



GENDER POLICY

PACIFIC ISLAND FORUM SECRETARIAT

December 1998 (Revised May 2003)

Introduction

1. Achieving gender-balanced participation in development is essential not only for promoting social justice, but it is also a matter of good economics and sound sectoral management. Worldwide experience clearly shows that supporting more equal participation by women contributes to the economic growth of their communities and improves the welfare of their families. Investing in gender equality is central to sustainable development and management of regional resources. A gender approach takes into account the different knowledge, roles and responsibilities of women and men and recognises that, to effect long-term positive change in the conditions of communities and nations, actions and attitudes about men's and women's roles and rights in society must change. Thus gender is a critical and crosscutting consideration in development planning. The failure to strive for gender equality in all social and economic activities creates an opportunity cost ill afforded by Forum Island Countries, as sustainable economic growth is reliant on maximising the potential of all its human resources, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or class.

2. The *Pacific Platform for Action (PPA) - for the Advancement of Women*, adopted in 1994 by all Forum members as part of the Noumea Declaration, formally recognises the importance of women's participation in national and regional development activities. It identifies the critical areas of concern affecting the full and equal participation of women in the region including all aspects of economics and politics. The PPA was the Pacific contribution to the Global Platform for Action which was endorsed in Beijing in 1995. Additionally, many Forum members are using the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as a guide for promotion of gender equity.

Policy Vision

3. This gender policy seeks to contribute to optimum political leadership through the Forum by promoting comprehensive social and gender analysis of, and fully informed decision-making on, issues concerning the Forum and the mandate of the Secretariat.

4. As well, the policy seeks to create a framework that will assist the Secretariat to provide service to member governments in harmony with their individual sovereign status, with respect for the rights, cultures and traditions of all citizens, and in line with existing and outstanding commitments to gender equity.

5. The policy seeks to reflect the commitment of Forum members, and hence the Secretariat, to values of inclusiveness, equity, respect and a sharing of responsibility for sustainable and equitable development in the region.

Policy Principles, Goals and Strategies

6. Principle One: Recognition of the weight and importance of national and international commitments to gender equity made by Forum Island Countries

- **Policy Goals:** To provide support to members as they work to fulfil gender equity commitments made at national and international levels;
- **Strategies:** i) Ensure that Secretariat staff are aware of member countries' commitments in the area of gender equity and how these are relevant to divisional work; and ii) Ensure through professional development and training that all Secretariat staff can respond with effective and appropriate analytical and technical skills to assist countries to meet their commitments to gender equity.

Indicators:

- level of knowledge of staff (female/male) of gender equality commitments of member countries and their relevance, through opinion surveys;*
- percentage of staff (female/male) receiving training which included information on member country gender equity commitments and their relevance.*
- percentage of staff (female/male) who have received professional development and training to ensure relevant analytical and technical skills;*
- level of satisfaction of receivers of services from Secretariat staff, through evaluation forms and requests for feedback.*

7. Principle Two: Recognition of the varied and valuable roles played by men and women, and other social groupings, in sustaining traditional and contemporary culture and in contributing to the ongoing positive development of their countries.

- **Policy Goal:** To analyze and document how men's and women's gender differentiated roles are relevant to, or may be impacted by, the mandate of the Forum and the work of the Secretariat.
- **Strategies:** i) In all studies and programs, staff will be encouraged to integrate an analysis of the value that the contributions of different groups can make to policy, as well as the differential impacts that policies may have on the practical needs and strategic interests of different social groups inter alia: men and women, people of different ages, ethnic origin, religion; ii) Sex disaggregated data will be produced available in all Secretariat publications which provide statistical information about people and their activities in the region iii) Based on the two previous strategies, the Secretariat Executive and staff will aim to include social and gender analysis statements in reports to the FEMM, FOC and Forum Meetings.
- **Indicators**
 - Percentage of studies and programs that adequately integrate analysis of the roles played by men and women and other social groupings in the positive development of their countries;*
 - Percentage of Secretariat publications on Pacific Islands people and their activities which provide adequate sex-disaggregated data;*

- iii) *Percentage of reports to FEMM, FOC and Forum Meetings which include adequate social and gender analysis.*

8. Principle Three: Promotion of democratic access to development initiatives

- **Policy Goal:** To promote equitable participation of women and men in all programs stemming from Forum initiatives and the divisional work programme of the Secretariat.
- **Strategy:** The Secretariat will encourage members to achieve of a balance of qualified men and women to participate in meetings and programs organised by the Secretariat.
- **Indicators**
 - i) *Percentage of men and women participating in meetings and programs organized by the Secretariat, disaggregated by level of seniority.*

9. Principle Four: Promotion of open communication to ensure that balanced information is collected from all components of society and integrated into comprehensive analyses of issues relevant to the region.

- **Policy Goal:** To provide assistance and advice to governments to ensure balanced communication with all sectors of their societies
- **Strategy:** Work with members to develop acceptable procedures to facilitate effective interaction with the private sector, communities and non-government organisations where these groups represent specific viewpoints relevant to achieving the annual workplan objectives of the Secretariat.
- **Indicators:**
 - i) *Numbers of consultations with different sectors; feedback from those consulted (through user surveys).*
 - ii) *In line with Standard Contract - number of studies with sex disaggregated data and gender analysis*
 - iii) *Number and percentage of members who have developed acceptable procedures which facilitate effective interaction with relevant private sector, community and NGO groups.*

10. Principle Five: Recognition of the importance of modeling best practices and learning from experience

- **Policy Goal:** Forum Secretariat will apply the principles of this policy to the organisation itself as well as to its mandated workplan
- **Strategies:** i) Review of corporate and human resources policies of the Secretariat to ensure that they do not discriminate against anyone on the basis of sex and that they encourage equitable opportunity in hiring; ii) Establishment of a monitoring and review process for the gender policy and procedures to ensure effectiveness of the policy and achievement of goals; iii) documentation of best practices for gender analysis and production of training materials on gender and policy analysis.
- **Indicators:**
 - i) *number of hiring cases which follow equitable practices;*
 - ii) *timely and effective follow-up to recommendations from monitoring and review processes related to the gender equality policy;*
 - iii) *numbers of copies of good practice material requested; user comment on good practice material (through user surveys).*

- iv) *Number of policies reviewed; b. number of changes to policies that did not meet requirements of the strategy;*
- iv) *adequate monitoring and review process for gender policy and procedures in place, including agreed indicators of achievement*
- v) *Number of cases of good practice documented*
- vi) *Number of training materials on gender and policy analysis produced.*

Guidelines for Implementation

An ongoing sub-committee of staff representing each division and including both men and women to be charged with:

- Interpreting the policy in light of each divisions responsibilities and commitments as defined by annual workplans and the corporate mandate of the Secretariat;
- Developing indicators of success to measure progress in achieving policy goals;
- Monitoring the policy and bringing significant results or findings to the attention of the executive.