



For the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaign, we asked SPC directors and staff to share a few words on the importance of gender equality and the need to eliminate all forms of violence against women. Here is what they said:

*'[A]s policy makers we all need to work together to put in place and implement policies that protect women in the maritime sector.'*

Thierry Nervale, Deputy Director, Transport

There are few Pacific women working as seafarers, and more would like to join this sector as expressed at the regional conference on women in maritime transport held in Tonga this year. SPC is proud to support this idea, and we take every opportunity to highlight the importance of increasing and recognising the involvement of Pacific women in the maritime sector, but also making this sector a safe space for them.

However, there are obstacles to lift if we want to welcome women in this sector. There are gender stereotypes, and the general belief that women's place is not at sea and they are not able to work in the tough environment of a vessel. There is also the risk of sexual harassment and the threat (real or perceived) of violence, which is a major factor impacting a woman's choice to pursue this career in the maritime industry.

Therefore, as policy makers we all need to work together to put in place and implement policies that protect women in the maritime sector. Training and awareness on the prevention of violence against women must be made mandatory for all seafarers and those working in the maritime industry. We believe men will benefit from those initiatives too.

*The 16 days of activism campaign, which runs every year from 25 November – International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women – to 10 December – Human Rights Day – calls for the elimination of violence against women and invites everyone to take action against it.*