



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

PIFS(21)FEMM.Info.4

FORUM ECONOMIC OFFICIALS MEETING

6 – 7 July 2021

FORUM ECONOMIC MINISTERS MEETING

13-14 July 2021

Virtual

INFORMATION PAPER NO. 4: ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Purpose and Summary

Purpose

This paper provides an update on the progress, challenges and planned actions to support women's economic empowerment in the Pacific.

Summary

Investing in women's economic empowerment is a 'game changer' and has significant financial rewards. The 2020 Biennial report, endorsed at FEMM2020, highlighted that despite some key progress gender inequality still persists in the Pacific and that women's economic empowerment is one area that still requires ongoing work.

When more women participate in the formal or informal economy, their families, communities, and countries become more prosperous. However, in the Pacific:

- (i) women's financial inclusion is unequal and low with many women remaining unbanked and access to finance is difficult making them more vulnerable to payday lenders and microfinance schemes charging high interest rates;
- (ii) women's ability to fully participate in the economy is restricted by outdated regulations and legislations compounded with a lack of accountability and enforcement.
- (iii) there is a clear overlap with women's ability to be empowered economically and their experience of violence by intimate partners.

These issues can only be addressed through the removal of barriers such as discriminatory laws, social and cultural norms that result in women's assumed responsibility for home and family care unpaid work and upscaling of initiatives to address the drivers and causes of gender inequality, exclusion, and vulnerability.

Key to this is the allocation of resources and implementation of actions that promote and ensure the economic empowerment of women enhancing women's self-reliance, decision-making, and social freedoms leading to positive effects at family, community and national levels.

This paper provides an update on efforts since the last Forum Economic Ministers meeting in 2020 to increase economic empowerment of women focusing on the commitments made at the 14th Women's Triennial and Women Ministers Conference, the impacts of COVID-19 on women's economic empowerment, gender responsive budgeting and on-going initiatives in the region.

A. Outcomes from 14th Women's Triennial and Women Ministers Conference

The 14th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women (Triennial) and 7th Ministers for Women Meeting (see **Attachment 1**), was held from 27 to 29 April 2021, and 4th May respectively, and focused on three priority areas: **women's economic empowerment, gender-based violence, and gender-responsive climate justice**; and four cross-cutting themes: women in leadership and decision-making; crises and disasters; sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD) and statistics; and intergenerational dialogue to ensure the perspectives of Pacific youth are heard.

2. The Conference and Ministerial noted the interrelated crises of COVID-19 pandemic and climate change and disaster affecting the Pacific and their crippling impacts for the long-term prospects for economic well-being and recovery. These crises amplify existing gender inequalities and pose further risks for women and girls of all diversities, potentially derailing efforts to accelerate gender equality.

3. The Triennial and Ministers meeting reaffirmed women's economic empowerment as **fundamental for development**, requiring partnership between government and key stakeholders to implement specific actions to achieve economic empowerment of all Pacific women. Both meetings acknowledged that **implementation of national, regional and international commitments remains a challenge** and called on governments, with the assistance of key stakeholders including the private sector, to implement policies, legislation and gender-responsive budgets to address disparities with regard to women's access and opportunities in all fields of economic activity, proactively expand opportunities for women to participate in critical sectors and industries and equally acknowledge, value and remunerate women's work in all fields¹. This call affirms that gender responsive budgeting is an important mechanism for ensuring greater consistency between economic goals and social commitments. It is critical that governments implement and monitor progress against these actions to advance gender equality in the Blue Pacific.

B. Progressing Women's Economic Empowerment

COVID-19 Pandemic: Impacts on Women's Economic Empowerment

4. COVID-19 impacts are not gender-neutral. Significant impacts include those related to regional trade and food security, especially in countries reliant on imported food with limited community food production systems, resulting in women either spending more time producing food or increasing their incomes to pay for higher priced foods. Women are more likely than men to work in low-paying, informal and precarious work, without safety nets, job security, paid leave or insurance for economic shocks². Likewise, women who sell produce and/or market primary produce have reduced incomes due to shrinking economies as a result of COVID-19 restrictions³.

¹ Outcomes Document from the 14th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women, and 7th Ministers for Women Meeting, 2021. The document is Annexed as Annex 1.

² [A summary of Pacific Women's Webinar on Women's Economic Empowerment and COVID-19 - Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development](#)

³ The Pacific Community (SPC); 2021; 14th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women's Economic Empowerment Brief.

5. The shutdown of markets as part of the COVID-19 restrictions translated into a huge income reduction for women.⁴ For example, a 2020 rapid assessment of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 in Tuvalu revealed that women and men are indeed affected differently, with more women experiencing loss of income primarily due to the nature of women’s income-generating activities – many depending on hospitality, restaurants and handicraft selling⁵.

6. The pandemic has seen women take on more unpaid work with the ‘opportunity cost’ of women not having spare time to engage in income generating activities that would have allowed them some economic independence. Taking on increased childcare and domestic labour responsibilities due to closure of school and workplaces has added to their existing unpaid workload.

7. The impact of COVID has reinforced the need to diversify women’s income streams so they do not rely only on trade. Indicated in Figure 1 below, female-led businesses have been disproportionately hit. The *PTI Pacific Business Monitor* in March 2021 report indicates that whilst the proportion of businesses reporting a very negative impact on community wellbeing has decreased, the **negative toll on mental health** has worsened since the last survey as indicated in Figure 2 below, with two thirds reporting negative impact on their mental health (previously 54%; now 65%).⁶

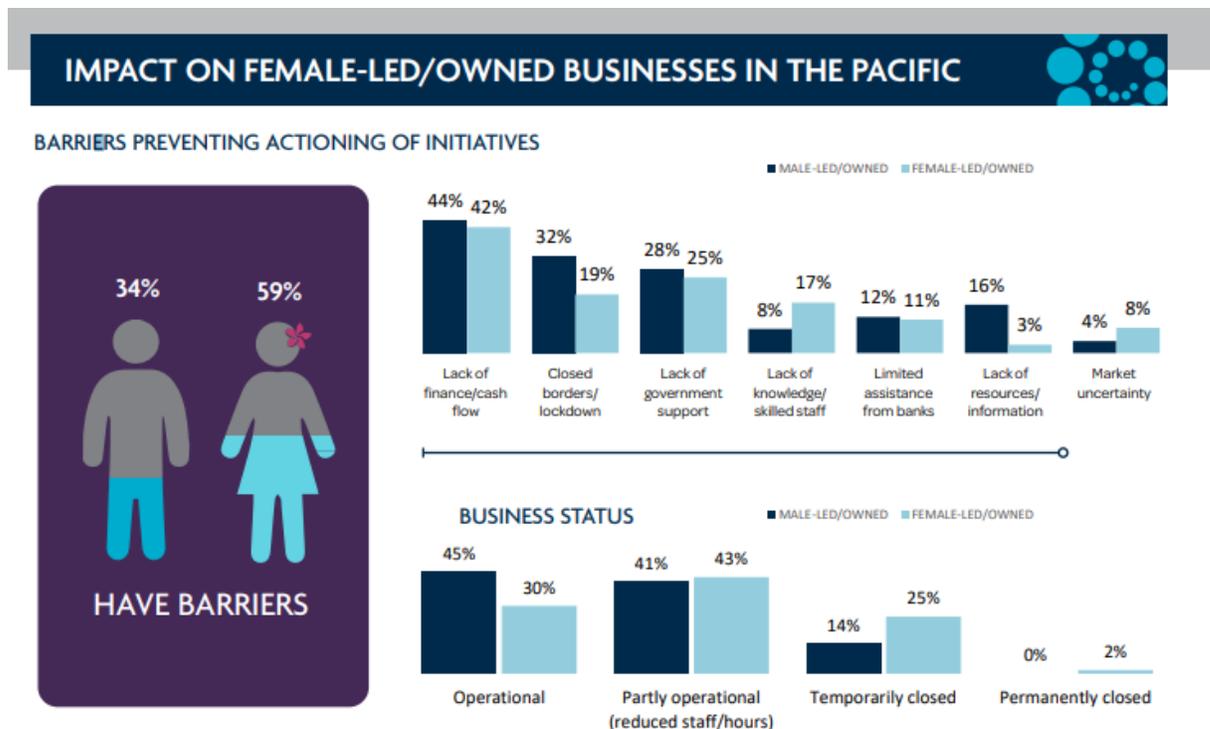


Figure 1: Impact on Business Source: PTI Pacific Business Monitor, as at March 2021

⁴ Pacific Women, 2020. COVID-19 effect on WEE

⁵ Tuvalu-COVID19-Rapid-Assessment-Report_Summary.pdf (pacificwomen.org)

⁶ Pacific Trade Invest (PTI) has commissioned Fifth Quadrant, an independent research agency, to run a regular survey to understand the ongoing effects of COVID-19 on the Pacific’s private sector. The 12th wave of PTI’s Pacific Business Monitor surveys includes responses gathered from 1 to 14 March 2021, from 136 businesses across the Pacific region, including 63 female-led/owned businesses.

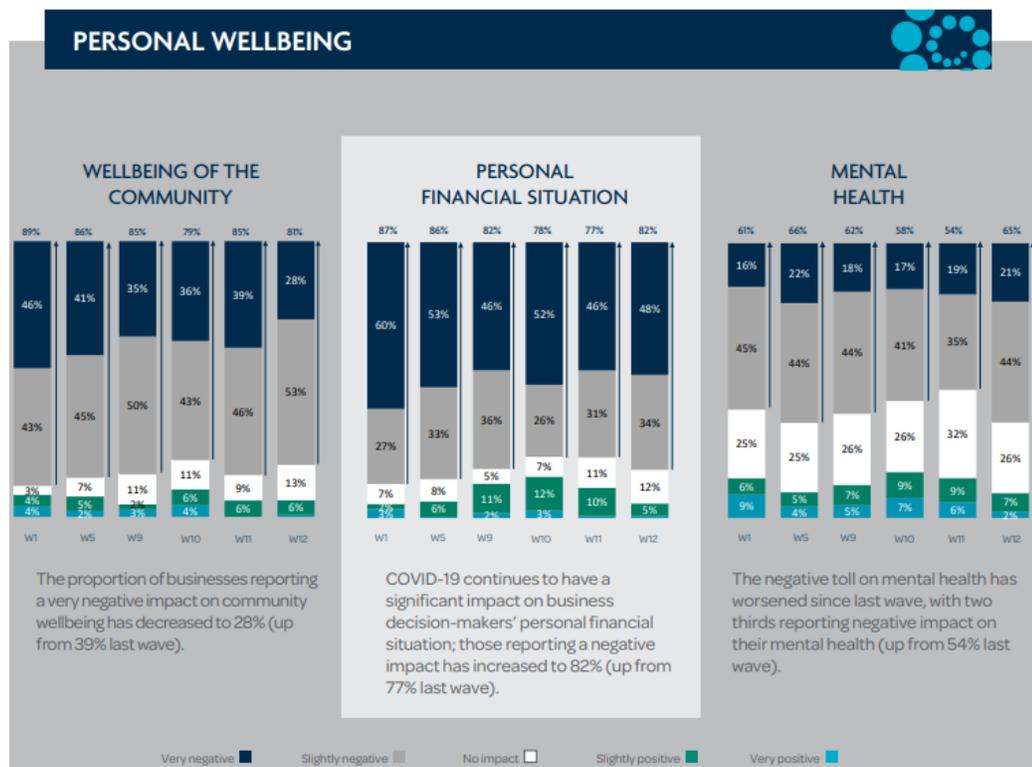


Figure 2: Personal Wellbeing. Source: PTI Pacific Business Monitor, as at March 2021

8. The Secretariat with other CROP agencies and as tasked by FEMM in 2020, is undertaking a Socio-Economic Assessment of COVID-19 (SEIA). The Assessment Report will be tabled at 2021 FEMM and include key recommend actions for Pacific countries to implement as part of recovery and rebuilding efforts from the impacts of the pandemic.

9. Pacific governments can take measures to ensure the economic impacts of COVID-19 respond to, and support women who are most affected. These include, but are not limited to:

- (i) Insurance scheme for unemployed and those in the informal economy.
- (ii) Financial and in-kind relief to rural women and women in remote areas bearing the burden of increased domestic labour.
- (iii) cash transfers for immediate needs, focusing on women.
- (iv) support actions that encourage women's economic empowerment during COVID-19 taking into account women's safety and protection given the increasing rate of men's violence against women during the pandemic.

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)

10. Gender equality can only be achieved if the needs of both men and women are reflected in key policies such as budgets and sufficient funds are allocated towards interventions to address inequality. It is critical that Pacific countries implement policies, legislation and gender-responsive budgets in compliance with agreed regional and international standards and conventions to: address disparities with regard to women's access and opportunities in all fields of economic activity;

proactively expand opportunities for women to participate in critical sectors and industries; equally acknowledge, value and remunerate women's work in all fields⁷.

11. The 2020-2021 period has seen a number of GRB initiatives take place across the region, including:

(i) *Fiji PEFA Gender Responsive Budgeting* - As part the Fijian Government's commitment to strengthen its public financial management, the Government embarked on the Gender Responsive budgeting and planning in the 2020-2021 financial year. The work commenced with the implementation of the PEFA GRB assessment through piloting the GRB tool for two ministries focusing on the budget circular and budget submission template. The GRBP work supports Government's commitment to addressing gender equality in Fiji.

12. The GRBP work is administered by the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation. For the 2021-2022 financial year, GRB will be expanded to 9 ministries with the submission of 18 budget submission requests through the new GRB submission template. With the current technical support from ADB, work will continue with the review of the two pilot ministries and the expansion of GRBP to 9 ministries to ensure the implementation of the other recommendations in the PEFA GRB assessment. Furthermore, support from other donor partners with the Ministry of Women for the work of capacity building on gender budget analysis will continue with the 9 ministries.

13. (ii) *UN Women Costing of Violence research and GRB work* - Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) policy efforts resourced by the Spotlight Initiative weave with regional efforts to build civil society capacity for GRB led by PIFS and national initiatives to mainstream gender in budgets led by Ministries of Women, Ministry of Economy and other government departments. UN Women is undertaking a costing of violence research effort in Fiji, Solomon Islands and the Republic of Marshall Islands. Through the specific lens of ending violence against women and girls, this research aims to inform broader gender-responsive budgeting efforts. In addition to the research component, a capacity-building component is supported in parallel with civil society and government actors on how to use the findings of this research for gender-responsive budgets specific to EVAWG. To-date, the research has undergone an inception phase that dialogued with key informants and mapped the objectives of PIFS' GRB initiatives for the region with the research timeline; research set up and data collection has commenced in Fiji and RMI with inception workshops and convenings. While COVID-19 delayed discussions on GRB, key dialogues and foundational relationship-building processes with stakeholders which took place in 2020 will spur forward actions and priorities for the region over the coming years.

14. The Costing of Violence research has always been conceptualized as a tool that national stakeholders own and develop to achieve key priorities and areas of interest for budgeting and EVAWG related advocacy. As the inception process has gone underway there is an increased recognition from national stakeholders as to the strategic value of the research, which has increased their ownership. The impact of this recognition will come to fruition in 2021, however the signs are positive and hopeful for impactful research for national governments and with lessons learned for the region.

⁷ Outcomes Document from the 14th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women, and 7th Ministers for Women Meeting, 2021. The document is Annexed as Annex 1.

Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (PPEVAWG) GRB monitoring toolkit (PIFS NSA)

15. Since 2019 and with the support of EU Funded Pacific Partnerships Programme, PIFS's has delivered several initiatives to enhance and strengthen regional and national CSOs, including women's organisations to actively advocate for and participate in the monitoring of Gender Equality related policies, including commitments to end violence against women and girls.

16. In 2021, 30 participants representing 18 NSA organisations from 10 countries were part of a Gender Responsive Budgeting Training facilitated by PIFS. The training programme covered practical tools for providing input and enhancing budget accountability particularly critical sector-wide budgets critical to integrate and cater for women's and girls needs. It also looked at organizational and national budgets that could support protection, prevention, and services for gender-based violence at the national level. Although the intended target groups were CSOs, a GRB Training Module is being finalised by consultants and will be shared to all stakeholders, including members by end July 2021. The Training Manual consists of various modules on Public Finance Management including Budgetary Cycles, with specific GRB tools and best practice that could be applied by stakeholders engaging in the space. The tools also target the enhancement of women's groups and CSOs to advocate effectively around Gender Responsive Budgeting and the broader empowerment of women in this space.

17. By August 2021, a *Train the Trainer* initiative coordinated by PIFS Gender Specialist and PIFS teams will provide more context on the utility of the GRB Training Module and ensure that the Tools are accessible and applicable by the hard-working grassroots community groups, national NSA networks around the region – to make a great positive difference to budgeting for women and girls in the Pacific, at the various levels.

Current WEE Initiatives in the Region

18. Current WEE initiatives in PICTs promote economic equality in the formal and informal sectors through: i) increasing job opportunities in the formal sector through equal employment, including equal pay for equal work; ii) reducing impediments to informal sector activity where women often dominate; and iii) simplifying processes for business licencing and access to finance and credit for women⁸.

19. Social protection programmes are emerging, notably those involving cash transfers or in-kind transfers to individuals, micro and small business incubator initiatives including access to collateral and credit and other financial services, business skills development, savings schemes and other forms of social insurance. Youth initiatives are also ongoing in many PICTs and include conditional cash transfers for education and training support, human resource development plans, job seeker registers, and increased scholarships awarded for education and training. Several programmes are supporting women in vulnerable or informal employment through improved market facilities, inclusive governance and security for women market vendors (e.g. Markets for Change)⁹.

20. There has been some progress in generating knowledge and data to inform policies and decision-making. Official reports including SDG Voluntary National Reviews, Universal Periodic Reviews and CEDAW have included sex disaggregated data and analysis of WEE. At the regional level, the Pacific Roadmap on Gender Statistics provides the guiding framework to support Pacific

⁸ The Pacific Community (SPC); 2021; 14th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women's Economic Empowerment Brief

⁹ Ibid

national statistical systems to generate quality, relevant and timely gender data that meets users' needs to advance gender equality. Sex disaggregation is standard for all labour market indicators in all PICs in the Pacific Data Hub¹⁰. 'Domestic violence' modules have been included in Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICSs), providing gender-based violence prevalence indicators presented against a range of socio-economic variables, including employment and wealth. Some Pacific countries have formed formal committees or networks to identify and address gaps in gender data and statistics¹¹.

21. Numerous interventions led by Pacific governments and CSOs directly or indirectly have WEE dimensions, including those relating to livelihoods, TVET, WASH, leadership, food security and renewable energy. A number of CROP agencies are in the process of reviewing human resource policies to strengthen gender equality, or have recently completed such reviews to protect women employees including provisions relating to anti-discrimination, 'zero tolerance' of workplace violence and support for survivors of domestic violence.

22. Women in Business groups or networks are being established or expanding in some Pacific countries with Chambers of Commerce (or equivalents) offering a range of training programs specifically for women entrepreneurs. Access to credit has expanded through a wider range of 'lending products', more flexibility in eligibility criteria, lower rates of interest and more flexible repayment schedules which are more suited for women entrepreneurs¹².

C. Next Steps

23. The Secretariat is undertaking a review of the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED) in 2021 with the aim of revitalising to reflect the current context we are living in. This review will include revisiting the key focus area of WEE reflecting key discussions and findings some of which are highlighted in the Paper.

24. It is important for Pacific countries to action commitments and recommendations made on gender equality at national, regional and international levels. These include the recommendations specified in the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Agreed Conclusions, 2020 Biennial Pacific Sustainable Development Report, the SEIA Report, and the outcomes of 14th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women, and 7th Ministers for Women Meeting.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
10 June 2021

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid



Outcomes and Recommendations
(Endorsed on 4 May 2021)
27–29 April, 4 May 2021, Virtual Webinar

PREAMBLE

1. The 14th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women ('the Conference'), convened by the Pacific Community (SPC) and hosted and chaired by French Polynesia, was held from 27 to 29 April 2021, preceded by side events from 22 to 23 April 2021. The Conference was a fully virtual event with over 1000 participants, reflecting the immense interest the journey of Pacific women and girls of all diversities¹³ towards equality. Participants included Pacific Island country and territory (PICT) government delegations, civil society representatives, development partners, academia, private sector, and other stakeholders, from within the Blue Pacific continent and beyond.

2. The theme of the Conference 'Our Ocean, Our heritage, Our Future – Empowering All Women in the Blue Pacific Continent' reaffirms that the ocean is inseparable from Pacific peoples, cultures, economies and societies. The Pacific Ocean forms a crucial element of Pacific women's identities, ways and knowledge, and is a source of cultural and material empowerment.

3. The 7th Meeting of Pacific Ministers for Women ('the Ministerial') followed the Conference, on 4 May 2021, and was attended by honourable ministers responsible for women's affairs, and/or their senior officials, from the following SPC members – Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States of America, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna.

4. This Outcomes and Recommendations statement represents a summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed at the Conference to progress gender equality in PICTs and was endorsed at the Ministerial. A summary report on the Conference is forthcoming.

¹³To clarify the use of 'Pacific women of all diversities' or 'all Pacific women', the Conference took guidance from CEDAW Article 1, which refers to discrimination against women as meaning 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. The use of these terms in this document thus refers to all groups and age groups of Pacific women, including indigenous women, elderly women, girls, women living with disabilities, lesbian and bisexual women, urban poor women, women in rural and maritime areas, and women on the climate frontline.

5. The Conference and Ministerial focused on three priority areas: women’s economic empowerment, gender-based violence, and gender-responsive climate justice; and four cross-cutting themes: women in leadership and decision-making; crises and disasters; sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD) and statistics; and intergenerational dialogue to ensure the perspectives of Pacific youth are heard. The 19 side events provided a platform to showcase practices, innovative ways of working, and initiatives for cross-learning and sharing. Annex A contains the Conference programme.

6. The Conference and Ministerial recognised and reaffirmed all national, regional and international commitments by PICTs to gender equality, including the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, while acknowledging that implementation remains a challenge for many of them. The Conference and Ministerial further recognised and reaffirmed that advancing gender equality requires a holistic and collaborative approach that leverages partnerships between governments, the media, civil society, private sector, academia, traditional and faith leaders, communities and families, and requires genuine political commitment at all levels.

7. The Conference and Ministerial noted the interrelated crises affecting the Pacific, including the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change and disasters, and their crippling impacts including for the long-term prospects for economic well-being and recovery. These crises amplify existing gender inequalities and pose further risks for women and girls of all diversities, potentially derailing efforts to accelerate gender equality. Regional solidarity and global collective action are critical to overcoming these challenges, and to enable the transition to an inclusive, circular, regenerative green economy.

LAUNCH OF THE BEIJING+25 PACIFIC REGIONAL PROGRESS REVIEW REPORT

8. The year 2020 marked the 25th anniversary of the 4th World Conference on Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing+25). In the Pacific region, SPC joined with the UN Women Pacific Multi-Country Office and the Pacific Region Gender Technical Working Group to produce the Beijing+25 Pacific Regional Progress Review Report. This was launched during the Conference by French Polynesian writer and poet Flora Aurima Devatine.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE KEY ISSUES AND PROPOSED ACTIONS

Cross-cutting themes

9. The Conference cross-cutting themes are both standalone priority areas as well as key enabling factors for the three Conference priority themes. The Conference called on governments¹⁴, with the assistance of civil society organisations (CSOs), faith-based organisations (FBOs), Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) agencies, development partners, and the private sector, mentioned in parentheses, as appropriate to implement the following specific actions.

² ‘Government’ means governments at all levels in PICTs.

i) Women in leadership and decision-making:

a) Adopt measures to increase women's participation in all levels of leadership and decision-making including political representation, senior positions in the public and private sector and within local and communal governance systems. *(Governments, private sector)*

b) Support ongoing efforts of the private sector in creating and strengthening leadership pathways for women and demonstrating their capacity as leaders to shift social norms. *(Governments)*

ii) Crises and disasters:

a) Actively involve women and girls in crisis response and recovery decisions, ensuring humanitarian and recovery programmes are gender responsive and enhance accountability to affected populations. *(Governments, development partners)*

b) Ensure women's access to essential services during crisis situations, including access to quality sexual and reproductive health services and commodities, and for those affected by gender-based violence (GBV) access to quality counselling, protection and safe housing. *(Governments, development partners)*

iii) Sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD) and statistics:

a) Establish mechanisms to identify gender-sensitive and socially inclusive sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data and statistics gaps, and plans to address and fill gaps (as prescribed in the Pacific Gender Statistics Roadmap). *(Governments, development partners)*

b) Ensure National Statistics Offices are given the responsibility and resourced to lead the culturally responsive collection, management and analysis of SADDD and work with decision-makers to inform policy and planning. *(Governments, development partners)*

iv) Intergenerational dialogue and marginalised groups dialogue and perspectives:

a) Ensure that national plans, policies and legislation are developed through participatory processes – with a life cycle approach – that include the perspectives of all marginalised groups in the community, including women and youth. *(Governments, development partners)*

v) Collaboration and communication:

a) Work with partners in media and communications to ensure messages consistent with gender equality and women's rights. *(Governments, private sector, CROP agencies, development agencies, civil society)*

b) Strengthen coordination and partnerships in all measures taken to advance gender equality and women's rights, including ongoing dialogue and collaboration with civil society, traditional and faith-based leaders and organisations, and communities. *(Governments, civil society, private sector, CROP agencies, development partners)*

PRIORITY AREA: WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

10. The Conference reaffirmed women's economic empowerment as fundamental for development. The Conference called on governments, with the assistance of CSOs, FBOs, CROP agencies, development partners and the private sector, mentioned in parentheses, as appropriate to implement the following specific actions to achieve economic empowerment of all Pacific women.

a) Implement policies, legislation and gender-responsive budgets in compliance with agreed regional and international standards and conventions to: address disparities with regard to women's access and opportunities in all fields of economic activity; proactively expand opportunities for women to participate in critical sectors and industries; equally acknowledge, value and remunerate women's work in all fields. *(Governments, private sector)*

b) Implement equitable, inclusive, accessible, resilient and gender-responsive social protection policies and programmes for all women, including those in informal work, unpaid care and domestic work, self-employed, migrant workers, and those with disabilities or affected by long-term illnesses. Social protection policies must be grounded in a human rights-based approach, and strengthened by supportive cultural practices. *(Governments)*

c) Establish or improve regulatory frameworks and enforcement of labour laws to ensure that informal sector workers and migrant workers have decent paid work and safe workplaces. *(Governments)*

d) Reduce barriers to women's access to credit and financial services, especially for women in the informal sector, rural women, women and girls with disabilities, GBV survivors and those residing in areas under-served by financial institutions, including in the aftermath of disasters. *(Governments, financial institutions)*

e) Strengthen prospects for all women, including those working in informal sectors, with inclusive education and financial literacy training that can help transition women to formal employment. *(Governments)*

f) Regulate private and public care providers to enforce minimum standards and quality of care, and protect the rights of domestic workers and caregivers. *(Governments)*

g) Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, including through national accounts if appropriate, to address women's disproportionate contribution to this valuable societal sphere. *(Governments)*

h) Strengthen business leadership by women through targeted business support services, incubation initiatives for women entrepreneurs, business clustering, and support opportunities for women to access leadership training and mentoring. *(Governments, private sector, development partners)*

- i) Adopt appropriate and accessible proactive measures for women's education, training and employment in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and information and communications technology, and develop pathways, including via training and mentoring, into critical industries (including leadership roles) with particular emphasis on agriculture, fisheries, and local and traditional arts and crafts. *(Governments, private sector)*
- j) Connect development efforts to sustainable livelihood opportunities by ensuring available national and regional markets for product-based development projects, and ensuring vocational training is linked to job market realities. *(Governments, development partners, civil society)*
- k) Promote partnerships to prevent GBV. Support private sector adoption of policies, procedures and evaluation to ensure an organisational culture and practice of safety in the workplace and at home. *(Governments, private sector, civil society)*
- l) Consider ratifying and applying the International Labour Organisation Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), and implementing its provisions in partnership with trade unions, employers' organisations and civil society. *(Governments, trade unions, employers' organisations, private sector and civil society)*
- m) Adopt policies and measures to facilitate reasonable accommodation and flexible working hours for women, and promote the use of technology for working remotely when possible/practical. Specifically for survivors of GBV, provide support, emergency accommodation and paid leave. *(Governments, private sector)*
- n) Facilitate access to safe and efficient transport to and from places of work for women. *(Governments, private sector)*
- o) Improve the culturally sound collection, analysis and use of gender-sensitive and socially inclusive sex-, age-, disability- and other variable disaggregated data on economic participation and workforce composition, including in relation to critical value chains. *(Governments)*
- p) Guarantee sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), so that women, young women and girls, including those with disabilities, receive comprehensive and confidential SRHR information and services that respect their culture, faith and human rights throughout their life. *(Governments, civil society)*
- q) Build and strengthen sustainable water resource management and maintenance in workplaces and communities to ensure that there is accessible, affordable, safe and secure drinking water, and gender-responsive waste management systems. *(Governments)*
- r) Ensure comprehensive maternity and parental leave that promotes equal recognition of the parenting roles of women and men, as well as safe, affordable and accessible early childhood care. *(Governments, private sector)*

s) Establish national and regional business hub(s) to create opportunities for women, from production to accessible markets, and safeguard against national supply chain issues, market fluctuations, or disaster-related disruption. *(Governments, private sector)*

PRIORITY AREA: GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

11. The Conference acknowledged GBV as a continuing scourge of the Pacific, and reaffirmed that its root cause is gender inequality, unequal gender power relations, privilege and patriarchy. The Conference called on governments, with the assistance of CSOs, FBOs, CROP agencies, development partners and the private sector, mentioned in parentheses, as appropriate to implement the following specific actions to end violence against women and girls and increase support and services to survivors.

a) Leadership at all levels must commit to promoting initiatives to end GBV, and partnerships must be strengthened between civil society and governments, including at district/provincial and town/island levels, traditional leaders, FBOs, education institutions, youth, sports and disability organisations, and communities to jointly advocate for and act to end violence in the family and society.

b) Invest in and strengthen contextualised, evidence-based GBV prevention programmes that work with children and young people, and ensure that violence prevention is integrated into formal and informal education curricula. *(Governments, education institutions, development partners, civil society)*

c) Create and support GBV prevention programmes that promote positive masculinities, respect for women and girls, and the understanding of consent with regard to sexual activity, and engage men and boys, mothers and fathers, and families. *(Governments, private sector, education institutions, development partners, civil society)*

d) Create and support programmes inspired by the 'Peaceful Village' model where families, the village and community participate on a voluntary basis as anti-violence advocates. *(Governments, development partners, civil society)*

e) Scale up resourcing of all GBV programmes to reflect the magnitude of the issue, and invest in responses based on a robust needs analysis. *(Governments, private sector, development partners)*

f) Ensure GBV efforts have a balance of emphasis and resourcing between prevention programmes, survivor response services, criminal justice system responses, support for survivors, and rehabilitation efforts for perpetrators. These efforts must be clearly linked, complimentary and tailored to the context. *(Governments, development partners)*

g) Establish or scale up support to crisis centres, safe houses and referral networks to ensure all GBV survivors (including child survivors and survivors of incest) and at-risk women and girls (including those with disabilities) have access to protection, shelter, counselling, psycho-social support and medical services, maintenance, compensation and criminal justice processes. Ensure that survivors also have access to employment training to become financially independent. *(Governments, development partners, civil society)*

h) Establish and implement standards of care for GBV survivors, including through national service delivery protocols. *(Governments)*

i) Include specific provisions in domestic violence laws to ensure survivors can access essential services during emergencies through service delivery protocol pathways, and enhance safety and protection messaging during emergencies. Strengthen the capacity of first responders and all humanitarian actors to prevent violence and protect women and girls during and in the aftermath of a disaster or crisis. *(Governments, development partners)*

j) Strengthen laws, definitions and criminal justice system penalties based on research and consultation, including the expansion of the definition of rape to include all its forms. Strengthen and enforce laws to explicitly prohibit marital rape, workplace sexual harassment, online violence and abuse, and cyber-harassment. *(Governments)*

k) Invest in training for health officials, counsellors, district/provincial and town/island officers, and law enforcement training for police officers and other first responders and all humanitarian actors with regard to incidents of violence against women and girls to ensure appropriate survivor-centred responses. *(Governments, development partners)*

l) Invest in the collection, analysis and use of safe, ethical, culturally sound and survivor-centred data, including prevalence of violence against women and administrative data, to inform legal frameworks, policies and strategies, and for assessments of emergency events. Data collectors

must be well-trained and gender and disability sensitised, and respondents fully informed. *(Governments, development partners)*

m) Support regional knowledge platforms, such as the Pacific data hub and Tok Save gender portal, to encourage learning and exchange between PICTs on GBV initiatives, through visits and dialogue. *(SPC and other CROP agencies, development partners)*

PRIORITY AREA: GENDER-RESPONSIVE CLIMATE JUSTICE

12. Climate change and crisis represents the single greatest threat facing the well-being, security and livelihoods of Pacific peoples. Climate change and related disasters impact women, girls, and persons with disabilities disproportionately, while women's knowledge and resilience are undervalued and overlooked. The Conference called on governments, with the assistance of CSOs, FBOs, CROP agencies, development partners and the private sector, mentioned in parentheses, as appropriate to implement the following specific actions to promote gender equality alongside reducing the impacts of climate change, especially within marginalised communities.

a) Ensure a gender-responsive approach to the climate crisis that recognises women's agency, knowledge and leadership, and facilitate women's active participation in climate change decision-making platforms regionally, nationally and within communities. *(Governments, CROP agencies, development partners)*

b) Ensure women and other marginalised groups meaningfully participate in all stages of the design and implementation of national and sectoral policies, strategies and plans relating to climate change and disaster risk management and that such policies, strategies and plans are gender-responsive and include gender indicators. *(Governments)*

- c) Recognise the value of and adopt gender-responsive and inclusive budgeting within all climate change and disaster risk management policies, strategies and plans to ensure financial support for activities and programmes that address climate change impacts on women and girls. *(Governments)*
- d) Acknowledge the link between gender equality and climate change impacts and the need to consider a human rights-based approach at the legislative, policy and programme level that is contextualised using cultural practices, norms and proverbs. *(All entities)*
- e) Recognise the value of traditional knowledge, skills and expertise – alongside scientific knowledge – and the role of indigenous, faith-based and local communities in climate action and disaster resilience. *(All entities)*
- f) Mainstream gender and social inclusion – one of the most effective approaches for building climate and disaster resilience – in responses to the climate crisis. Support governments to meet social and environmental safeguards when applying for the Green Climate Fund and other climate financing mechanisms. Ensure national women’s machinery and women’s organisations are partners in the implementation of climate resilience activities and provide them with appropriate levels of support for work in this regard. *(Governments, development partners, CROP agencies, civil society)*
- g) Invest in culturally responsive collection, analysis and use of gender-sensitive and socially inclusive sex-, age-, disability- and other variable disaggregated data, to enhance understanding of the gendered impacts of climate change. Support the implementation of national surveys that measure aspects of the gender–environment nexus, including training for gender data gatherers. Convene a Pacific Group on Disaster-related Statistics to share better practices on disaster-related data disaggregation, monitoring and application. *(All entities)*
- h) Invest in knowledge hubs and appropriate and accessible platforms (in indigenous and local languages, for example), including digital platforms, and particularly those that demonstrate local women-led innovation, to increase inclusion and access to and dissemination of knowledge to all Pacific women on climate change and responses. *(Governments, development partners)*
- i) Acknowledge the link between climate change, disaster risks, GBV and SRHR, and ensure all women and girls can access GBV and SRHR information and services including in times of disaster. *(All entities)*
- j) Ensure strengthened coordination and capacity building on gender and human rights, including integration in climate and disaster gender policies, through the utilisation of existing mechanisms to promote a holistic approach to addressing the gender dimensions of climate change and other crises. *(All entities)*

k) Recognise that recovery efforts in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic present an opportunity to transform our societies and to place women, especially the most marginalised, at the heart of climate change and crisis responses and the transition to a green economy, including through ensuring the meaningful participation of women, persons with disabilities, and the elderly in the planning, design and maintenance of resilient infrastructure. *(All entities)*

l) Use these Outcomes and Recommendations to inform the position of the Pacific Islands Countries at the next sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, especially the 66th session dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women in relation to climate change. *(Governments)*

m) In recognising the threat of climate change, agree to work towards national implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change gender action plan. *(Governments, development partners and CROP agencies)*

MONITORING PROGRESS

13. The Conference calls on all entities to work in partnership to monitor progress in the implementation of these action points on the three priority themes and cross-cutting themes, and to report on this progress at the next Triennial Conference of Women.

ENDORSED BY:

- Australia
- Cook Islands
- Federated States of Micronesia
- Fiji
- French Polynesia
- Guam
- Kiribati
- Nauru
- New Caledonia
- New Zealand
- Palau
- Republic of the Marshall Islands
- Samoa
- Solomon Islands
- Tonga
- Tuvalu
- United States of America
- Vanuatu
- Wallis & Futuna