



*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:*

*'Because violence against women is deep-rooted in our societies, we all have a role to play to be able to effectively tackle this issue.'*

*Leituala Kuiniselani Tago-Elisara, Director, Social Development Programme, Pacific Community*

*The elimination of violence against women has been part of the regional agenda for over 20 years; yet, it remains a major obstacle to the achievement of development outcomes in the Pacific island countries and territories. Because violence against women is deep-rooted in our societies, we all have a role to play to be able to effectively tackle this issue.*

*We know that in order to address the multidimensional aspects of violence against women and girls, we need to adopt multisectoral policies and strategies involving wider sectors of government, including health, law and justice, social development, education, infrastructure, communications and the media, civil society organisations, and many other stakeholders. This also requires concerted efforts to mainstream gender issues including the elimination of violence against women and girls across all sectors so it becomes a collective responsibility through the adoption of a whole-of-government approach.*

*SPC continues to work together with the Pacific Island countries and territories to build capacity to mainstream gender considerations across government services and programmes. For us, gender inequality is not an issue that is particular to women and that needs to be treated separately. Across all sectors there are opportunities to: 1) promote women's participation in decision-making so they can influence programmes and services that will contribute to their protection, their safety, and will respond to their needs; 2) develop opportunities for employment and income-generating activities for women that will contribute to their self-reliance; and 3) inform them about their rights. We stand ready to assist!*

*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.*