



# Tuvalu National Gender Policy





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## Foreword

Despite development progress in Tuvalu, as our Millennium Development Goal report reveals, work remains to be done to fully realise the aspirations and needs of women and girls in some sectors in which we work, while in other cases like education, boys are falling behind.

We believe that gender equality is an important development objective in its own right as well as smart development policy. Empowering women and girls within our society is fundamental to the realisation of human rights for everyone, and key to effective and sustainable development. We need to create the conditions for the political participation and economic inclusion of women, so that women and men work together to overcome the many challenges from the impacts of climate change, labour migration and poverty and hardship, and build a violence-free society in which all people have equal opportunities to lead safe, prosperous and happy lives.

The Tuvalu National Gender Policy, developed with the assistance of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), reflects the Tuvalu Government's values and commitments to durable and meaningful development results for all. It provides guidance on pursuing more effective, evidence-based investments in gender equality and the empowerment of women and incorporating these efforts into our core development programming.

I assure all that this policy will be implemented in a flexible, responsive and culturally sensitive manner, considering both women's and men's needs and responsibilities, and ensuring equal participation of both men and women in development activities and as beneficiaries and decision-makers. Therefore, I request cooperation and collaborative efforts from all ministries, our vibrant civil society and other organisations as an essential ingredient of effective and stable democracy. We will face our remaining challenges with renewed vigour and enthusiasm.

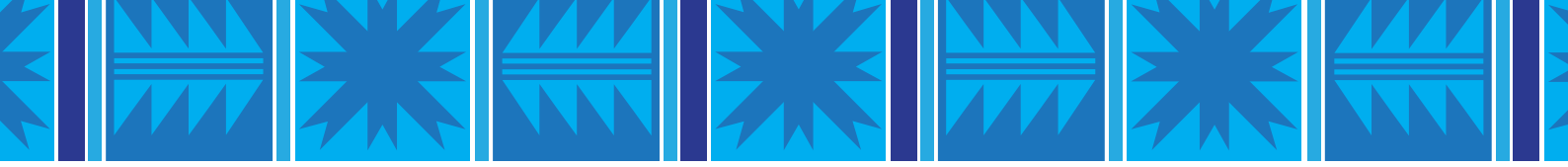
Tuvalu mo te Atua!



**Enele Sosene Sopoaga**

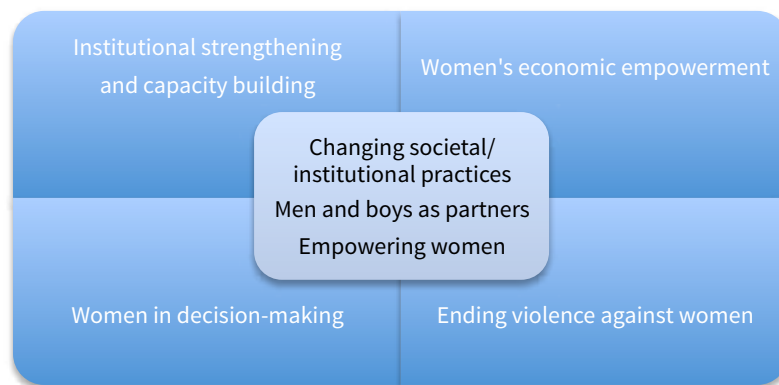
Honourable Prime Minister





## Rationale

Recognising the benefits of the initial National Women’s Policy of 1999 (reviewed in 2005 and 2011), and taking note of the continued gender inequalities in some areas of society, this National Gender Policy will focus on four key policy measures: Institutional strengthening and capacity building, Women’s economic empowerment, Women in decision-making and Ending violence against women.



The four key policy measures were identified through several consultations that were conducted as part of a gender stocktake in Tuvalu in 2013, which took stock of the existing supporting mechanisms and constraints for gender mainstreaming across all of Government, a thorough desk review of the work on gender equality and women’s development in Tuvalu since 1999 and further consultations during the development of this policy.

It is also proposed through this policy that the name of the Department of Women Affairs be changed to Gender Affairs Department (GAD), to reflect an inclusive approach and a broader focus on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

## Policy objective

The National Gender Policy aims to provide the guiding framework to operationalize Government’s commitments to gender equality and women’s empowerment in Tuvalu. The Policy outlines the specific areas that the Government will focus on within the next five years and provides the basis for multi-sectoral engagement and partnerships towards the overarching goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

## Vision

To build a society where women and men are recognised as equal partners in all aspects of development, are protected from all forms of discrimination and violence, and can equally access and benefit from the growth and development of the country.



## Mission

To strengthen mechanisms across Government ministries and within other institutions that will contribute to gender equality and the full realisation of women's human rights.

## Goal

To achieve the recognition of women and girls in Tuvalu as partners and beneficiaries equal to men and boys in all aspects of development and decision-making, and to ensure progressive realisation of women's human rights.

## Policy strategic approach

A distinct policy shift towards developing a stronger enabling environment for gender mainstreaming is recommended. This encompasses a broader approach than the former focus on women in development, focusing instead on the strengthening of technical capacity, accountability mechanisms, and the policy framework, and also ensuring adequate resourcing to address gender inequality. The shift also encompasses a stronger focus on engaging men and boys across government and within the community.

The Policy recognises the reality of limited public resources that has in the past hampered the implementation of plans. The Policy therefore advocates a shift towards each sector being strengthened to be able to mainstream a gender perspective, with the GAD playing a catalytic and a facilitation role for all formal and informal actors, and developing partnerships between the various key stakeholders, i.e. government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and communities.

## Priority outcomes

In line with this focus and as a result of consultations, the Policy focuses on the following priority outcomes:

Increase capacity within all sectors of Government to address key issues of concern in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment within each sector;

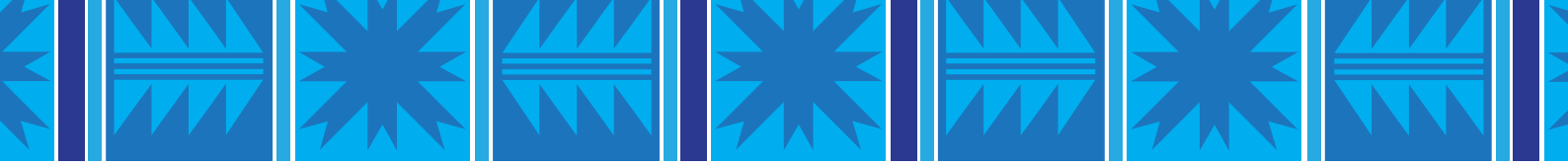
Reflect Government commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment in legislation and in sector policies affecting Government and civil society;

Create an enabling environment for the full participation of women in economic development;

Take measures to ensure women's and men's equal access and full participation in decision-making as a means of enhancing leadership and governance at all levels;

Eliminate all forms of violence against women.





## Coordination and implementation of the Policy

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) is the central government body responsible for promoting and incorporating gender equality as a fundamental development theme and will support and monitor the implementation of the Policy in all Government agencies. The OPM will report as required to Cabinet on progress made in the implementation of the Policy.

The implementation of the National Gender Policy is a responsibility shared between all of the Government's institutions. Each ministry will need to incorporate a gender perspective throughout its planning and budgeting process and in the delivery of sectoral programmes and services.

The OPM, through the GAD, will work with relevant government ministries and agencies on the initiatives outlined in the National Gender Policy. The GAD will collaborate with the Department of Planning regarding the goals and strategies for gender equality in the overarching government framework, with the Education Department to integrate gender perspectives into school curriculums and policies, with the Department of Personnel and Training in relation to institutionalising capacity building and with the National Coordinating Committee on gender mainstreaming to ensure a national response to the coordination and implementation of the Policy.

The GAD will contribute to addressing critical gender issues through targeted activities and research, make recommendations on policy and legislation in support of gender equality, monitoring and evaluating sectoral efforts and provide overall technical support for all mainstreaming initiatives. It will maintain a key role in:

- Guiding and supporting the gender mainstreaming process.
- Facilitating partnerships between government departments and regional organisations, NGOs and community-based organisations.
- Collaborating with other ministries/departments and stakeholders in implementing commitments on gender-based methodologies, addressing conceptual issues and developing sector-specific approaches.
- Maintaining a resource centre and information management system on gender and development and facilitating the production and dissemination of publications on gender issues.
- Liaising with youth groups, NGOs, community-based organisations and members of the public in building awareness and implementing the Policy.
- Advising on alarming, urgent and emerging issues experienced from time to time, e.g. climate change, trafficking, labour mobility and any relevant national issues and concerns at stake.



## Monitoring role of the National Coordinating Committee (NCC)

The network of ministries, agencies and NGOs previously established to guide, plan, monitor, and evaluate the process of mainstreaming gender and to ensure collaboration and policy coherence on gender equality in Government's work will be re-convened. It will serve as sector experts on the NCC and will be responsible for driving achievement of commitments to gender equality outlined in the Policy.

The proposed composition of the NCC is as follows:

- Senior Assistant Secretary from the Office of the Prime Minister (Chairperson)
- Tuvalu National Council of Women (TNCW)
- Attorney General's office
- Director of Budget and National Planning, Ministry of Finance
- Director of Education
- Government Statistician
- Director of Environment
- Director of Health
- Coordinator, Tuvalu Association of NGOs (TANGO)
- Personnel and Training Department
- Police Department
- Tuvalu Family Health Association (TuFHA)
- Tuvalu Media Corporation
- Community Affairs Officer
- Gender Affairs Department (Secretariat)

## Conclusion

A whole of Government approach is necessary with the Gender Affairs Department working in a catalytic and facilitation role to ensure that all commitments are met.

The Policy also recognises that to sustain the change, capacity needs to be consistently built and sustained. The Policy provides the measures necessary to strengthen and restructure the GAD to sustain the required changes. Effective and successful implementation of the Policy will be based on collaborative and coherent work by stakeholders.



# Tuvalu National Gender Policy

## Strategic Plan of Action 2014–2016

The three-year Strategic Plan of Action proposes a series of outputs and key actions in order to achieve the outcomes of the National Policy on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment. Its implementation requires the active contribution of the Government and civil society organisations. The outcomes and outputs proposed must be incorporated and addressed in the national policy and programmes in every sector and need to be part of annual plans.

### Goal

The goal of the National Gender Policy is to achieve the recognition of women and girls in Tuvalu as partners and beneficiaries equal to in all aspects of development and decision-making and to ensure progressive realisation of women’s human rights.

### Priority outcomes

The following Policy outcomes are sought over the next 5 years of this plan (2014–2019):

1. Increase capacity within all sectors of Government to address key issues of concern in achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment within each sector;
2. Reflect Government commitments to gender equality and women’s empowerment in legislation and in sector policies affecting government and civil society;
3. Create an enabling environment for the full participation of women in economic development;
4. Take measures to ensure women’s and men’s equal access and full participation in decision-making as a means of enhancing leadership and governance at all levels;
5. Eliminate all forms of violence against women.



## Policy Outcome 1

*Increase capacity within all sectors of Government to address key issues of concern in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment within each sector*

### Outputs

- 1.1 Government commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment are fully understood and embraced by all sectors of Government.
- 1.2 Government sectors are able to identify and articulate specific sector links between gender equality and women's empowerment.
- 1.3 Government sectors are consistently disaggregating data by sex and using sex disaggregated data to further inform programme development, implementation and reporting.
- 1.4 All Government sectors are able to address women's practical and strategic needs.

### Key actions

#### Central Government

- Strengthen the research department within the Planning and Research Unit to be able to apply a gender lens to the cost benefit analysis research and all other research conducted to inform macro-planning processes.
- Strengthen the Statistics Department to understand the use of sex disaggregated data in gender analysis and how this can be used to inform national development plans.
- Develop training modules on gender concepts, gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, gender responsive planning and budgeting and human rights and institutionalise this training as a key component of public service training through the Department of Personnel and Training.

#### Education

- Assist the Department of Education to develop a gender policy.
- Monitor indicators for gender equality in education with specific attention to statistics from outer islands.
- Support vocational and non-formal education and training for young men and women in non-traditional sectors.



- Conduct awareness raising sessions to address stigma associated with teenage pregnancy.
- Review all teaching material to remove gender stereotypes and make sure it promotes gender equality.
- Build the capacity of teachers and schools directors to provide non-discriminatory teaching and promote gender equality and use gender sensitive approaches in all of their interventions.

#### Health

- Assist in developing a health policy that specifies and addresses the specific health care needs of women and men, with a particular focus on health needs of women in the outer islands.
- Monitor health indicators for women and men.
- Encourage male engagement in all aspects of maternal and child health care.
- Encourage and support ongoing sexual and reproductive health awareness with a focus on targeted youth populations.
- Build the capacity of all medical staff to identify the social determinants of health – particularly the ones related to gender issues – and provide gender sensitive care services.

#### Natural resources

- Conduct gender analysis in agriculture, fisheries and natural resources management in order to identify the roles, knowledge, and needs of women and men in those sectors.
- Develop a gender policy and plan of action for the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.
- Recognising women's roles in agriculture, fisheries and natural resource management, apply a quota for the inclusion of qualified women in all levels of decision-making in the fisheries and agricultural sector.

#### Environment

- Monitor the implementation of commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment in the National Strategic Action Plan for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management.
- Ensure women's equitable access to capacity building initiatives in disaster risk management and adaptation to climate change and natural resources management. Support equitable participation of women, together with men, in decision-making in relation to disaster risk management, climate change adaptation and natural resources management at the community and national levels.



## Gender Affairs Division

- Strengthen the GAD to be able to promote and coordinate the collection of data and to implement gender analysis, gender responsive budgeting and gender audits.
- Strengthen the capacity of GAD to effectively monitor and manage information relevant to each sector and facilitate the sharing of information as well as act as a catalyst to ensure gender mainstreaming commitments are carried out effectively.
- Strengthen the capacity of GAD to effectively monitor the implementation of the National Gender Policy.

## Policy Outcome 2

*Reflect Government commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment in legislation and in sector policies affecting government and civil society*

### *Outputs*

- 2.1. CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) articles are embedded into the constitution and legislative and statutory reforms and policy initiatives across Government.
- 2.2. CEDAW review report is prepared and presented to CEDAW committee.
- 2.3. Government, NGO and civil society are informed and aware of the need for legislative changes and how it positively impacts women and girls.
- 2.4. Sectors are knowledgeable about key aspects of their policies and how they discriminate against or empower women and girls.
- 2.5. The specific situations of rural women and women and girls with disabilities are understood and reflected in Government legislation and policies.

### *Key actions*

- Ongoing information sharing and awareness raising is done on Government commitments to CEDAW and the gaps in the legislation as well as Government plans to address legislative change.
- An effective system of information management is institutionalised within the GAD to monitor the implementation of commitments to CEDAW from various sectors.

- Research and analysis is done on the key links between CEDAW and the various sectors of Government and information papers are shared with sectors.
- Specific research and gender analysis is done on the situation of rural women in Tuvalu and shared with various sectors.
- The rights of women and girls with disabilities are addressed through all legislation processes.

### Policy Outcome 3

*Create an enabling environment for the full participation  
of women in economic development*

#### *Outputs*

- 3.1. An increase in the growth of number of women's businesses in Funafuti and the outer islands.
- 3.2. An increase in the number of women establishing businesses in non-traditional areas.
- 3.3. Improved working conditions for women in paid employment in both formal and informal sectors.
- 3.4. An increase in the number of women entering into technical areas of work and the number of men entering service industry work.
- 3.5. An increase in women's access to and ownership of productive assets.

#### *Key actions*

##### Women in business

- Develop a database for all women in business.
- Provide ongoing business and financial management training for women and monitor the progress of women in business.
- Develop case studies of successful women in business as advocacy tools.
- Create affirmative action policies to support the growth of women's businesses and to encourage ownership of assets.



- Improve the market place with hygiene and safety measures.
- Conduct market research to identify new economic opportunities for women.

#### Women in wage employment

- Institute equal opportunity policies and legislation.
- Introduce equitable measures in sectors to encourage stronger female and male participation, e.g. equal number of male and female recruits for nursing; quota for women in fisheries.
- Develop case studies for advocacy purposes.
- Adopt a national policy against sexual harassment and intimidation in the workplace.
- Adopt measures to facilitate access to employment for women with disabilities.

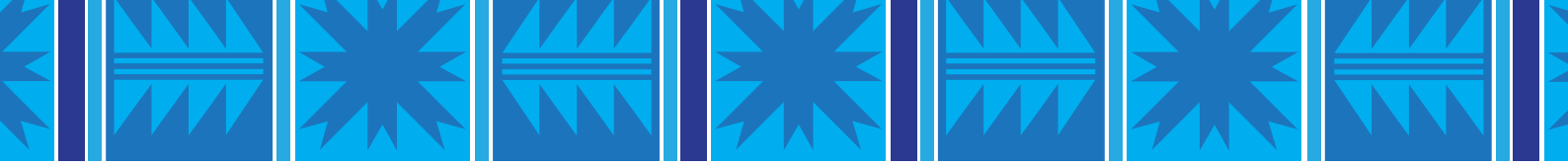
#### Policy Outcome 4

*Take measures to ensure women's and men's equal access and full participation in decision-making as a means of enhancing leadership and governance at all levels*

#### *Outputs*

- 4.1. Increased support of women's rights to participate in public life and exercise leadership roles.
- 4.2. Increased understanding of the proposed amendments to the Falekaupule Act and the positive impact on the community.
- 4.3. Increase in the number of women in leadership roles and participating in national and local governance institutions.
- 4.4. Increase in the number of women participating in decision-making at the Kaupule and Falekaupule level.
- 4.5. Increase in the number of women in parliament.





### *Key actions*

- Conduct research and consultations, and develop a plan of action for the introduction of temporary special measures for women's political participation.
- Conduct research and consultations, and develop a plan of action for the involvement of women at the Falekaupule and Kaupule level in accordance with amendments to the Falekaupule Act.
- Develop a database of qualified women for possible appointment to public bodies and for political leadership.
- Implement an awareness programme at community level to encourage support for women in decision-making with evidence of support from men and boys.
- Create a gender sensitive environment in the Falekaupule, Kaupule and parliament to enable women's participation at all levels, including for women with disabilities.

## Policy Outcome 5

*Eliminate all forms of violence against women*

### *Outputs*

- 5.1. Institutionalised adequate government responses that prevent and respond to gender-based violence.
- 5.2. Passing of the Family Law and Domestic Violence Bill in parliament.
- 5.3. Increased partnerships with men to prevent gender-based violence.
- 5.4. Increase in the number of reported cases of gender-based violence (significant due to the culture of silence around domestic and gender-based violence in Tuvalu).
- 5.5. Recognition of gender-based violence experienced by women with disabilities and adoption of adequate measures to prevent it and protect women.



### *Key actions*

- Analyse the community consultations on the Family Law and Domestic Violence Bill.
- Develop a plan of action targeted specifically to address the findings from the consultations with a focus on changing attitudes towards sexual and family violence. Key focus on working with men and boys.
- Develop protocols with key stakeholders to respond to victims and survivors of violence.
- Strengthen capacity of police officers and health-care service providers to responds to the victims with a gender sensitive approach, including for victims with disabilities.
- Adopt measures to protect the victims.
- Build the capacity of community leaders and church leaders to prevent domestic violence and other form of gender-based violence.
- Raise awareness within government and the private sector to address sexual harassment in the work place.



## Annex 1: The need for a gender policy

Since the establishment of the Department of Women's Affairs (DWA) in 1999, significant advancements have been made in addressing the inequalities between women and men. These inequalities are manifest in the legislative environment that governs the country, the absence of women from decision-making spheres, the numbers of women in wage employment when compared to men, the strong concentration of women in traditional employment areas such as teaching, nursing and administration, and the prevalence of domestic violence and violence against women as unreported phenomena.

The Government of Tuvalu has made significant advancements towards addressing these issues by making itself accountable to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) that was ratified in 1999 and subsequently reported on in 2008 and 2012, developing a National Women's Policy in 1999 and reviewing it in 2005, and developing corporate plans to guide the work of DWA and gender mainstreaming across government in 1999, 2007 and 2009. Government has also assessed and reported against its commitments to Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG 3) in 2005 and in 2010/2011. This has required reporting on gender parity in education, the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sectors and the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament as a percentage of all occupied seats.

Over the years, legislative reform has also taken place in an effort to address discriminatory aspects of laws relating to inheritance of land, adoption of children, marriage, custody of children, or domestic violence. Due to limited resources, government has had to prioritise the reform and pursue it in stages, with priority given to the drafting of a Family Protection and Domestic Violence Bill, a Criminal Code Amendment Bill and amendments to the Falekaupule (local government) Act to ensure that women and men 18 years and above are eligible to vote in Falekaupule assemblies and in authorising Falekaupule annual budgets. Consultations have been conducted on the Native Lands Act and the Tuvalu Lands Code as well as on the issue of temporary special measures in parliament with resistance on these issues still evident from the consultations. The acceleration of the discussion of equality in the inheritance of land and in women's political participation is further constrained by the limited resources available to support the work on gender inequality with collective decisions made to focus on strategic areas, where there is stronger evidence of support.

The achievement of gender equality is a key indicator of development and the social well-being of a nation. As such, the Government of Tuvalu's National Strategic Framework, Te Kakeega II 2005–2015, identifies as one of its key policy objectives, 'To promote gender equity and to expand the role of women in development'. Te Kakeega II identifies key issues in terms of women's reproductive and productive roles and highlights the need to address the inequalities in the legislative framework governing the distribution of lands and custodial rights. Government has identified the need to integrate the role of women and the issue of gender and development in implementing Te Kakeega II strategies and to provide women with small business and entrepreneurial training and access to appropriate credit facilities. The roadmap subsequently developed by the new government that assumed power in August 2013 specifically identifies a key focus on the development of a National Gender Policy and a Corporate Plan, the empowerment of women and CEDAW domestication and actions.

The National Gender Policy is tailored to support this focus in line with the above-mentioned framework and in compliance with commitments to regional and global instruments for addressing gender equality. These commitments include CEDAW, the MDGs, Beijing Platform for Action 1995, the revised Pacific Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality 2004, the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015, and the Pacific Leaders Declaration on Gender Equality. It also takes into consideration the limited capacity and resource constraints in Tuvalu to implement commitments made. Therefore, while the policy framework encompasses three strategic areas of addressing societal and institutional practices, working with men and boys as partners in gender equality and addressing the inclusion of women in development, the focus has been limited to addressing it within the outlined four areas of concern.



## Annex 2: Areas of concern for Tuvalu

The patriarchal nature of Tuvaluan society is still a major constraint for progress towards gender equality. While commitments have been made to mainstream gender at a broad government level, this is not supported by an allocation of resources and is not reflected in the work conducted by central government or sectors of government. Broad macro-economic policies do not reflect any of these commitments and while some good practices may have been introduced, they have not been sustained. Women are still not equitably included in local government decision-making processes noted, though this is slowly changing with proposed amendments to the Falekaupule Act.

### Violence against women

Violence against women in Tuvalu is an issue that often remains unreported. It constitutes an alarming threat to the rights and dignity of women, and it has a tremendous impact on children and a heavy cost for society. The 2007 Tuvalu Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS) reported that 4 in 10 women have been subjected to some type of physical violence, with their current husbands or partners being the main perpetrators (84.6%). In particular, wives whose husbands drink alcohol excessively are far more likely (72%) to experience physical, emotional, or sexual violence than those whose partners do not drink (27%). It is estimated that around half of all reported acts of physical violence were reported by women aged 25–29. The TDHS also shows that domestic violence against women does not have a link with place of residence (Funafuti or outer islands), employment status, marital status, educational level or the woman's number of children. According to the findings of the survey, women in Tuvalu were brought up to accept, tolerate, and even rationalise domestic violence and to remain silent about such experiences. The survey results indicate that in almost all cases the violence is committed by a person the woman knows.

### Women in wage employment

As in other Pacific countries, the traditional and stereotypical perception in Tuvalu is that women are only responsible for domestic duties. According to the 2007 TDHS more women (49%) than men (15%) reported not being employed in the 12 months preceding the survey. The women are more likely to be in the lowest wealth quintile and have limited (secondary or primary) education. Women are more likely to hold professional/technical/managerial and clerical jobs than men. The majority of women work for cash only in non-agricultural work, are employed by non-family members and work throughout the year. Over 60% of working women surveyed for the TDHS reported that their earnings were less than those of their husband and partner. The TDHS highlights the significant gender disparity in the employment participation rates of men and women in Tuvalu, with more men employed than women (57% of women compared to 90% of men).



## Women and decision-making

### *Women in parliament*

Women in Tuvalu encounter many barriers to equal participation in parliament, with only one woman parliamentarian from 1986 to 1993 and no woman parliamentarian from 1993 until 2011. At present (2013) there is one female parliamentarian within the political arena of Tuvalu. While the laws provide equal opportunities for men and women, the Tuvalu CEDAW Report (2012) highlights the cultural barriers women need to overcome when contesting elections. Such barriers include the traditional and stereotypical perceptions of women's roles that confine them to the home as home makers, care givers and nurturers of the family; financial constraints; and the nature of voting, which is based on relational and family lines rather than on the merits of candidates. The situation is exacerbated by the absence of political parties, which could be a tool for affirmative action through allocation of safe seats to women. The government of Tuvalu has endorsed its support for temporary special measures with the GAD now responsible for identifying the most suitable temporary measure based on the country's specific context.

### *Women in decision-making in government*

There were 41 senior positions within the public service of Tuvalu in 2013, including permanent secretaries, senior assistant secretaries, assistant secretaries and directors. Men dominate the senior positions within the Government. From 2009 to the present, women have occupied 9 senior positions: 2 were permanent secretaries, 1 was senior assistant secretary, 3 were assistant secretaries and 3 were directors.

### *Women in local government*

At the local government level in Tuvalu, decisions are made by the Falekaupule (island decision-making entity), with the Government Department of Rural Development and the Kaupule (the executive arm of the Falekaupule) as primary advisors. Development plans for each island community are prepared and implemented by the Kaupule upon final approval by the Falekaupule. Depending on the setting and regulations of each Falekaupule, women are generally not allowed or able to be present during decision-making meetings. The understanding is that the male head of household represents women. The absence of women's voices at the local government level has resulted in: i) a lack of understanding and interest about issues of women's development in island communities and ii) women themselves being unaware of what development issues are being decided on at the local level. A woman matai may participate in the decision-making process but is not eligible to cast a vote. Although the Falekaupule Act 1997 paves the way for the inclusion of women in the traditional decision-making process, with women slowly taking advantage of the opportunity, it does not replace the existing traditional structures for decision-making on each island, which still exclude women. Government has drafted laws to amend the Falekaupule Act to allow women to debate and finalise annual budgets for the Falekaupule.



## Constraints for sectoral gender mainstreaming across all of Government

In order for gender to be mainstreamed across all the sectors of Government, there needs to be sufficient technical capacity to identify the impact of social roles, responsibilities, behaviours, attitudes and identities deemed particular to men and women, and boys and girls, on the socio-economic development of Tuvalu. This encompasses a sufficient ability to analyse the situation of men and women (often comparatively), and their socio-economic status, needs, and constraints, and to identify approaches necessary to promote the equitable development of men and women, and boys and girls. However, the technical capacity for gender mainstreaming across government is limited. In addition, there is a lack of sex-disaggregated data across all sectors that would contribute to the identification of gender gaps and support the development of policies and the improvement of service delivery by the government.

In Tuvalu, gender disparity is still evident between fields of study, with men still dominant in the fields of engineering, construction and information technology. However there are signs of change, with average data from a number of new pre-service scholarships between 2003–2005 and 2007–2009 indicating that female to male ratios for business and finance, law, management and administration have all improved. For the same period, women are still dominating in the field of health (in particular nursing) and education service. Urban (Funafuti) women are more educated than rural (outer island) women. This highlights the need for interventions to address women's and girls' education in the outer islands.

In the area of women's health, the Government of Tuvalu provides free medical treatment to everyone. Serious cases are admitted to the main hospital on Funafuti and Government has a policy to regulate the sending of patients for treatment overseas where there is a need for further treatment outside Funafuti. The TDHS 2007 highlights the links between education, wealth and fertility, with less educated mothers having more children on average than women with more than a secondary-level education. Women in the lowest wealth quintile households have more children than women in the highest wealth quintile households. It is therefore important for the policy to direct interventions towards women in the lowest wealth quintile and the outer islands in the areas of education and health.

The gathering of gender disaggregated data to inform government responses to climate change is clearly outlined in the National Strategic Action Plan for climate change and disaster risk management with further analysis needed on the data collected and their use to further inform climate change adaptation projects.







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