

## REVITALISED PACIFIC LEADERS GENDER EQUALITY DECLARATION

Pacific Forum Leaders declaration on achieving gender equality through the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*.

### PREAMBLE

1. **Recalling** the *2012 Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration*, which committed to lift the status of women in the Pacific and empower them to be active participants in political, economic and social life;
2. **Recognising** that despite the progress since our endorsement of the Declaration in 2012, our collective ambition in advancing gender equality and social inclusion are yet to be achieved;
3. **Recognising** that structural and underlying social, cultural, and economic barriers have detrimental effects on the lives of women and girls in all their diversity,<sup>1</sup> and that changing attitudes and behaviours towards gender equality and social inclusion must start with our children;
4. **Reaffirming** our commitment to the *Beijing Platform for Action* and the *Pacific Platform for Action and Women's Human Rights (2018 – 2030)*, as contextualised against the thematic areas of the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*.
5. **Reaffirming** that climate change and disasters, including nuclear contamination, have a disproportionate impact on women and girls in all their diversity, particularly women and girls with disabilities and women and girls living in rural, remote and maritime areas and that we will not meet the 1.5 degrees celsius goal, or any other goal, without their full contribution.
6. **Reaffirming** our rich diverse context, cultures, traditions, and values, and the significant role these play in progressing gender equality and social inclusion in our region;
7. **Reaffirming** that women's economic empowerment is fundamental to development;
8. **Acknowledging** that digital technologies can transform communities, promote innovation and provide opportunities that can accelerate the realisation of our 2050 Vision and advance gender equality and social inclusion in the Blue Pacific Continent;
9. **Expressing strong concern** that gender-based violence remains a grave challenge for our Blue Pacific Continent; and
10. **Affirming** that this revitalised *Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Declaration on Achieving Gender Equality* promotes a coherent and inclusive approach to gender equality and social inclusion actions, to achieve our Vision for a resilient Pacific Region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity, that ensures that all Pacific peoples can lead free, healthy, and productive lives.

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<sup>1</sup> *The term women and girls in all their diversity is taken from the Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights 2018-2030, and the Outcomes of the 14th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and the 7th Pacific Ministers for Women Meeting. The full definition as referenced in these documents is provided in the Explanatory Note and recognises national contexts.*

**WE, THE LEADERS OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM MAKE THIS REVITALISED DECLARATION BASED ON THE FOLLOWING:**

11. **Call** for stronger commitment at all levels to the revitalised *Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Declaration on Achieving Gender Equality* and urge new transformative partnerships and investments with all stakeholders that will guarantee lifelong learning, health and wellbeing of all Pacific peoples, particularly for women and girls in all their diversity.
12. **Commit** to stronger leadership to improve governance, ownership and accountability of the Declaration through the Pacific Islands Forum Women Leaders Meetings, our annual Forum Leaders Meetings, other ministerial convenings at regional and international level, and as determined through a timebound work plan.
13. **Commit** to operationalise and implement the revitalised Declaration through:
  - i. stronger measures to improve strategic resourcing, monitoring and reporting on progress through the collection, collation and analysis of high-quality quantitative and qualitative disaggregated gender and disability inclusive data.
  - ii. accelerated actions and measures to strengthen the participation of all Pacific peoples, particularly women and girls in all their diversity, at all levels of leadership and decision-making, and strengthen national systems to promote and mainstream gender equality and inclusivity.
  - iii. holistic approaches to gender equality and social inclusion, including measures to fully engage men and boys in efforts to achieve the full, effective, and accelerated implementation of this Declaration.
  - iv. taking a twin tracked approach to disability inclusion by creating an enabling environment for the meaningful and equal participation of persons with disabilities particularly women and girls with disabilities, through transformative and innovative approaches that provides opportunities whilst ensuring their safety and protection.
  - v. accelerating necessary and innovative actions to prevent and eliminate gender-based violence including domestic violence, which take survivor-centred, whole-of-community and family approaches, while ensuring perpetrators of violence are held accountable for their actions.
  - vi. ensuring universal health coverage for all Pacific peoples particularly women and girls in all their diversity, including Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and mental health.
  - vii. inclusive, accessible, quality and affordable education for all Pacific peoples that ensures lifelong learning, a safe and supportive education environment, progressive curriculum with appropriate pedagogy that promotes gender equality and social inclusion and comprehensive sexuality education.
  - viii. meaningful participation of all Pacific peoples, particularly women and girls in all their diversity, in climate change action including access to climate finance, disaster risk management, the protection of persons affected by climate change-related sea-level rise, climate security and the sustainable management and use of oceans and river resources for development.

- ix. creating a conducive environment for women and girls' economic empowerment inclusive of those working in the informal and unpaid care economy, women and girls with disabilities, and women and girls in rural, remote, and maritime areas.
  - x. bridging the gender digital divide by promoting access to ICT and digital services for all Pacific peoples, particularly women and girls in all their diversity while ensuring online safety and minimising harmful impacts.
  - xi. Ensuring the safety and protection of all Pacific peoples particularly women and girls in all their diversity including climate security, and by taking measures to end all forms of human exploitation including human trafficking.
  - xii. ensuring the full, equal, effective, and meaningful leadership and participation of women and girls in all their diversity at every stage of peace processes, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding for peace and security.
14. **Direct** CROP and **Call** on all partners to dedicate recurrent and new resources and work collaboratively for greater coherence to progress gender equality and social inclusion at both national and regional levels.

## ADDENDUM

### Explanatory Note

#### Revitalised Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration

1. The revitalization of the Declaration was endorsed by Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders at the 51st PIF Leaders Meeting (PIFLM).
2. Consultations took place from September 2022 to April 2023 with the 18 Member countries of the PIF. Consultations were informed by the 2021 independent PLGED review and consultations for the development of the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent* (2050 Strategy).
3. The consultations focused on the priorities and a proposed governance mechanism for the revitalized PLGED. Members were presented with a proposed way forward, which included:
  - (i) **Priorities:** using the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) 12 Areas of Critical Concern + 2 Pacific-specific areas<sup>2</sup> as reflected in the Pacific Platform for Action and Women's Human Rights 2018 – 2030 (PPA), and the basis for renewed focus; and

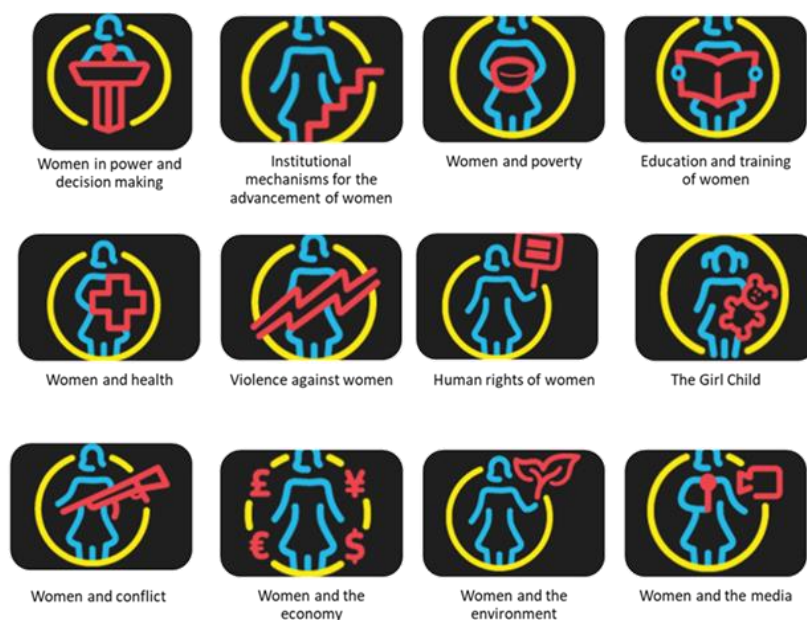


Diagram 1: BPA 12 +2/PPA Critical Areas

- (ii) **Governance:** the PIF Women Leaders Meeting (PIFWLM) as the governance and oversight mechanism for gender equality actions in the region.

#### Priorities of the Revitalised Declaration

<sup>2</sup> Two additional areas of Women and Culture and Women and Disability are derived from the 2020 Pacific Report on the Beijing 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and reflective of the PPA.

4. The consultations confirmed the need to amalgamate the revitalised PLGED to the 2012 priorities, the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) Critical Areas and the two Pacific specific areas of culture and disability as reflected in the PPA, as well as emerging issues from the consultations. It also confirmed the need to reflect these priorities within the seven thematic areas of the 2050 Strategy.



Diagram 2-2012 PLGED focus



Diagram 3-Emerging Issues

| Political Leadership and Regionalism   | People Centred Development  | Peace and Security   | Resource and Economic Development  | Climate Change and Disasters   | Ocean and Environment   | Technology and Connectivity   |
|--|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision making</li> <li>• Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Gender-based violence</li> <li>• Human Rights</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Sports</li> <li>• Migration</li> <li>• Mental health</li> <li>• Faith</li> <li>• Health emergencies</li> <li>• The Child</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender-based violence</li> <li>• Women, peace, and security</li> <li>• Human trafficking</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economy</li> <li>• Energy</li> <li>• Mobility &amp; Migration</li> <li>• Land</li> <li>• Fisheries</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food security</li> <li>• DRR</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Fisheries</li> <li>• Resource-related rehabilitation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media</li> <li>• STEM</li> <li>• ICT</li> <li>• Transport</li> </ul> |

*Diagram 4-Revitalised PLGED – priorities*

5. The use of the terminology ‘Pacific women of all diversities’ or ‘all Pacific women’ is derived from the 14<sup>th</sup> Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Pacific Ministers for Women which took guidance from CEDAW Article 1. The Article 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.

6. The PPA provides a roadmap for achieving gender equality and enhancing the well-being of all women and girls of all diversities inclusive of young women, older women, rural women, women with disabilities, women with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, and indigenous women.

*Overarching Priorities based on the 2050 Strategy Thematic Areas*

**i. Political leadership and regionalism**

7. There is a need to accelerate actions and adopt measures to strengthen the participation of all Pacific peoples particularly women and girls in all their diversity, at all levels of leadership and decision-making, and strengthen national systems to promote and mainstream gender equality and inclusivity.

**ii. People-Centred Development**

8. To achieve the full, effective, and accelerated implementation of the Declaration a holistic approach to gender equality and social inclusion which include measures to fully engage men and boys in efforts to address gender inequality is required.

9. Creating an enabling environment for the meaningful and equal participation of persons with disabilities particularly women and girls with disabilities, through transformative and innovative approaches that provides opportunities whilst ensuring their safety and protection.

10. Further investments in all aspects of the health and wellbeing of all Pacific peoples, including Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)<sup>3</sup>, Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and mental health.

<sup>3</sup> This language is used in the Pacific Sustainable Quadrennial Report.

11. Encourage lifelong learning for women and girls, in all their diversity by providing an enabling environment and encouraging them to develop their skills, including in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and economics.

12. Attitudinal and behavioural change towards gender equality and social inclusion needs to start with children including strengthening the gender equality and social inclusion content in Pacific education curriculum.

13. Recognise that sports can be utilised as a pathway for development, including educational and economic opportunities.

14. Given the importance of culture in the lives of Pacific people, it is critical to utilise Pacific cultures and values that support gender equality and social inclusion efforts.

15. It is imperative that actions to prevent and eliminate gender-based violence, including violence against children, are survivor-centred and hold perpetrators of violence to account. Furthermore, considering the communal and kin-based ways of living, a whole of community and family approach to preventing and eliminating gender-based violence is imperative.

16. While Gender Based Violence is an all-encompassing reference to violence, it must be acknowledged that women and girls face high rates of violence with statistics showing that 2 in 3 women will experience physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime – double the global rate of violence<sup>4</sup>. It is imperative that all forms of violence against women is addressed.

### **iii. Peace and Security**

17. The expanded definition of security inclusive of human security, as espoused in the 2018 Boe Declaration ensures that conflict prevention broadly needs to be inclusive of all Pacific people to ensure peace within our societies. This expanded definition also takes into consideration all forms of human exploitation including human trafficking.

### **iv. Resource and Economic Development**

18. The creation of economic opportunities for women in all their diversity, including those working in the informal economy, women in the unpaid care economy, women and girls with disabilities, and women in rural, remote, and maritime areas will contribute to the development of the Blue Pacific.

### **v. Climate Change and Disasters**

19. The climate crises, disaster risk management and humanitarian action and the protection, management of our environment and ocean actions need gender-responsive and socially inclusive approaches that promote the active participation of women and girls in all their diversity, including in decision-making, development, and use of technologies, and through simplified access to finance.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/fiji/ending-violence-against-women>

**vi. Ocean and Environment**

20. The depletion of natural resources and environmental degradation displaces communities, and results in negative effects on the health, well-being, and quality of life of all Pacific peoples especially girls and women in all their diversity. A gender and socially inclusive approach will ensure that all Pacific people's circumstances are considered when addressing resource and environmental displacement.

**vii. Technology and Connectivity**

The promotion of access to ICT and digital services by all Pacific peoples, particularly women, children, persons with disabilities, and those living in rural, remote, and maritime areas will contribute to bridging the gender digital gap. At the same time, the need for ensuring online safety for women and children, particularly harmful impacts such as online harassment,