



Economic empowerment of Pacific Women
L'émancipation économique des Océaniennes

Thirteenth Triennial Conference of Pacific Women

and

Sixth Meeting of Pacific Ministers for Women

2–5 October 2017, Suva, Fiji

Recommendations and outcomes

Endorsed on 5 October 2017



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique

PREAMBLE

1. The 13th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women, hosted by the Pacific Community (SPC), was held from 2 to 5 October 2017 in Suva, Fiji. The theme of the Conference was '**economic empowerment of Pacific women**'.
2. Meeting participants included representatives of 20 SPC member countries and territories – American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tuvalu, United States of America, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna – and civil society and academic institutions, CROP agencies,¹ and international and regional non-governmental and development partner organisations.
3. The Conference reaffirmed the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED), the Revised Pacific Platform for Action on the advancement of women and gender equality (RPPA), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of its subsequent reviews, which laid the foundation for the implementation of the S.A.M.O.A Pathway and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
4. The Conference reiterated that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provide an international legal framework and a comprehensive set of measures for realising gender equality, equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and empowerment of all women and girls of all diversities,² including their economic empowerment, throughout their lives.
5. The Conference recognised that gender equality is a prerequisite for the full achievement of the objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, the Pacific Youth Development Framework, the Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Moana Declaration and the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific.
6. The conference recognised the right of persons with disabilities, including women, to work on an equal basis with others. This includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work, freely chosen or accepted, in a labour market and work environment that is open, safe, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities, and to safeguard and promote the realisation of the right to work.
7. The Conference recognised the importance of the International Labour Organization (ILO) standards related to women's right to work and rights at work, which are critical for women's economic empowerment, and recalled the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Decent Work Agenda.
8. The Conference welcomed the regional overview of the current status of economic empowerment of Pacific women, which shows that women's work, including unpaid work, is fundamental in building Pacific

¹ Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific.

² To clarify the use of women and girls of all diversities, the meeting took guidance from CEDAW Article 1 and suggested the following wording. For the purposes of the present convention, the term 'discrimination against women' shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

economies, sustainable development and resilience, and emphasises key drivers of their economic empowerment.

9. The Conference and the Ministers' Meeting provided an opportunity to review and adopt the *Pacific Platform for action for gender equality and women's human rights 2018–2030*.

10. The *Pacific Platform for Action (PPA) 2018–2030* proposes measures to accelerate implementation of gender equality commitments made by Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) at the global, regional and national level, in particular the PLGED. The PPA has five strategic objectives:

- ❖ Enhance the generation of knowledge to inform policies and decision-making, and support advocacy for gender equality
- ❖ Mainstream gender across all legislation, policies, programmes and services delivered by government, CROP agencies and civil society organisations (CSOs)
- ❖ Develop and strengthen effective partnerships between governments, institutions, CSOs, the private sector and faith-based organisations (FBOs), so that women and men of all ages across all levels of society are empowered as individuals and communities to prevent violence and all forms of discrimination
- ❖ Mobilise resources and sustain investment to advance gender equality
- ❖ Establish mechanisms and systems to make stakeholders accountable for implementing commitments to gender equality and the human rights of all women and girls

11. The Conference made recommendations to achieve economic empowerment of Pacific women in line with the PPA's strategic objectives and the priority areas of the PLGED.

12. The Conference recognised the many forms of discrimination and adversity that women experience at different stages of their lives. Acknowledging that women's economic empowerment depends on the links between their social, economic and environmental conditions, the Conference stressed the importance of adopting a combination of measures, taking a multi-sector and integrated approach.

13. The Conference stressed that women's economic empowerment requires strong public–private partnerships and that the private sector has a responsibility to implement the principles of decent work, including a social responsibility to promote gender equality and support women's economic empowerment.

14. The Conference acknowledged the valuable role of CSOs, in particular women's human rights organisations, in promoting gender equality, human rights including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and women's leadership, and supporting measures to eliminate gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination against women and girls of all diversities.

15. Acknowledging that peace and security are preconditions for women's economic empowerment and resilience, the Conference called for the development and implementation of gender-responsive policies and programmes, where appropriate, to address the inter-generational effects of nuclear testing, including on women's health and other areas. The conference noted the forthcoming Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Enhance the generation of knowledge to inform policies and decision-making, and support advocacy for women's economic empowerment

16. Governments, in partnership with academics, CSOs, FBOs and the private sector, and with the support of CROP agencies and development partners, need to collect, analyse and use data disaggregated by sex, age and disability on a regular basis and conduct gender analysis to better understand and track progress of women's economic empowerment and identify economic opportunities for women, in all their diversities and throughout their life cycle, including Indigenous women and those from ethnic minorities, urban poor, those living in rural and remote areas, young women, women with disabilities, and lesbian and bisexual women.

The Conference:

17. Acknowledged ongoing work done at the regional and national level to identify and expand promising practices to support women's economic empowerment.

18. Called for PICTs to strengthen the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of accessible statistical data on women's economic empowerment in the region and for CROP agencies and development partners to continue providing technical assistance and support.

19. Recognised the need for effective partnerships between academics, governments, CROP agencies, development partners and the private sector to conduct studies, gender analysis and participatory research to generate knowledge on:

- a) women's contribution to economies, especially in the informal sector, including cultural industries
- b) unpaid work and care, including household and community-related activities
- c) conditions for work and activities in the informal and formal sectors, to inform legislation and policies
- d) causes of pay disparity between women and men from different segments of the population, and potential measures to ensure women of all diversities receive equal pay for work of equal value
- e) effective measures to support the resilience of women's economic activities in the context of climate change and disaster impacts
- f) income-generating activities, including development of value chains, employment, and livelihood opportunities for women, especially for women with disabilities, young women, rural women, and lesbian and bisexual women
- g) causes and social and economic impacts of gender-based violence, and strategic approaches to address harmful social norms
- h) examples of practices in the Pacific region that contribute to the redistribution of unpaid work and care
- i) impacts – both positive and negative – of legislation and policies, including macroeconomic policies, structural reforms and aid and trade agreements, on women's productive assets and economic empowerment

- j) economic models and measures adapted to the Pacific context that protect traditional knowledge and practices and communal property rights, respect the human rights of women of all diversities, and acknowledge the benefits of technological and social innovations.

Mainstream gender across all legislation, policies, programmes and services delivered by governments, CROP agencies and CSOs

20. Women's economic empowerment must be supported by all sectors, including information and communication technology (ICT), education, finance, justice, public service, water, agriculture, marine resources and infrastructure, and by sub-national and local government and the private sector. Central and local governments, with the assistance of CSOs, FBOs, CROP agencies and development partners, are encouraged to mainstream gender across their policies, legislation, programmes and services.

The Conference:

- 21. Urged governments to adopt, review, and implement legislative measures to:
 - a) reform discriminatory legislative and regulatory frameworks to promote gender equality and women's rights to decent work and employment, equal pay, decent living wages, timely and accessible justice, freedom and personal safety, sexual and reproductive health, property, inheritance and citizenship
 - b) ensure appropriate social protection measures for poor women and their dependants that provide cash and in-kind transfers, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks and enhance the social status and rights of marginalised people
 - c) protect migrant workers and the human rights and social protection of women migrant workers
 - d) increase the number of women in national and sub-national parliaments and legislatures, in customary institutions and in senior decision-making positions in government
 - e) address all forms of sexual and gender-based violence in all areas of life
 - f) ensure access to SRHR is available to all people, with increased support and protection for girls and young women, including enhancing access to education and appropriate resourcing, human and financial.
- 22. Called on the public and private sectors to support the development of women's productive assets and capacities by:
 - a) reviewing early childhood, primary and secondary education curricula, teacher education and student assessment to promote and guarantee gender equality and human rights and challenge gender stereotyping and similar harmful norms
 - b) promoting lifelong learning for all women, of all diversities, and encouraging and supporting young women to develop skills in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and economics, and gain qualifications that enhance their employment prospects
 - c) improving the educational environment for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to attract women, young women and girls into technical fields and apprenticeships
 - d) adopting measures to promote and guarantee that all places of learning and work are safe places for women, young women and girls of all diversities

- e) providing incentives for the private, not-for-profit and state sectors to train and employ women
- f) taking measures to ensure women with disabilities have access to decent work in the public and private sectors, and that work environments are inclusive of, and accessible to, all persons with disabilities
- g) designing programmes and services that support women's roles as managers and custodians of natural resources in sectors including agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and mining
- h) promoting financial and economic literacy programmes and access to financial services
- i) improving delivery of gender-responsive programmes
- j) ensuring measures for climate change adaptation and disaster risk management address the needs of cultural industries, small-scale agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture
- k) improving the provision of basic services and infrastructure, such as water, sanitation and energy, to alleviate the burden of women's unpaid care work
- l) providing high-quality, accessible and affordable childcare
- m) implementing mechanisms to support gender mainstreaming processes across central, sub-national and local government programmes and services
- n) increasing women's access to ICT and digital services, including for women with disabilities and women living in remote areas
- o) supporting government and regional organisations to undertake and implement gender-responsive budgeting.

23. Called on the public and private sectors to improve working conditions for women by:

- a. adopting gender and social inclusion policies
- b. supporting enterprises to introduce and strengthen violence and harassment policies and conduct gender audits to identify measures to ensure gender equality at all levels, establish respectful and safe workplace environments for women and men, and enable reconciliation of work and family responsibilities
- c. removing biases and stereotypes in human resource policies, adopting practices to reduce gender gaps in hiring, promotion and pay, and establishing accountability mechanisms including appropriate protocols for pay equity processes, with objective criteria for initial pay and promotion, and regular reviews of pay equity
- d. improving infrastructure and governance of market places to create inclusive and gender-responsive environments
- e. implementing training, mentorship, internship, apprenticeship and sponsorship programmes to enable female employees to develop their skills
- f. ensuring that structural reforms, budgets, economic policies, taxation, aid arrangements and trade agreements do not disadvantage women
- g. introducing appropriate gender equity measures in public procurement to encourage women-led businesses in the formal and informal sector to bid on government tenders, or providing assistance to

women-owned enterprises, such as setting mandatory procurement targets and subcontracting goals in supply chains.

24. Called on the public and private sectors, CSOs, FBOs, CROP agencies and development partners to adopt measures to promote gender equality in all areas of life by:

- a) setting appropriate targets for the representation of women, men and marginalised groups across the key decision-making areas noted in the PLGED, and considering adopting temporary special measures, where appropriate, to increase women's representation in legislatures
- b) encouraging women's participation and leadership in trades unions, organisations for informal workers, employers' and business organisations and professional associations
- c) promoting women's influence and agency by supporting the capacity of special interest groups, such as market vendors, to develop their bargaining power in economic areas.

Develop and strengthen effective partnerships between government institutions, academics, CSOs, FBOs, CROP agencies and the private sector so that women and men of all ages, across all levels of society, are empowered as individuals and communities to address gender justice issues

25. Strong and effective partnerships at all levels of Pacific governments and the private sector are required to lift women's economic empowerment by developing and implementing policies and practices that support their employment and entrepreneurship. Similarly, CROP agencies and development partners must ensure their own programmes are gender responsive and support women's economic empowerment. In many countries, CSOs play a part in informing women (and men) of their rights, and raising awareness in the public and private sectors of areas for improving women's working conditions.

The Conference:

26. Encouraged the development and strengthening of partnerships between women and men, and between government institutions, CSOs, FBOs, unions and the private sector to:

- a) promote gender equality and the human rights of women of all diversities in the workplace
- b) establish high-level corporate leadership of gender equality to advance policies for addressing gender-based violence, discrimination and sexual harassment, and promote the appointment of women to leadership positions
- c) support family life education that promotes gender equality and human rights, including SRHR
- d) support the initiatives of CSOs to challenge harmful gender norms, gender-based violence and discriminatory practices, and to promote equality and the human rights of women and girls of all diversities
- e) support programmes that engage men and boys as allies in challenging gender stereotypes and reducing women's double burden of paid and unpaid work
- f) support dialogue with customary institutions, where appropriate, on reviewing practices that hinder women's access to productive assets

- g) work with women, particularly the most marginalised, to amplify their voices and support representative organisations to negotiate with national, sub-national and local government and private sector bodies
- h) promote a safe and enabling environment for all civil society actors, with a specific focus on women human rights defenders, and more equitable access to resources for grassroots, local, national and regional women’s organisations and CSOs to support women in asserting their economic rights.

Mobilise resources and sustain investment to advance gender equality

27. Achievement of gender equality and women’s economic empowerment in the Pacific requires governments to work alongside CSOs, FBOs, CROP agencies and development partners. Long-term investment is needed to address the issues that combine to create gender inequality in the region. More specifically, there is a need to develop effective action on the commitments made by Pacific Leaders and Economic Ministers.

The Conference:

28. Called for governments, the private sector, CROP agencies and development partners to increase financing and sustained investment to:

- a) support women’s entrepreneurship
- b) facilitate financial inclusion of women
- c) support cultural industries
- d) build women’s resilience to climate change impacts³ and sustain their livelihood in agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, recognising their traditional knowledge and sustainable, traditional adaptation and mitigation practices
- e) provide affordable, high-quality and accessible care services, such as child care, elder care, mental health care and disability care
- f) improve basic infrastructure and services, including sustainable energy, accessible ICT and transport
- g) strengthen social protection measures to support women’s economic security throughout their lives
- h) develop and support legislation, policies and programmes that challenge harmful and unjust gender norms, gender stereotypes and all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence
- i) establish and sustain merit-based scholarship programmes supporting young women, of all diversities, to study in areas of country priorities including science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

³ Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work: Agreed conclusions of the 2017 Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61), paragraph 40 (hh), page 13.

Establish mechanisms and systems to make stakeholders accountable for implementing commitments on gender equality and the human rights of all women and girls

29. Pacific governments have made repeated commitments to gender equality and women's economic empowerment, but tracking tools and accountability mechanisms, and the capacity of people to do the work, need to be strengthened. Regular and evaluative monitoring and reporting processes for governments and CROP agencies are necessary to demonstrate their efforts to deliver on these commitments.

The Conference

30. Called on PICTs, CROP agencies and development partners to establish or support the implementation of, and reporting on, existing commitments with accountability mechanisms that demonstrate:

- a) adoption and implementation of legislative and policy measures to increase women's digital, financial and property assets
- b) that women's human rights are protected within macroeconomic policies, in structural reforms and in aid and trade agreements
- c) government budget is invested in basic infrastructure and services that contribute to alleviating the burden of unpaid care work and support women's economic empowerment
- d) removal of barriers to women's participation in the workforce and in decision-making, and enforcement of equal opportunity practices
- e) development and implementation of legislative measures, policies and programmes to eliminate gender-based discrimination and violence and harmful gender norms in the workplace
- f) adoption and implementation of laws and policies promoting decent work, pay equality, and support for the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities.

31. The **Sixth Meeting of Pacific Ministers for Women** was held in Suva, Fiji, on 4 and 5 October 2017. The Ministers adopted recommendations to uphold gender equality and women's human rights across the regional development and resilience agenda and to promote these Pacific priorities in the global development and climate change agenda.

32. The Ministers endorsed the *Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights 2018–2030* and recommended that reports be presented to Triennial Conferences of Pacific Women on action under the PLGED and on progress against, and the effectiveness of, the measures contained in the PPA.

33. Ministers noted the need for CROP agencies and development partners to support the region's gender equality commitments, and to ensure that monitoring and evaluation frameworks, under the PPA's strategic objectives, are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and other regional and international commitments.