

REGIONAL WORKING GROUP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FAMILY PROTECTION/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEGISLATION (RWG)

4th ANNUAL MEETING

OUTCOMES DOCUMENT (Endorsed July 20, 2023)

1. INTRODUCTION

a. Background

The 4th Annual Meeting of the Regional Working Group on the Implementation of Family Protection/Domestic Violence (FP/DV) Legislation (RWG) was convened by the Human Rights and Social Development (HRSD) Division of the Pacific Community (SPC), from July 17-21, 2023, at Heritage Park Hotel, Honiara, Solomon Islands. The convening commenced with two days of closed meetings for each sub-committee of the RWG, namely, the Advisory Committee/Councils Sub-committee, the Counselling Sub-committee and the Data Collection and Monitoring and Evaluation Sub-committee, from July 17-18. These were followed by the main RWG meeting from July 19-20 and a learning visit to two SAFENET members on July 21.

The meeting was attended in person by members and alternate members from the national governments of the Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Nauru, Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) and Tuvalu. The member and alternate member from Pohnpei State Government of FSM, joined remotely from their country hub¹.

The meeting was chaired by Samoa (the Chair), with support from Nauru (the Deputy Chair) and assisted by SPC HRSD as the RWG Secretariat (the Secretariat).

b. Objectives

The objectives of the meeting were to reach consensus on:

- a. Specific regional priority areas for implementation in the next phase of the RWG work plan.
- b. Action-oriented recommendations as key actions for the next annual year.
- c. Vote for the new Deputy Chair of the RWG.
- d. Actions for the RWG to take forward to ensure that its work more effectively supports, complements or is incorporated into international human rights treaties², recent gender

¹ Vanuatu and Kosrae State (FSM) did not attend the 4th Annual Meeting of the RWG.

² Including the Convention on the Rights of Children, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

equality developments in the Pacific³ .

2. SUMMARY OF MEETING KEY ISSUES AND AGREEMENTS

The Regional Working Group:

- e. Acknowledges Samoa and Nauru for their leadership role as Chair and Deputy Chair, respectively, of the RWG.
- f. Notes and thanks Samoa for their leadership as Chair of the RWG, congratulates Nauru as the new Chair and Solomon Islands as the Deputy Chair, respectively.
- g. Acknowledges the generous support of RWG member governments to the work of the RWG, and the New Zealand Government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) for the direct funding of the 4th Annual Meeting of the RWG.
- h. Acknowledges the participation of RWG countries and states, including their presentations, discussions, and the key recommendations from the sub-committee meetings.
- i. Acknowledges the presentation from Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP), that contributed immensely to ongoing discussions and provided invaluable insights into strengthening the implementation of FP/DV legislation.
- j. Recognises the continued support and commitment of development partners and CROP agencies and reaffirms the need for equitable support and collaboration for countries in the implementation of FP/DV legislation.
- k. Commits to accelerate coordination and strengthen multi-sectoral partnership between government, civil society organisations, faith-based organisations, development partners, and the private sector to ensure inclusivity in the design, implementation and review of legislation, prevention, response, and recovery policies, plans and programmes.
- l. Commits to progressing regional gender equality commitments, relating to domestic violence⁴.
- m. Requests the Secretariat to work closely with RWG members to provide technical and funding support for implementing and/or review of national/sub-national legislation and support the implementation of recommendations.
- n. Acknowledges and welcomes the work of the Technical Taskforce⁵ to develop the Regional GBV/VAWG Counselling Framework, taking into account new and emerging issues, that will impact GBV/VAWG counselling service provision.

³ Including the broader regional development priority/agenda of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, the 14th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women, the Pacific Platform for Action, the work to revitalize of the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration, the work of the Pacific Islands Forum Women Leaders, the inclusion of gender equality as an agenda item at the 52nd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting scheduled for 2023, and the work under the Pacific Women Lead Programme.

⁴ Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration and the 14th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women.

⁵ Members of the Technical Taskforce include: Ministry of Internal Affairs (Cook Islands Government), Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation (Fiji Government), Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (Solomon Islands Government), Ministry of Women's and Social Development Affairs (Nauru Government), Ministry of Health, Social Welfare, and Gender Affairs (Government of Tuvalu), Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC), Family Support Centre (FSC), Kiribati Women and Children Support Centre (KWCSC), Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC), Tonga Women and Children Crisis Centre (TWNCC), UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office, and the Pacific Women Lead and RWG Secretariat at the Pacific Community (SPC)

The Regional Working Group agrees to:

- o. Refine and clarify a clear pathway of its priority focus, to address issues of implementation of DV/FP legislation.
- p. Redefine the meaning of domestic/ family violence within the context of the RWG mandate and in relation to gender-based violence outside the family unit.
- q. Amend the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the RWG. Membership is to be inclusive of Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP) Secretariat as a permanent observer. Any other observers to the meetings of the RWG will be by invitation only, and with the consensus of the RWG. The amended ToR will be circulated by the Secretariat to members for endorsement, within one month.
- r. Revisit and review the scope and appropriateness of the three priorities areas in relation to the mandate of RWG. Assess if the priorities are tangible, taking into account new and emerging issues, fit for purpose and contextualised.

The Secretariat will:

- s. Assist to provide/coordinate technical and funding support to scope for/establish offices for family violence prevention within member governments, as/when requested by members.
- t. Assist member countries/states by mobilising and coordinating funding support for the implementation of FP/DV legislation including requirements for data collection, monitoring and evaluation. This is subject to, but not limited to developing a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework. This includes functional systems of data collection, storage, analysis and reporting of both survivors/victims and perpetrators of violence, service providers, etc. of all family protection/domestic legislation.
- u. Coordinate opportunities for professional development for member countries/states especially its institutions, that deal with family violence and support survivors/victims and perpetrators.
- v. Assist member countries/states to provide/coordinate opportunities to strengthen/establish safe and accessible shelters to survivors/victims of family violence.
- w. Assist member countries/states to report on the needs, issues, and challenges on implementation of FP/DV legislation within their respective countries/states and support the Advisory Committee/Councils Sub-committee to draft an action plan based on those to be tabled in the 5th Annual meeting of the RWG.
- x. Develop a concept (including a communications and visibility component) for the next phase of the RWG project, to ensure resourcing for its commitments.

3. COMMITMENTS

The following key agreements share the commitments by the RWG members, over the next one-year period, and recognise that its implementation, monitoring, and review will be prioritised within country contexts. This will be led by the respective sub-committees, with the support of the Secretariat.

a. Priority area 1: Counselling

The Regional Working Group will:

- i. Socialise the draft Gender-Based Violence Regional Counselling Framework with member countries utilising planned key national events. RWG members will actively support this process.
- ii. Endorse the draft Gender-Based Violence Regional Counselling Framework by the 5th Annual Meeting of the RWG.
- iii. Convene its next Counselling Sub-committee meeting in Tuvalu and affirm the Tuvalu Government's role as the Chair of the Counselling Sub-committee.

b. Priority area 2: Advisory Committees/Councils

The Regional Working Group will:

- i. Strengthen multisectoral coordination with FP/DV stakeholders to ensure consistent, timely and quality holistic service provision for survivors/victims. Additionally, it commits to strengthening coordination with development partners to strengthen the RWG's assistance to legal and justice services for survivors/victims.
- ii. Convene a plenary meeting for member countries/states, in 2023, with the intention of obtaining reports on their respective status in relation to the mandate of the Advisory Committee/Councils sub-committee. The RWG also affirms the FSM National Government as the Chair of the Advisory Committee/Councils Sub-committee. The sub-committee will conduct its next meeting in FSM in 2024.
- iii. Commence scoping on the development of an action plan for the RWG on the implementation of FP/DV legislation. Scoping will capture the needs and challenges for RWG members on the implementation of their legislation and will inform the plan. The plan will set out the framework to assist, guide and complement the various existing governance structures, national actions and coordination in-country.

c. Priority Area 3: Data Collection & Monitoring and Evaluation

The Regional Working Group will:

- i. Conduct a situational analysis and draft a report to inform the development of a regional framework on data collection and monitoring and evaluation for FP/DV legislation.
- ii. Support the drafting of a ToR together with development partners to conduct prevalence studies on Violence Against Women in Pacific Island Countries, under the WHO Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women framework.
- iii. Support the ongoing professional development of government officials responsible for data collection and monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of FP/DV legislation.