

**FOURTH PACIFIC WOMEN'S MINISTERIAL MEETING
NADI, REPUBLIC OF FIJI, 20–22 JULY 2011**

COMMUNIQUÉ

Preamble

1. The Fourth Pacific Women's Ministerial Meeting hosted by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) was held in Nadi, Republic of Fiji, from 20–22 July 2011. A Ministerial Workshop on Climate Change was held in conjunction with the Fourth Pacific Women's Ministerial Meeting. Annex 1 contains the communiqué from that meeting.
2. Participants at the Fourth Pacific Women's Ministerial Meeting included representatives of 18 SPC member countries and territories – *Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna, Australia and New Zealand* – and representatives of regional, non-governmental, civil society and academic organisations, private sector partners, United Nations (UN), donors and development partner organisations.
3. The overall objective of the Fourth Women's Ministerial Meeting was to consider the outcomes and recommendations from the 2010 11th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and the relevant outcomes of the 2010 Forum Economic Ministers' Meeting and to agree on ways to best implement the recommendations effectively at national level.
4. Pacific Women's Ministers endorsed the findings of the review of progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action in the Pacific and the outcomes of the 11th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women in the areas of: Mechanisms to Promote the Advancement of Women; Women's Legal and Human Rights; Women's Access to Health Services; and Women in the Pacific Economy.
5. Ministers reaffirmed that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was central to any long-term improvements in gender equality in

the region. They also endorsed the need for women to have the right to political and public participation and reaffirmed the need for high-level political commitment to Temporary Special Measures (TSM).

6. Ministers recognised the need for Pacific Island ministers and parliamentarians to be made aware of gender issues such as through parliamentary select committees and advocacy committees.

7. Ministers noted the ongoing need for capacity building on gender at all levels, taking into account local knowledge and experience. They also noted the need for information on gender equality and women's rights to be made available to women in remote islands and areas.

8. The meeting noted the important role of the private sector in advancing the role of women in the economy and the need to develop and strengthen ongoing partnerships between business organisations such as the Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation and women's organisations. In recognition of its significance, the inclusion of private sector representation in future women's ministerial meetings was approved. In this context, the meeting also endorsed the need for partnerships between governments and civil society organisations.

9. Ministers recognised that HIV and AIDS represent a critical development issue that is increasingly affecting women and children in the Pacific. They affirmed the need to sustain high-level political commitment towards an effective HIV response that is inclusive of people living with and affected by the virus.

10. Ministers received the report of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat Reference Group on Sexual and Gender Based Violence. This report covered the group's scope of work, recent activities and plans for the future. It also acknowledged the important advocacy and technical advisory role the group plays in supporting ongoing work concerned with the elimination of violence against women at both regional and national levels.

11. Ministers received the report of Pacific Regional Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, and encouraged SPC to continue its support of this group as a Co-Chair. They welcomed the preparation of a Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, and also encouraged development partners to support the development and implementation of the Regional Action Plan through financial resources.

12. The Fourth Pacific Women’s Ministerial Meeting commended the establishment of the new UN women’s entity, UN Women. It noted that the existence of this body should strengthen and sharpen the focus of support from UN agencies and other development partners for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

13. In discussions on the structure and composition of the executive board of UN Women, ministers recommended that the Pacific be allocated three positions on the board and agreed to follow through on this recommendation with Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Pacific Island country representative offices to the United Nations based in New York. They also recommended that UN Women establish three sub-regional offices in the Pacific – one each in Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia. Ministers noted the announcement by the Government of Solomon Islands to contest a seat on the executive board of UN Women in the next election.

14. The 11th Triennial Conference recommendations follow on from the global 15-year review of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPA)* endorsed at the Beijing Women’s Conference in 1995 and its regional counterpart, the *Pacific Platform for Action for Gender Equality and the Advancement of Women (PPA)*.

15. Commitments to gender equality have been made in many Pacific regional development frameworks, such as the PPA, the Pacific Plan and Forum Leaders’ communiqués. Such commitments are also evident in international treaties and frameworks such as the BPA, Millennium Development Goals, International Conference on Population and Development, CEDAW and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), as well as in other regional and international frameworks. However, these commitments are yet to be fully integrated into national and regional development agendas. The Fourth Pacific Women’s Ministerial Meeting thus focused on strategies and mechanisms for refining national and regional approaches to ensure gender equality is given priority across all sectors and additional resources are dedicated to these efforts.

Mechanisms to promote the advancement of women

Ministers discussed the opportunities available within government and regional structures to promote the advancement of women. They reiterated the need to strengthen these existing mechanisms and to consider innovative ways to support gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women.

The Ministerial Meeting acknowledged the need for:

- strengthening and utilising existing structures such as through Parliamentary Select Committees, including targeted technical assistance to create sensitivity and build the

awareness of parliamentarians on gender issues, gender mainstreaming and women's human rights;

- targeted gender-sensitised capacity building and training for law enforcement agencies and government officials – further noting the need for the utilisation and strengthening of existing government mechanisms to incorporate gender issues;
- governments to recognise and utilise the expertise of civil society organisations and the private sector in efforts to advance gender equality;
- raising the awareness of gender mainstreaming issues at the national and regional levels;
- considering further how to raise the profile of and give higher priority to the role and work of national women's machineries by placing them within strategic government departments, such as the Office of the Prime Minister or Office of the President, in order to provide a gender perspective in all national and policy discussions;
- development partners and donors to ensure that financial, technical assistance and programming integrates and addresses gender issues and supports gender analysis and mainstreaming across government sectors;
- creation of an enabling environment for national women's machineries, to gain better access to development partners;
- increased support for the compilation and analysis of gender data and statistics to improve policy advocacy, implementation, monitoring and reporting;
- men's support to enable women's participation in decision-making, particularly in customary and community-based structures. Ministers further noted the need to strengthen existing traditional structures and systems to promote women's participation at community level;
- profiling the reality of life for francophone women at regional and international levels, using accurate data and statistics; and
- facilitating the participation of Pacific French-speaking territories at regional and international fora.

Women's legal and human rights

CEDAW is the basis for securing women's legal and human rights.

The ministers noted the need for:

- continued support for ratification, reporting, implementation and monitoring of CEDAW, including increased provision of budgetary and technical resources to support these processes;
- provision of additional budgetary support to enable drafting and implementation of legislation to address gender inequality, including violence against women;
- integration of francophone territories into the French CEDAW report, including support the establishment of a CEDAW committee in Wallis and Futuna;

- provision of external technical support at national level, integrating women’s human rights and ensuring that leaders and key stakeholders understand its linkages with other sectors, such as information and communications technology, economics, infrastructure, agriculture and health;
- gender training for women in leadership, with a strong emphasis on research, legal literacy, empowerment, and civicⁱ and voter education;
- local knowledge to be merged with external technical advice and support at national level;
- the adoption of short-term strategies such as temporary special measures, for example legally enacted quotas providing for reserved seats for women, which in combination with awareness raising and capacity building, will contribute to overcoming entrenched discrimination against women and to their advancement in political decision-making in the long term.
- ratification, domestication, localisation and implementation of core human rights conventions such as CEDAW, CRC, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment and Punishment; the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

Women’s access to health services

The ministers recognised that women’s health has been a concern among Pacific Island countries and territories for many years and that many women are still dying prematurely or are unnecessarily suffering ill health and disability due to a range of factors. Although there are specific problems that affect only women, such as reproductive cancers and risks associated with pregnancy and childbirth, women’s health is increasingly being threatened by noncommunicable diseases and women are often denied access to safe, sensitive, competent and responsive health services.

Leading on from discussions on Temporary Special Measures (TSM), ministers recognised:

- the importance of TSM as a means of increasing women’s representation at the highest levels for advocacy, policy formulation and budgetary support to address priority health issues for women and girls in the Pacific;
- that specific mandatory budgetary support should be allocated for women’s health needs, non communicable diseases, gender based violence issues and women’s health services generally;
- the need to establish a mechanism whereby gender based violence is specifically addressed as a women’s health issue and mainstreamed into health services; and
- the work of the Pacific Islands AIDS Foundation and other non-governmental organisations in responding to HIV at the regional and national levels in the Pacific, and they reaffirmed the establishment of a Pacific Coalition on Women and AIDS calling for support from the development partner community for this initiative.

Women in the Pacific economy

Economic empowerment for Pacific women means equal opportunities in leadership and decision-making, security and independence. It is recognised that women entrepreneurs make up a large proportion of the informal business sector; therefore building partnerships with private sector organisations and women in business organisations is essential if women entrepreneurs are to graduate to the formal sector of Pacific economies.

Ministers noted the need to:

- establish a critical mass of women at all levels of decision-making in the public and private sectors to create a transformational shift in gender equality in the economy;
- create the enabling environment for women’s representation on boards, in the community, in the private sector and in decision-making positions in all Pacific Island countries and territories, utilising existing national women’s machineries, with special attention to young women;
- mobilise and educate men and women on the need for change to a gender equal economy;
- continue to increase access to finance including insurance, savings, investments and credit;
- specifically support women in business by creating a more targeted, enabling environment to increase women’s business knowledge and skills and, in doing so, facilitate the transition to formal, larger women-owned businesses;
- reduce the vulnerability of women operating in the informal sector through greater education and improved enabling environment;
- promote women’s traditional knowledges and crafts at the national, regional and international level, in partnership with civil society organisations. encourage more public–private partnerships to foster women’s involvement in business development and access to markets; and
- enhance the quality of research and data analysis on women in the economy, specifically to: (i) address the gaps in understanding of the economic cost of gender based violence; (ii) meet the need for baseline surveys on micro, small and medium enterprises in each country and territory to determine women’s participation in the economy; and (iii) demonstrate the value of women’s contribution to the economy.

Nadi, Republic of Fiji

22 July 2011

ⁱ Awareness of government structures and parliamentary processes.

ANNEX 1

PACIFIC WOMEN'S MINISTERIAL WORKSHOP ON CLIMATE CHANGE

NADI, REPUBLIC OF FIJI

20 July 2011

COMMUNIQUE

Promoting gender and women's human rights in climate change strategies in the Pacific region

The Pacific Women's Ministerial Workshop on Climate Change agreed that adverse impacts of climate change are likely to have far-reaching consequences for Pacific Island economies and the well-being of Pacific peoples. They may also affect women and men differently.

Acknowledging the different yet complementary roles of men and women in ensuring the well-being of their families and the development of their society, the ministers affirmed the necessity of taking into account the knowledge, experiences and priorities of both women and men in order to develop effective climate change strategies.

The ministers recognised that gender inequalities and the violation of human rights hamper the capacity of Pacific Island countries and territories to adapt to and mitigate differential impacts of climate change. They called for governments of the region to fulfil their commitment to achieving gender equality and human rights.

In doing so, the ministers:

- 1) reiterated the need for a multidimensional approach to climate change adaptation as recommended by the *Pacific Beijing + 15* review report;
- 2) noted the need for greater and effective participation of women in the identification of climate change issues, the design of local and national policies and strategies, the implementation of adaptation and mitigation programmes and the overall decision-making processes at all levels and in the global negotiation process;
- 3) confirmed the need for gender analysis to be incorporated in strategic planning, programming and results-based implementation of climate change programmes and the production of sex-disaggregated data and indicators to monitor the impacts of adaptation and mitigation initiatives;
- 4) recommended further research on the gender and human rights dimension of climate change;
- 5) recommended capacity building of government and civil society organisations to mainstream gender in climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies in all sectors;

- 6) recognised the value and requested documentation of local and traditional knowledge maintained by both women and men alongside scientific knowledge, to facilitate adaptation and mitigation efforts to building resilience in communities to respond to climate change in the Pacific Islands;
- 7) agreed that climate change funding priorities should be gender responsive and ensure accessibility to address the needs of and benefit both women and men and recommend capacity building of the government to effectively manage climate change funds to this end;
- 8) advised strengthening collaboration and partnership between national women's machineries and climate change departments and ministries as well as other organisations and stakeholders;
- 9) strongly urged government delegations to incorporate gender equality and human rights principles in all areas of regional and global negotiations in relation to climate change; and
- 10) called for gender and climate change issues to be incorporated into outcome statements of regional and international meetings.

Nadi, Republic of Fiji

20 July 2011