricultural planning systems should take account of the 'wide' range of agricultural activities necessary in our societies for family food security (including nutrition), cash cropping and production of handicrafts.

2. Data on women's activities should be collected and surveys made of needs to support these activities. Intra-household studies of the family unit workings and factors affecting this should be carried out.

3. Appropriate agricultural support systems, including where appropriate extension programmes for women, should be established.

4. Institute appropriate training programmes.

Regional Level

- Regional programs should support the Women in Agriculture lobby
- Increase financial support to the Women and Fishing Network
- Mainstream gender issues through all agricultural and fisheries planning.

SPC Role

- Coordinate with international institutions to increase opportunities/ funding for women in agriculture and/ or fishing.

- Establish a network of women in agriculture and fishing in the region to encourage the exchange of information.
- Provide training in relevant skills to support development activities (i.e., marketing skills, management and basic accounting).
- Gender sensitization in all SPC programs and services.

LEGAL RIGHTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The human rights of Pacific peoples are deeply enshrined in the Constitutions and legislation of Pacific Island countries and territories. However, institutional barriers and social values often prevent women from gaining full protection from the legal system or exercising their rights. As a result, not all women enjoy the same right of choice and security in marriage; the right to land, property and inheritance; reproductive rights; the right to education and employment; and the right to their individual identities. Violence against women in all its forms, such as rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence, incest, pornography; stress, emotional abuse or verbal abuse, are all violations which deny women their basic human rights.

Social structures often reinforce biased attitudes in applying the law and laws pertaining to women are slow to be implemented without continued public pressure. New legislation must be made to address other critical areas of women's issues. Cultural beliefs and traditions that discriminate against women, while officially discredited, continue to flourish at grass-roots level and old laws are not repealed to make way for new legislation. Personal, customary and religious law often conflict with civil law and government policies and this conflict mainly affects women adversely. Most countries lack empirical data on the law and how it functions in society, which is crucial for any change in the legal system.

Legal literacy gives women choices and options which they may not enjoy now. Many Pacific women are unaware of their legal rights. A comprehensive regional study of the legal systems in eleven Pacific nations is underway. A guideline set of strategies for women on how and where women can intervene to counter discriminatory practices which will accompany this, is just a beginning to the process of legal literacy for women.

Strategic Objective: To increase community awareness of the importance of human rights and legal rights, in particular of women, and to urge policy makers to ratify and practise the CEDAW Conventions.

Action Plan

1. Legislative and policy reviews to incorporate equal opportunities for women.
2. Education to understand the CEDAW convention should be promoted throughout rural as well as urban areas.

Regional Level

- Create a Pacific Human Rights Charter.
- Increase legal literacy rates for women.
- Establish awareness programs on legal literacy, leading to the formulation of legislation for the elimination of discrimination against women.

SPC Role

- Develop Information, Education and Communication materials to promote a basic understanding of legal rights.
- Identify and provide access to regional expertise in the area of legal and human rights.

SHARED DECISION-MAKING

Women's input into decision-making is imperative for appropriate, sustainable development for families, communities and Pacific Island countries and territories. More women are taking positive steps in the political arena and assuming roles in the technical and professional arenas. But women are vastly under-represented in government and community decision-making bodies, and in Boards, Trade Unions, etc. Only Guam has achieved the target set by the Economic and Social Council of 30 percent in decision-making levels (government) by 1995. The decision-making patterns observed within families, in these changing times, must also be examined (see Culture and Family).

Many constraints to women's entry into public politics are structural. However, cultural and religious constraints also influence women's full participation in the formal and informal decision-making bodies.

There is an immediate need for women in elected and non-elected offices at all levels of decision-making positions in the interests of equity and balanced planning. Women's participation may influence and transform systems to counter the effects of wars, militarism, poverty, misallocation of resources, environmental degradation, sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination.

Strategic Objective: To promote and encourage the full participation of women in family, political and public decision-making.

Action Plan:

1. Education about, and the promotion of CEDAW through community and nation.

2. Legal literacy and democracy education, (including familiarization with the parties and platforms) so as to mobilize women to participate and vote in elections. Thus to use the power of women's vote to influence policy for peaceful, equitable, democratic goals.

3. Education in basic political and leadership skills and encouraging and supporting women's efforts to aspire to decision-making positions in the formal and informal arenas.

4. Promotion of women in elective political offices and appointive decision-making positions.

5. Gender sensitization programs which enable people to consider aspects of their culture and tradition which do not treat girls and boys, men and women as equals.

6. Access to simplified legal information in the vernacular.

Regional Level

- Attain the 30 percent target set by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for women in decision-making levels of government.

- Leadership development and training for women for government and community positions.

SPC Role

- Regional courses on CEDAW.
- CEDAW monitoring.
- Facilitate the access of regional experts for training programs, conferences and workshops on decision-making for women.
- Facilitate networking between/among women leaders past and present.

ENVIRONMENT

In the Pacific region, the size of small island developing States and the fact that they are coastal entities means that the environment and coastal management are interrelated and this calls for integrated management and protection of our narrow resource base.

Threats to our environment include the long-term effects of nuclear testing by the French, British and United States Governments, the incineration of stockpiles of chemical weapons by the United States Government in Kalama Island (Johnston Atoll) and the passage of plutonium through our waters by the Japanese Government. Further threats include the depletion of our forests and marine resources by large-scale logging and mining developments as well as drift-net fishing by the Japanese and United States Governments.

[THE REPRESENTATIVES OF FRANCE, FRENCH POLYNESIA, NEW CALEDONIA AND WALLIS AND FUTUNA EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ON THE ABOVE PARAGRAPH]

Pacific women have a vital role in our region's environmental management and development. Their participation is essential to achieving sustainable development, resource management, energy conservation, reusing and recycling; and safeguarding the well-being of our limited land and coastal resource for future generations.

Strategic Objective: To recognise and utilise the critical role and knowledge of women in environmental management and development, and to recognise and address the long-term environmental effects and threats of military and mining-related activities.

Action Plan:

1. Increase awareness and act in defense of the environment.

2. Recognize and increase women's participation in environmental management and development.

3. Formulate policies to address the issues of the environmental impact of the military related and mining activities.

Regional Level

- Ensure mining and logging operations do not have adverse effects on the community and environment.

- Make known the dangers that international agreements have for fishing in order to preserve the fisheries resources of the Pacific.

- Increase pressure at all levels for the cessation of nuclear testing and disposal, the movement of nuclear material, passage of nuclear-powered vessels or any other related activity endangering the human and natural environments.

- Make adequate arrangements for safe waste disposal and the re-use and recycling of waste at all levels of production.

- Ensure that the Pacific is not used as a dumping ground for all waste and poor quality food and medicines.

- Support the development of safe and environmentally sound sources of energy such as solar and wind power

- Include environmental education programs in the curricula of all formal and non-formal educational institutions.

SPC Role

- Organize a workshop on 'Disposable wastes'
- Organize a workshop on the dangers of nuclear energy.
- Identify and provide access to regional expertise on environmental issues.

CULTURE AND THE FAMILY

The uniqueness of our region is reflected in the central role of custom and tradition, the primacy of the 'family' as an institution and the strong affinity of our people with the land. The enduring strength of the customary ways and efforts to incorporate these onto a 'development' goal is evident in all countries. The family, which is the crucial unit for the development of Pacific nations, is being faced with changes and influence which threaten its very existence, as for example the increase in solo parent households. The extended family unit is very important in the Pacific and efforts must be make to reinforce the family structure providing as it does the social, cultural and economic support systems for the individual. At the same time, men and women should work to promote egalitarianism within the family structure- the idea of shared male/female roles, responsibility and status. They both must ensure that the family is not a site for the abuse of women and/or children, be this social, economic, verbal or physical abuse.
Women, families and communities must carefully examine the prevailing customary ways to see how these are impacting on women, family and community, be this in education, health, employment, decision making or customary laws for example. It is necessary to decide which practices are 'central' to culture and national identity, and therefore should be positively promoted and which practices could be discarded. In undertaking this exercise it must be stressed that many of the 'traditional' ways have already been modified considerably in recent years, which raises the question as to why these practices are being upheld.

Strategic Objective: To encourage the preservation of customary cultural values and traditions consistent with the need to ensure gender equality. To ensure that policy makers address the growing concern to recognise the needs of senior citizens in the context of the breakdown of traditional family support structure.

Action Plan:

1. The preservation of customary cultural values and tradition preserving practices consistent with change and equality.

2. Research, record and document oral traditions and traditional knowledge systems used by traditional leaders and elders.

3. The examination of factors influencing the transition, arising from cultural changes and influences in these societies.

4. To support and facilitate the families' transition from traditional to changing lifestyles.

5. To share information on the changing and evolving roles within the families.

6. To provide programmes to address the needs of senior citizens.

Regional Level

- CEDAW: examination, particularly the sections pertaining to culture, the family, traditions and religion and how these relate to Pacific cultural values.

- Continue to increase awareness; appropriate networking and information dissemination.

SPC Role

- Provide a workshop concentrating on promoting egalitarianism within the family structure.
- Organise seminars to evaluate CEDAW.
- Assist in the research and documentation of tradition and culture.
- To collaborate and network with regional agencies in supporting the existing regional initiatives.

MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

The past three years have witnessed the establishment of women's ministries/ bureaus in 22 countries and general awareness raising through all levels of government has proceeded apace through the region. National women's departments and non-government organisations are fast becoming the focal points for information and decision-making about women and should provide feedback and share information after attending regional international workshops, seminars and conference. Each country could promote and encourage national caucus and issues discussed at sub-regional levels, to ensure continuity. Such issues/ plans of action should complement national plans.

At the same time, women's bureaus are charged with the task of mainstreaming women's concerns into public policies and programs. In order to do this it is necessary to establish communication channels for women's input into these nation and community decision-making bodies. Bureaus have established informal communication channels, largely dependent on friendship networks. However, formal recognized channels must be instituted in order to be assured of the continuation of input by right. Women's input through all planning sectors such as agriculture, environment and public works, should ensure that there is due regard for the impact of these policies on women and the family.

These bureaus must be strengthened through the allocation of resources- human and financial.

Strategic Objective: To develop and strengthen appropriate mechanisms that will continue to enhance the advancement of women at all levels.

Action Plan:

1. Governments should strengthen the allocation of financial and human resources to women's bureaus/ offices to promote the bureaus functioning.

2. Governments should identify formal avenues by which women's bureaus can input into decision-making process through national/ community other levels. Once identified, these must be observed.

3. Women must recognize, acknowledge and support women's bureaus/offices/focal points.

4. Increase the awareness of women of existing institutional decision-making processes at national and regional levels.

Regional level

- Continue to support national bodies as they are at different rates of progress

- Caucus strengthening. Regional unity and information networking. As national bureaus strengthen, regional bureaus should be able to focus attention on regional issues.

- Liaison role between national bodies through to the Caucus level.

SPC Role

- Provide information from international bodies through to the sub-regional and local bodies. Synchronization of role.

- Draw together the four sub-regional caucuses. Liaison work at that level.
- Strengthen the PWRB's liaison role.
- Seek funding from donor countries to strengthen the mechanisms to promote the advancement of women in the Pacific.
- Assist in strengthening of national machinery for women.
- Assist in the establishment of data bases and networking for women's focal points and NGOs at country level.

VIOLENCE

Women in the Pacific share a common problem with others which transcends the bounds of class, color and culture. That problem is violence. Much, if not most of the violence in the Pacific is directed against women and within the family. Violence may take the form of physical, sexual and psychological abuse and includes incest, sexual harassment, rape and pornography. Because of attitudinal or cultural stigmas, the violence has been largely invisible, under-reported, unrecorded and, to a certain extent, appears to be accepted as the norm.

Violence often starts in the home but is an issue that affects not only families but also communities, nations and regions. Violence is a community problem and not just a woman's problem. Violence is a serious impediment to women's development and must be viewed as a human rights issue. The community, as a whole, should be responsible for taking steps toward an end to violence.

Women and men must be mobilized to eliminate violence in all its forms. Effective public measures must be taken to address both the causes and consequences of violence. The focus must not be solely male oriented, but include the education of women and children, family and community, and through formal and non-formal institutions.

Strategic Objective: To create increased awareness that violence is both a crime and a violation of women's human rights, to develop appropriate public measures to eliminate violence and mechanisms to ensure that these measures are enforced.

Action Plan:

1. Make the elimination of domestic violence a national priority.
2. Establish an integrated data collection on violence against women.
3. Promotion of legislation and enforcement policies aimed at eliminating domestic violence and encouraging women's ministries to take a more proactive role in this area.

Regional Level

- Monitor and follow-up to policies and practices to address discrimination against women, sexual harassment and other gender-based violence.
- Reevaluate educational curricula with a view to changing current gender perspectives and shift emphasis from war and violence to more peaceful aspects of civilization.
- Investigate the breakdown of traditional value systems which may have sanctioned acts of violence but at the same time controlled these acts of violence.

SPC Role

- Institute a program to raise awareness of CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) with a view to obtaining ratification by all Pacific island countries.

- Seek and increase funding to support services for victims of violence including basic shelter, food medical, legal and psychological assistance.

PEACE AND JUSTICE

Within the Pacific region, there exists uniqueness in culture, values, religion and ethnicity. It is within these differences that we celebrate the diversity of the Pacific. To ensure forward progress of the region, respect for one another is essential. Inter-relationships and interactions that foster tolerance, understanding and acceptance are the basis of peace.

Women and men must join together to increase conflict resolution for the Pacific region. They must serve as formal and informal educators in bringing up young people in an atmosphere of compassion, tolerance, and mutual concern and trust.

Strategic Objective: To promote conditions for sustainable peace in the family, the community and society at large.

Action Plan:

1. There is a need to find a blend of tradition and democracy and manage the conflict and change in our societies.

Regional Level

- Include peace/education/conflict resolution in the curricula of all formal and non-formal educational institutions.

- Initiate a regional Pacific charter on human rights and zone of peace.

POVERTY

In the available data used to prepare the Pacific Platform for Action, poverty as an issue in and of itself was not presented as a critical area of concern in our region. This is not to say that poverty does not exist. Indirect indicators do show that poverty will become an issue of higher priority in the near future.

Unemployment is difficult to define or measure in any society, but particularly for semi-subsistence economies. Male female unemployment figures are roughly equal through Micronesian countries. Fiji comparative figures show a decrease in male but increasing female unemployment. In all countries females are more likely to be unemployed than males.

Poverty is experienced by household. Perhaps the main indicator of this is in the rise of female-headed households. There is a close association between female head ship and low incomes. As the traditional and cultural means of income disintegrate, women have come to bear the brunt of the burden for managing food security, child-rearing, family health and household management. Women-headed households in the Pacific may be shielded from some of the worse effects associated with this status because kinship systems may enable women to cope 'better' with poverty. However, customary mechanisms may not be too effective today as these are being shaped by changing social conditions.

In the Pacific region the percentage of households headed by a woman is lower than the world average of one-third. Rates are highest in Micronesian countries (Guam, Northern Marianna Islands and Palau with

roughly one-fifth), and urban figures are higher than for rural areas, except in the Solomon Islands which shows a marked preponderance in the rural sector.

Public policies and private initiatives that address women's skills and potential by providing the necessary resources and opportunities will lead to equitable economic growth.

Strategic Objective: To recognise the increasing incidence of poverty in the Pacific, particularly as it relates to female-headed households, and to promote means to address the root causes of this growing problem.

Action Plan:

1. Research and data to access poverty levels by region and by country.
2. Develop appropriate indicators.
3. Refer also to measures in 'Economic Empowerment'.
4. Support women's multiple roles
5. Promote equitable employment opportunities for both men and women.
6. Provide assistance and opportunities for men and women to actively pursue income-generating activities in the communities.

Regional Level

- Strengthen institutional support to women's focal points, bureaus and offices to provide access and service to women, increasing their acquisition of financial and technical resources to promote income generating opportunities for women.

- Develop specific allocation and long-term secured funding for women's development programs.

- Introduce affirmative action legislation for promoting women's participation in professional employment arenas.

- Develop public physical infrastructure especially water supplies, sewage and transport systems because these directly help women reduce their domestic chores.

SPC Role

- Provide programs and facilities to encourage the support of market development initiatives that will increase women's income-earning capabilities in paid-employment and self-employment ventures

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

The women of the Pacific Island countries and territories confirm their support to the principles enshrined in the several instruments of the UN Rights of Indigenous People, related Declarations and Conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CED) and the Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Populations (107).

Recognising that there exists within the Pacific region the denial of rights to indigenous people, international and regional development agencies and governments should commit financial and other resources to education, training and health services for indigenous people and their communities to develop their capacities to achieve their sustainable self-development, and to contribute to and participate in sustainable and equitable development at the national level. Particular attention should be given to strengthening the role of indigenous women.

Strategic Objectives: To ensure that the identity and rights of indigenous peoples, particularly the rights of women, are upheld in the development process.

Action Plan:

1. International development agencies and Governments to commit financial and other resources to education and training for indigenous people and their communities to develop their capacities to achieve sustainable self-development.

2. Information exchanges through networks of indigenous groups on indigenous-related issues need to take place in the Pacific and beyond the region.

3. Hold round table meetings of Pacific indigenous women on issues of concern

Regional Level

- To promote indigenous identity through cultural exchanges and documentation of arts; dance; music, etc.

- Land tenure systems to be strengthened and monitored.