

# *Women's Economic Empowerment in the Pacific*

## **Regional Overview**

Prepared by the Pacific Community for the  
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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific
CSOs	Civil society organisations
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FEMM	Forum Economic Ministers Meeting
GDI	Gender development index
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEM	Gender empowerment measure
HDI	Human development index
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organization
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NWMs	National women's machineries
PICTs	Pacific Island countries and territories
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PLGED	Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PPA	Pacific Platform for Action
PRISM	Pacific regional information system (SPC)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPC	Pacific Community
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHLP-WEE	UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment

## Summary

Economic empowerment of women is a 'development game changer' because when more women participate in either the formal or informal economy, their families, communities and countries become wealthier. This empowerment requires removing barriers such as discriminatory laws, changing social and cultural norms that expect women to take on the lion's share of home and family care, and doing much more to address the drivers and causes of gender inequality, exclusion and vulnerability.

In the Pacific, gender disparities that have the effect of excluding women are the result of the roles that society assigns to men and women; attitudinal and structural barriers to equal participation in decision-making; obstacles to access to justice, inheritance and ownership; and value systems that link masculinity with authority of women in some parts of the Pacific. Against this background, women's economic empowerment in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) is therefore about promoting economic equality in both the formal and informal sectors through i) increasing job opportunities and closing the pay gap between women and men; ii) reducing impediments to informal sector activity where women often dominate; and iii) simplifying processes for business licencing and loan access.

Women already make a large contribution to PICT economies. In Solomon Islands, the annual turnover at the Honiara Central Market is USD 10–16 million, with women responsible for about 90% of market activity, both as bulk-buyers from farmers and as retailers. In Papua New Guinea, women are largely responsible for food production, valued at USD 55 million per year. In Samoa, 80% of the private sector comprises micro-businesses and women are estimated to head over 40% of them. Women may not be formalising their businesses for several reasons. Culturally, they are not expected to become successful in business although they may be expected to engage in income-generating activities. In some countries, for example, Tonga, there is growing acceptance of female entrepreneurship, at least at the sole trader level. But as in many societies, economically active women have a 'double workday' – combining responsibilities for home and family with their economic activities. For example, in Papua New Guinea, women work on average nearly twice as many hours as men, and in Tonga, they spend 50% more hours than men on non-economic activities each week.

Pacific governments have made numerous commitments to gender equality and women's economic empowerment at national, regional and global levels over many years. They have made progress in legislative reform and policy making, but implementing the new laws and policies remains a challenge.

Where are there gaps in implementation and why is women's contribution to economic development in the Pacific not better recognised? To answer these questions, we need to examine the underlying causes of inequality and identify drivers that can help trigger increased commitment and progress. These include the following:

- (i) Recognising that changes in community attitudes and behaviour can only be achieved gradually, requiring the support of both women and men to break down stereotypes about gender roles and responsibilities in the home, employment and community.
- (ii) Ensuring that the perspectives of women and men are taken into account in forming national development plans and budgets. This requires governments and decision-makers to recognise the roles of men and women in both the formal and informal sectors in their economic and social policies and programmes.

- (iii) Enhancing legal protection and reforming discriminatory laws and, most importantly, ensuring that once enacted the laws are implemented and enforced.
- (iv) Removing gender disparities in relation to property rights and improving access to finance and technology.
- (v) Improving public and private business culture and practice to increase women's employment prospects and acknowledge the importance of the informal sector to the overall economy.
- (vi) Reducing and redistributing unpaid work and care. This factor relates directly to (i) above and requires careful and well-supported negotiation and a shift in societal values and norms to recognise that sharing these responsibilities has benefits for individuals, families and communities.
- (vii) Enhancing the collection, analysis and dissemination of data on gender to support effective policymaking, as outlined in (ii) above. This is critical to understanding and acting on impediments to, and drivers of progress in women's economic empowerment.
- (viii) Strengthening the collective voice and representation of women on all of these factors to ensure sustained progress and success.

Based on this analysis, and in line with the new Pacific Platform for Action, recommendations have been developed under the five areas of the Platform. A full list of the recommendations is included in the paper.

In terms of information requirements, there is a need for further studies on issues such as the impacts of cultural, political, religious, social and economic structures; the effects of communal property rights and traditional social structures; utilisation of technological and social innovation; the potential economic benefits of supporting women in raising families and sharing care responsibilities; and increasing women's opportunities to respond to economic incentives.

There are many paths for mainstreaming gender in economic development approaches. For example, government procurement policies can include incentives for corporations and companies to employ more women and appoint women to their boards, and fiscal measures can be used to support employment of women with disabilities and young women. Gender analysis can be used to identify the impacts of macro-economic policies on women's assets and economic empowerment and on people in hardship. Improvements in infrastructure and communication can support women's economic participation and increase the rewards of their participation; for example, UN Women's Markets for Change programme in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu is enhancing conditions for vendors by improving market-place governance, facilities and access. Policies must ensure that women are fully included in disaster preparedness and recovery, and in approaches to climate change. Attention to cultural industries and small-scale farming and fisheries is also highly important for women, particularly in relation to informal economic activity.

Key to the success of initiatives to enhance women's economic empowerment is the establishment and maintenance of partnerships between governments, the private sector, civil society, development partners, financial organisations and academic institutions. While each has separate roles, collaboration can promote sustainable gains. Recommendations on how the roles of each of the partners can be enhanced are included in the paper.

Achieving gender equality and women's economic empowerment in the Pacific will require long-term investment that reflects the integrated nature of the issues that create gender inequality.

Pacific governments have made repeated commitments to gender equality and women's economic empowerment but there are major weaknesses in follow-up and monitoring to ensure accountability for results. The paper recommends regular and rigorous monitoring and reporting process for the governments and CROP agencies to demonstrate their efforts in terms of practices and resourcing to effectively progress the implementation of commitments to gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

## A. Introduction

1. Women's economic empowerment is the central theme of the 13th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and 6th Meeting of Pacific Ministers for Women (1–5 October 2017, Suva, Fiji). In support of this theme, the meetings will consider the adoption of a revised regional instrument for gender equality – the *Pacific Platform for Action on gender equality and women's human rights* (PPA). The goal is to accelerate action on regional and national commitments to gender equality, particularly those agreed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and 2012 Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration.

2. Women's economic empowerment is fundamental to the resilience and sustainable development of Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs). In the last two decades, there has been progress in terms of access to education and training for girls and women; expansion of women's financial inclusion and financial literacy; introduction of maternity leave in the public sector; and increased numbers of women contributing to superannuation schemes for long-term financial security.<sup>1</sup>

3. However, improved gender parity in primary and secondary education and increased access at tertiary level has not yet translated into equal employment opportunities and control over productive assets for business development. According to the PLGED Trend Assessment Report, 'gender pay disparities have widened or remained the same; legal, policy and social barriers hinder access to finance and resources, and the sustainability of business; gender discrimination on formal labour occupational segregation, maternity leave, care economy and precarious informal workplaces remain key challenges across the countries'.

4. This paper presents an overview of women's economic empowerment in the Pacific Islands region. It includes commitments made by Pacific governments at both global and regional levels; the status of women in the informal and formal sectors of employment and entrepreneurship; barriers and drivers for women's economic empowerment; and recommendations to accelerate action on women's economic empowerment in the context of the revised PPA. The paper will (i) guide discussions at the 13th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Pacific Ministers for Women, and (ii) provide the key reference for development of 'draft zero' of the joint Conference/Meeting outcomes document.

### **Economic empowerment of women – a definition**

5. 'A woman is economically empowered when she has both the ability to succeed and advance economically and the power to make and act on economic decisions. To succeed and advance economically, women need the skills and resources to compete in markets, as well as fair and equal access to economic institutions. To have the power and agency to benefit from economic activities, women need to have the ability to make and act on decisions and control resources and profits' (ICRW, 2011).

6. Women's economic empowerment has two dimensions: resources and agency. Resources are material and financial assets as well as skills, knowledge and expertise, and social capital and networks. Access to resources reflects the rules and norms that govern concepts of value, resource distribution and exchange. Agency refers to the ability of people to define their own goals and act on them. In the context of empowerment, agency implies

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<sup>1</sup> Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. 2016. Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration: Trend Assessment Report 2012–2016.

actions that may challenge power relations. It involves both changes in how people see themselves and in their capacity for action and enforcement of claims

7. Women's economic empowerment is a matter of human rights and social justice. Where women can achieve their economic potential, economies grow and societies prosper. Families are wealthier and more resilient when they have more than one adult with the skills to earn an income. Economic empowerment increases options for women who need to remove themselves and their children from violent situations. More diversity in business leadership results in more diverse and creative businesses.

8. There is solid evidence that increasing women's economic empowerment leads to economic growth. However, this growth occurs in many contexts and does not necessarily lead to women's economic empowerment and gender equality. The pursuit of economic growth must therefore be accompanied by awareness of gender-related barriers to women's economic empowerment and appropriate policy responses.

## **Pacific context for women's economic empowerment**

9. PICT economies all have the challenges of limited natural resources; heavy reliance on imports; a narrow base; remoteness from markets; and vulnerability to exogenous shocks such as high fuel prices and natural disasters. Formal employment is low overall – lower for women than men – and reliance on subsistence is common. These relatively weak economies will benefit when women are able to reach their potential and participate fully in economic life.

10. There are economic and social challenges to improving the status of women's economic empowerment. An emerging concern is the increased levels of poverty and hardship in many parts of the region. Despite differences between and within countries, there is also evidence of increasing inequality.<sup>2</sup> The State of Human Development in the Pacific (2014) points to island economies shifting from traditional to market-based economies and the differing circumstances of those living in urban versus rural areas. The report notes the contribution of the subsistence sector, which for most countries (except Papua New Guinea and Nauru) has reduced the prevalence of food poverty. However, with the move from a traditional to a monetised economy, there is also evidence of a breakdown in the reach of traditional safety nets.

11. The limited data available indicate that women are overrepresented in the increased proportion of households in hardship. Most often affected are sole mothers and women who are socially excluded or disadvantaged, such as widows, women with disabilities, LBT women, women living in remote areas, women who are victims of violence and women living with a family member with a disability. In Cook Islands in 2011, households headed by women had generally lower household incomes than those headed by men. For example, there was an 18% gap in household incomes between lone female and male household heads living with other relatives.<sup>3</sup> The data suggest that male-headed household incomes increase at approximately the same rate as economic growth, while the household income for female-headed households, particularly the poorest, does not increase at the same

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<sup>2</sup> The State of Human Development in the Pacific. A Report on Vulnerability and Exclusion in a Time of Rapid Change. 2014. ESCAP, ILO, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Cook Islands Gender Profile 2012, SPC. ([http://www.mfem.gov.ck/images/documents/Statistics\\_Docs/10.Other-Information/Cook-Gender-Profile.pdf](http://www.mfem.gov.ck/images/documents/Statistics_Docs/10.Other-Information/Cook-Gender-Profile.pdf)).



rate. In Samoa, for example, between 2008 and 2014, male-headed households benefited more from economic growth compared to female-headed households with more of the latter falling into the lowest income group.<sup>4</sup>

12. Women's contribution to the economy is significant. According to a study conducted by the World Bank in Solomon Islands in 2010, the annual turnover at the Honiara Central Market was estimated to be between USD 10–16 million, with women responsible for about 90% of this marketing activity – both as bulk buyers from farmers and as retailers. In PNG, annual food production is largely the responsibility of women and has been valued at USD 55 million per year. In Samoa, 80% of businesses in the private sector are micro businesses, and women are estimated to head over 40% of them (IFC, 2010). In Vanuatu in 2015, Tropical Cyclone Pam affected approximately 3600 female micro-entrepreneurs, who lost an estimated 141,110 work days, or an average of 39 days each. The Vanuatu post disaster needs assessment (PDNA) estimated that women's additional unpaid work in restoring homes and gardens, fetching water, searching for food and taking care of children due to the closure of primary schools and kindergartens, represented lost earnings of a minimum of VT 432 million. These estimates of lost income would increase by 27% if this work was valued (SPC 2015).<sup>5</sup>

13. As in many other societies, economically active women suffer from an unequal burden of work because they also have responsibilities for home and family and community. In PNG, women work on average nearly twice as many hours as men. In Tonga, women work over 50% longer than men on non-economic activities each week.<sup>6</sup> In Fiji, in 2015–2016, on average women working for wages or salaries spent 24 hours a week on household work, while men spent 10 hours.<sup>7</sup>

14. Women have only weak social protection in the private sector, and a lack of social protection in the informal sector, where they dominate. For example, the sparse data available indicate that women workers face high levels of sexual harassment in the workplace.

15. Labour force participation rates for both men and women tend to be lower in the Pacific Islands region than in other parts of the world due to the high proportion of subsistence agriculture and fishing, the importance of the informal sector and the limited labour market. However, there are notable gender gaps in labour force activities in the region. Most PICTs include unpaid subsistence work in labour force statistics, artificially inflating participation rates, especially for women. For example, in Solomon Islands in 2009, 68% of women participated in the labour force, but 85% of these women were

**Box 1: Definition of the formal and informal sector**

Enterprises, economic activities and employment regulated by the government, i.e. registered, protected and taxed, are part of the **formal sector**.

The **informal sector** 'is broadly characterised as consisting of units engaged in the production of goods or services with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes for the persons concerned. These units typically operate at a low level of organisation, with little or no division between labour and capital as factors of production, and on a small scale. Labour relations – where they exist – are based mostly on casual employment, kinship or personal and social relations rather than contractual arrangements with formal guarantees'.

ILO Resolutions Concerning Statistics of Employment in the Informal Sector. Adopted by the 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, January 1993, para. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Samoa Hardship and Poverty Report: Analysis of the 2013/14 Household Income and Expenditure Survey. Samoa National Statistics Office and UNDP Pacific Centre, Apia, Samoa, 2016 (<http://www.sbs.gov.ws/index.php/new-document-library?view=download&fileId=2014>).

<sup>5</sup> Source: Vanuatu Post Disaster Needs Assessment, Tropical Cyclone Pam, March 2015, Government of Vanuatu ([http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_397678.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_397678.pdf)).

<sup>6</sup> Hedditch, S. and Manual, C. 2010. Gender and Investment Climate Reform Assessment. World Bank and IFC in partnership with AusAID.

<sup>7</sup> 2015–16 Employment and Unemployment Survey, Preliminary Release, Fiji Bureau of Statistics. FBoS Release No: 34, 2017, 07/08/2017 (<http://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/statistics/population-censuses-and-surveys>).

in unpaid work and only 15% worked for wages, salary or profit (Solomon Islands Census 2009, population aged 12 years and over).

16. Statistics on formal sector employment illustrate gender gaps in participation and gross earnings. In Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) in financial year 2015, 39% of employees in the formal sector were women, who received 36% of gross earnings and on average earned 13% less than men. In the Republic of the Marshall Islands, women comprised 32% of all formal sector employees, receiving 30% of gross earnings and on average earning 9% less than men. Women comprised 39% of Marshall Islands' government employees and on average earned 2% more than men working in government, which is attributed to both the increasing number of women in senior government positions and their generally higher educational qualifications and associated salary allowances. In Palau, 40% of formal sector employees are women and, on average, their gross earnings are slightly higher than for men (2%). The government is the largest employer of Palauan women; these employees receive 2% higher gross earnings on average than their male counterparts. The other major sector of employment for Palauan women is the wholesale and retail trade where they earn 18% less than Palauan men.<sup>8</sup>

17. Occupational concentration and to some extent segregation is evident in many PICTs, largely due to the nature of women's work in the informal sector and the significance of cultural industries to women. In Cook Islands (2011), at least 23% of those working for pay or profit were involved in the cultural and creative industries directly or indirectly. Almost 54% of these workers were women, with women making up 47% of overall workers.<sup>9</sup> Preliminary results from the 2016 Census of Population and Housing in Tonga show that women comprise 95% of the approximately 5000 people working in occupations related to handicrafts.<sup>10</sup>

17. In general, women are more likely than men to be unemployed and seeking work, with unemployment rates higher for women than men in all PICTs except Tuvalu, Niue and Solomon Islands. Labour force statistics can be inflated by high rates of unemployment as the unemployed are defined as being part of the labour force. For example, in Kiribati in 2015, the labour force participation rate for women was 60%, but almost half (47%) of these women were unemployed and seeking work (Annex 1 shows selected labour force indicators).

18. Women and girls in the Pacific Islands region experience some of the highest rates of gender-based violence in the world, including economic violence. Intimate partner violence has profound direct and indirect financial impacts on victims and survivors. These include medical costs, time off work and psychosocial impacts that affect the victim's ability to study, hold a job or contribute to family and community economic activities. In some cases, perpetrators directly sabotage their victims' employment. In Marshall Islands, almost three out of ten (27%) ever-partnered women reported that their partners either took their earnings or income or refused to give them money.<sup>11</sup> In Vanuatu, women who earned their own income were about 1.5 times more likely to experience physical and sexual violence than those who did not earn an income. Further, women who experienced physical and/or sexual partner violence in their lifetime were significantly more likely to work for an income (83%) than those who had never experienced violence. This was despite the fact that women living with violence were also significantly more likely to have to give up or refuse a job because of their husband/partner.<sup>12</sup> In PNG, trial results estimating

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<sup>8</sup> Formal sector employment statistics from social security agencies in FSM, RMI and Palau (to be published).

<sup>9</sup> Cook Islands Cultural Industries Scoping Study. 2016. Pacific Community and UN Women.

<sup>10</sup> Tonga Gender Fact Sheet. 2016 Census. Department of Statistics (provisional and unpublished).

<sup>11</sup> Republic of the Marshall Islands National Study on Family Health and Safety. 2014. (Table 4.12).

<sup>12</sup> Vanuatu National Survey on Women's Lives and Family Relationships. 2014. Vanuatu Women's Centre (Table 8.7 and analysis).

the costs of gender-based violence in three companies showed that both men and women missed work due to gender-based violence, with women losing an average of 8.3 days per year and men 5.6 days per year. Gender-based violence included deprivation, physical and sexual assault and emotional and psychological abuse.<sup>13</sup> In FSM in 2014, 25% of ever-partnered women in Chuuk and Kosrae had experienced economic abuse by an intimate partner, decreasing to 8% in Pohnpei and Yap, with a national prevalence rate of 15%.<sup>14</sup>

19. Women's economic empowerment is impacted by other factors affecting Pacific Island economies including: (i) climate change and its effects on subsistence and informal activities in fishing and agriculture; (ii) globalisation and its consequences for small, open economies that are highly reliant on imports and vulnerable to rising fuel and food prices; increasing labour mobility, which contributes to family incomes but also increases women's burden of unpaid work and changes the population make-up of households, villages and communities; (iii) the impact of foreign investment, aid and public sector tax and reform programmes; and (iv) social norms that confine women to certain roles and activities, exclude them from decision-making and governance mechanisms, make them vulnerable to violence and exploitation, impose huge work burdens, and restrict their movement and ability to invest in the means of production and develop their productive assets.

20. As noted at the 12<sup>th</sup> Triennial, 'Expanding the reach of transformative gender equality initiatives, responsive to a broad range of women in different contexts and circumstances, is thus critical to the advancement of women's human rights and economic empowerment in the future'.<sup>15</sup>

## **Governments' commitments to women's economic empowerment**

21. Governments across the Pacific have committed to gender equality, recognising on many occasions the need for strengthened measures to ensure women's economic empowerment.

22. Commitments to gender equality in the region go back to 1994 when PICTs adopted the *Pacific Platform for Action*, which included paying attention to women's economic empowerment in sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, employment and education.

23. In 1995, PICTs endorsed the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, which include specific recommendations to support women's economic empowerment and reduce their vulnerability to poverty. They served as guidelines for regional and national initiatives promoting gender equality and women's human rights.

24. Most countries in the region have ratified CEDAW, which includes specific measures to address sex role stereotyping and prejudice, and access to employment and economic and social benefits.

25. Most recently, under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, PICT governments, along with the rest of the world, committed to uphold human rights principles and to 'leave no one behind', reaffirming the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as other international instruments relating to human rights and international law.

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<sup>13</sup> Gender violence in Papua New Guinea: The cost to business. 2015. ODI (<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9886.pdf>).

<sup>14</sup> FSM Family Health and Safety Study (Table 4.12) (<http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/pacific/drive/CIFHSSReportweb.pdf>).

<sup>15</sup> Secretariat of the Pacific Community. Recommendations from the Twelfth Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and Fifth Pacific Women's Ministerial Meeting on Economic Empowerment of Women in the Pacific Islands. Cook Islands, October 2013.

26. In 2012, all Pacific Leaders signed the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration. The Declaration highlighted the need to remove barriers to women’s employment and participation in the formal and informal sectors; the need to implement equal employment opportunity and gender equality measures in public sector employment; the need to improve the facilities and governance of local produce markets; and the need to target support to women entrepreneurs in the formal and informal sectors.

27. In 2012, Forum Economic Ministers adopted a FEMM Action Plan, which includes specific priorities for women’s economic empowerment, such as improving women’s employment and participation in the formal and informal sectors; increasing women’s access to finance, business ownership and markets; improving women’s right to safe, fair and equal participation in local economies; and improving access to and use of sex-disaggregated data (SPC 2013).

## Drivers of women’s economic empowerment

28. In its call for action on gender equality and women’s economic empowerment, the UN Secretary General’s High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment (UNHLP-WEE) identified seven drivers of change for breaking constraints:

- 1) Tackling adverse norms and promoting positive role models
- 2) Ensuring legal protection and reforming discriminatory laws and regulations
- 3) Recognising, reducing and redistributing unpaid work and care
- 4) Building assets – digital, financial and property
- 5) Changing business culture and practice
- 6) Improving public sector practices in employment and procurement
- 7) Strengthening visibility, collective voice and representation

**Figure 1. Seven primary drivers of women’s economic empowerment**



Source: UN Secretary General’s High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment, 2017.

## E.1 Tackling adverse norms and promoting positive role models

29. Many social norms hinder women's economic empowerment in the Pacific. Issues such as girls' orientation in the education system, the choices that women have in following professional development pathways, their more limited access and control over productive assets, pay disparity, and the burden of unpaid work are all related to social norms and gender stereotypes. Addressing those issues requires more than progress at the individual level, i.e. building women's capacity is not enough. Social and economic norms and systems that perpetuate gender inequalities and the economic exclusion of women must be changed.

30. The Pacific Beijing + 20 review report stated that 'several reporting PICTs acknowledged that the multiple roles women play in the family and the community negatively lessen their ability to dedicate time and energy to developing business activities. Samoa identified women as being particularly 'time poor', and described their challenge of balancing economic roles alongside their social and family obligations. (SPC 2015).

31. Gender stereotypes also have a tremendous impact on women's choices in terms of sector of employment and business development. A 2013 study by SPC in Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and Tonga found that a key factor limiting women's education pathways and career choices in fisheries sciences and management was people's belief that men were more suited to employment in the fisheries sector and lack of awareness that women occupy many such jobs.

32. There have been few studies in the region on the links between women's economic empowerment and the elimination of violence against women. However, it has been shown that when women are economically independent, they are better able to exit a violent relationship.

33. The UNHLP-WEE recommends 1) eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls – including by reforming discriminatory statutory and customary laws; preventing violence in the workplace; and promoting economic security such as setting a minimum wage, and mandating equal pay for work of equal value, paid maternity/paternity and parental leave, and cash transfers and basic income; and 2) ending discrimination and stereotypes that assign gender roles and abilities by promoting positive role models, and challenging adverse norms and stereotypes in schools.

34. The Pacific Beijing + 20 review report highlighted positive steps taken in the region:

- There have been improvements in maternity protection, equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation. Fiji, Solomon Islands and Samoa have adopted legislation to guarantee equal access to employment for men and women, with clauses dealing with equal pay for equal work. However, monitoring mechanisms are lacking and it is uncertain how effectively the legislation is being implemented, especially in relation to protection from dismissal during pregnancy and maternity leave (ILO 2010).
- Cook Islands has allocated government budget to assist private sector employers to pay for six weeks of maternity leave.
- Awareness raising has improved workplace environments. The Fiji Women's Rights Movement initiated the 'Not OK: Stop Sexual Harassment' campaign following a study conducted with 1013 women in 2016, which found that one in five had experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.

## E.2 Enhancing legal protection and reforming discriminatory laws

35. Weak legislative, institutional and policy frameworks, sometimes combined with biased justice systems (state and customary), result in many Pacific women being unable to seek redress, claim rights and achieve some degree of economic security. For example, in some countries, there are laws that exclude women from having the same legal opportunities as men. Across the region, there are two parallel legal systems: formal and customary. In general, customary law impacts most people at community level and often includes practices that discriminate against women, most notably in relation to property rights and the allocation of resources such as land.

36. In the formal system, the laws that affect women's economic activity are most commonly linked to property and employment rights. In almost all Pacific countries, the civil codes, labour laws and inheritance laws have provisions that can be interpreted in a discriminatory manner. A 2010 IFC study<sup>16</sup> on laws and regulations that hinder women's economic empowerment in targeted countries (PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu) suggested revisions for each country that included laws and regulations relating to marriage, divorce and division of property, inheritance, employment and citizenship.

38. General measures to improve working conditions are important for women, especially when they target social protection, legislation on a minimum wage, or improved job security. For example, in 2013 Fiji enacted its first national minimum wage legislation, which applies to many women, especially those in the tourism, garment and service sectors.

39. Laws and regulations can have indirect effects by encouraging a shift in cultural or social norms, such as limiting bride price or providing for equal distribution of assets among sons and daughters under inheritance laws. Businesses can also take action, for example, by mandating targets or quotas for employing women, or requiring that women comprise at least half the membership of all recruitment committees.

40. The UNHLP-WEE recommendations for enhancing legal protection and reforming discriminatory laws include a) reforming discriminatory laws; b) creating an enabling environment for informal workers; and c) improving access to justice.

41. The majority of women in the Pacific work in the informal sector and perform most of the unpaid care work. More information on informal economic activities, the conditions in which women perform those activities and their contribution to household budgets and community services needs to be generated to inform policy-makers and encourage investment in improving informal sector working conditions.

42. While it is important to support measures that enable women to transition from the informal to the formal economy, many women are likely to continue to work in the informal sector for a range of economic and social

**Box 3: Women, Business and the Law 2016** provides quantitative measures of laws and regulations that affect women's economic opportunities in seven areas: accessing institutions, using property, getting a job, providing incentives to work, going to court, building credit and protecting women from violence. It focuses on the formal legal and regulatory environment that determines whether women can open their own businesses or work. The report is concerned with the laws governing the formal economy. Pacific Island countries have made positive changes impacting women and economic empowerment, e.g. **Fiji** adopted a new constitution that no longer recognises customary law as a source of law. **PNG** introduced a national identification system. The application process for national ID cards is equal for men and women. **Tonga** enacted a new law that covers physical, sexual and economic domestic violence against former and current spouses and family members.

*World Bank. 2016. Women, Business and the Law: Getting to Equal.*

<sup>16</sup> Hedditch, S. and Manual, C. 2010. Gender and Investment Climate Reform Assessment. World Bank and IFC in partnership with AusAID.

reasons and preferences. Understanding and addressing the barriers and constraints that informal workers face, as opposed to encouraging them to transition to the formal sector, is essential to improve their economic status.

### E.3 Recognising, reducing and redistributing unpaid work and care

43. As in the rest of the world, Pacific women assume most of the responsibilities for unpaid care work while also undertaking productive work, whether paid or not. With the huge impacts of non-communicable diseases in the Pacific, women are already having to dedicate more hours to caring for family members, which further limits their capacity to enter paid work.

44. UNHLP-WEE recommends recognising, reducing and redistributing care work by investing in affordable, quality and accessible care services such as childcare, elder care and disability care. To reduce the time that women spend on unpaid work and care, public investment in basic infrastructure, such as water and energy, is critical especially in remote areas and outer islands. Social protection, especially paid maternity and paternity leave and job protection, and flexible work arrangements are important. Caring for the elderly also tends to reduce female labour force participation and hours worked. This will become a larger challenge as Pacific societies age.

45.. The need to find ways to share the work of care and support requires a shift in the way these tasks are viewed by families and communities. Bringing about change in this area requires careful and well-supported negotiations to best understand societal values and norms, and recognition that sharing responsibility can bring benefits for individuals, families and communities.

46. The UNHLP-WEE also recommends fostering a change in social norms to redistribute care from women to men and ensure that care is their equal right and responsibility. This goes back to transforming social norms and addressing gender stereotypes through education and media campaigns, including challenging stereotypes related to masculinity. Recognising the parental role of both men and women, and adopting employment policies such as parental leave, is part of this change.

47. Women's unpaid care work, in combination with their community (custom) responsibilities, has a tremendous impact on their health, which further impedes their economic empowerment. A small (unpublished) case study in New Caledonia in 2015 on women's mental health reported that women are becoming more stressed and tired as a result of combining family responsibilities, customary responsibilities and work in low-income jobs.

#### Box 2: Definition of unpaid care work

'Unpaid care work refers to all unpaid services provided within a household for its members, including care of persons, housework and voluntary community work' (Elson, 2000). These activities are considered work, because theoretically one could pay a third person to perform them.

- Unpaid = the individual performing this activity is not remunerated
- Care = the activity provides what is necessary for the health, well-being, maintenance, and protection of someone or something
- Work = the activity involves mental or physical effort and is costly in terms of time resources

*Issues paper: Unpaid Care Work: The missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labour outcomes*  
© OECD 2014

## E.4. Building assets— digital, financial and property

48. Building financial, property and other assets and eliminating related gender disparities can be addressed through laws, policies and regulations and improving access to technology and innovation.

49. The UNHLP-WEE recommends a) ensuring women’s equal access to digital financial services and equal access to and control over productive resources, including land, labour and capital; b) encouraging stakeholders to assess how women in the country are progressing along the digital inclusion continuum; and c) enabling women’s voices to shape digital, financial and property products, services and policies.

50. Access to finance is usually through commercial or development banks, microfinance institutions, and informal credit providers. The rapid uptake of mobile phones by Pacific people has facilitated the extension of financial services, including the introduction of online banking for electronic transactions. However, many women have difficulties in accessing finance, with financial institutions charging high interest rates because women do not have the security required for a commercial loan at a lower rate.

51. Greater financial independence increases women’s options, helping them to stand up to abusive spouses. Economic empowerment programmes improve women’s ability to contribute to household income and to increase their own assets. However, on the negative side, some researchers have found that an increased contribution to household income is not always linked to an ability to renegotiate other gendered responsibilities, contributing to an increase in women’s workload overall and relative to men. Programmes that put gender equality at the heart of their strategy appear more successful in enhancing women’s earnings and their decision-making power in the household than other programmes.

52. A recent study on increasing women’s financial inclusion in the Pacific noted that ‘the relationship between gender-based violence and the provision of financial services is not yet fully understood’ (Women’s World Banking, 2013) Given this, and the policy priority attached to sustainable economic development in the region, better understanding of what factors enhance women’s economic inclusion and empowerment in the fullest sense, and what are the barriers, is essential to enabling change that also advances security. In some countries, the operations of unscrupulous money-lenders who ‘prey’ on those least able to repay debt, are a concern. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this problem is occurring in Tonga where affected women are ending up in a continuous cycle of debt.

53. More generally, the affordability of technology needs to be improved for low-income customers. Corporations can also expand access by offering an affordable ‘entry-level’ internet service. Both governments and the private sector can facilitate women’s access to financial services, for example by reducing the costs of opening and maintaining a savings account and tailoring financial products to the different needs of women. Development Banks (for example, in Fiji) can establish systems to ensure an agreed percentage of their loan

### Box 3: Definition of digital financial services

**Digital financial services** are the broad range of services accessed and delivered through digital channels, including payments, credit, savings, remittances and insurance. The digital financial services concept includes mobile financial services.

**Digital financial inclusion** is the use and promotion of digital financial services to advance financial inclusion.

Alliance for Financial Inclusion, Digital Financial Services  
Basic Terminology. Guideline Note No. 19. 2016.



portfolio is reserved for women's businesses.<sup>17</sup> Digital financial solutions being rolled out in some of the bigger economies show enormous promise.

## E.5 Changing business culture and practice

54. Women remain poorly represented in formal employment in PICTs. For example, they constitute only 34% of the formal workforce in Fiji and 29% in Samoa.

55. Research shows that there is a business case for the private sector to not only ensure non-discrimination in hiring and promoting women and giving them loans, but also to proactively seek opportunities to support women as employees, managers and entrepreneurs. At a minimum, companies should comply with national laws and follow ILO conventions on gender equality to eradicate discriminatory practices, eliminate gender gaps in legal and social protection and enable equal participation of men and women in trade unions, employer and business membership organisations and other worker organisations.

56. The key recommendations from the UNHLP-WEE for changing businesses' culture and practices include a) conducting an internal self-audit looking at gender equity issues in terms of pay, employment, leadership, procurement, corporate social responsibility and suppliers; b) providing incentives to frontline managers and holding managers accountable; c) considering setting procurement targets for sourcing from women-owned enterprises; and d) mapping value chains to ensure ethical sourcing and workers' rights.

57. Changing business culture and practice requires business leadership at the highest level, with determined follow-through to measure and monitor results and hold management accountable. Nagarajan<sup>18</sup> has described a role for government in 'nudging' corporations and companies to be more responsive to the needs of women by, for example, including in their procurement process a preference for companies that have a positive recruitment process for women or policies to increase the number of women on their board. Governments can also introduce legislation and policy changes to ensure there is redress for sexual harassment in the workplace, mandatory paid maternity leave in the private sector and the right to request shorter working hours. A challenge in the Pacific is that most workers in the private sector are employed by very small firms that have little in the way of company policies and no scope to self-insure for the costs of paid maternity leave.

58. Businesses are encouraged to adopt women-friendly recruitment policies or develop in-house flexible working conditions. The Business Coalition for Women in PNG and in Solomon Islands provides examples of good practices. The Coalition, which is supported by the IFC, is a membership-based network that gathers representatives from the private sector to promote women's empowerment. The Coalition's priorities are to ensure that all workplaces are free from violence and that businesses support staff who experience family and sexual violence; promote gender-smart workplace policies and practices; promote career development of women to enable them to take leadership positions; and expand opportunities for women-owned businesses in supply and distribution networks.

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<sup>17</sup> Nagarajan Dr Vijaya. Economic Empowerment of Women in the Pacific, Macquarie Law School, video presentation, 2017.

<sup>18</sup> Nagarajan Dr Vijaya. Economic Empowerment of Women in the Pacific, Macquarie Law School, video presentation, 2017.

## E.6 Improving public sector practices in employment and procurement

59. Formulation and implementation of national economic policies, budgets and programmes that work as well for women as they do for men are major challenges for all Pacific governments.

60. The UNHLP-WEE<sup>19</sup> highlighted the importance of shaping macro-economic policies that support inclusive growth by challenging and transforming negative and harmful norms that limit women's access to work and devalue their work. The Panel noted that there are many norms around the types of work done by women and men, e.g. about women's mobility outside the home; the value of women's work; justification for violence against women; and women's and men's rights to expect equal remuneration and respect at work and equal access to property.

61. The UNHLP-WEE recommends a) promoting gender equality in public sector employment, including in top-level positions; b) promoting women-own enterprises and women's collectives by encouraging their participation in procurement; and c) providing support for informal workers and agricultural workers, and allowing collective enterprises to bid on public procurements.

62. Stocktakes of the capacity of 15 PICT governments to mainstream gender across policies and programmes (conducted by SPC between 2010 and 2014) showed that the top three positions in ministries are occupied by men; most countries do not have any formal mechanism to support gender mainstreaming across government; and there are no accountability measures in place for implementing government commitments to gender equality. These findings have implications for the capacity of governments to deliver public services that benefit women, especially rural women and urban women living in hardship, who are often involved in informal activities.

63. Some governments have taken the lead in putting mechanisms in place to support mainstreaming. The Solomon Islands' Public Service Commission sets performance indicators for gender mainstreaming in the contracts of all permanent secretaries. The indicators include the establishment of a gender focal point and adoption of a gender mainstreaming strategy in the ministry. After almost four years of implementation, more and more ministries have established their gender focal point and have started adopting measures to identify and tackle gender issues in their sector.

64. In PNG, the public service gender equality and social inclusion policy, which applies to all government departments, is another promising practice. It includes access to opportunities, recruitment and promotion, inclusive policy and practice, fair decision-making, transparency, removal of barriers to employment, and respectful communication. The approach covers both internal institutional practices and service delivery.

## E7. Strengthening visibility, collective voice and representation

65. Strengthening women's visibility, voice and representation is critical to achieving the political will to improve the economic environment for women's fundamental labour and human rights, such as the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, which are enshrined in ILO conventions. These rights apply to all workers, including in the informal economy.

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<sup>19</sup>Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment. 2016. A Call to Action for Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment.

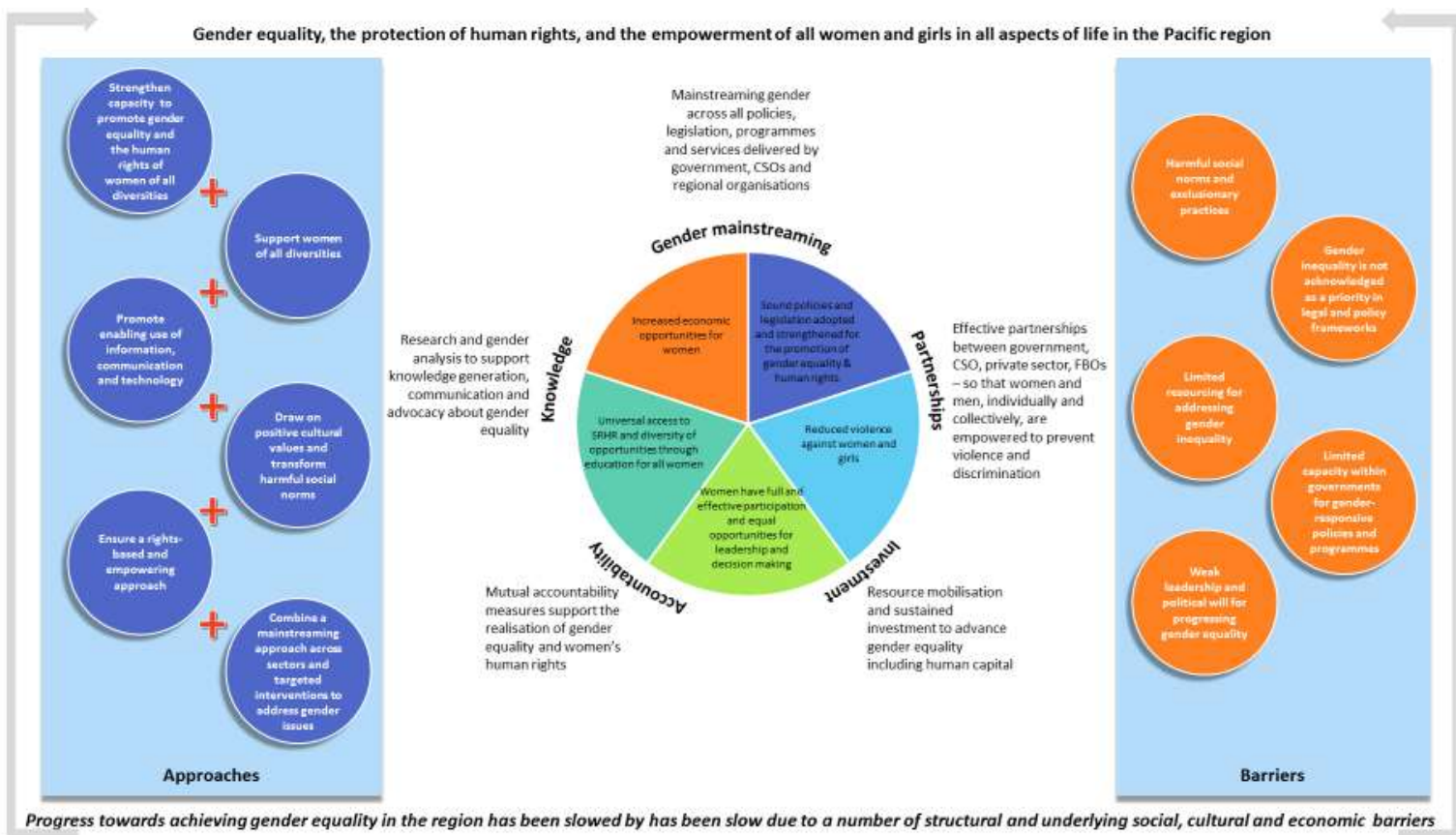
66. The UNHLP-WEE recommendations include a) ensuring an enabling environment to organise and strengthen the visibility of women workers, their collective voice and representation, and collective enterprises; and b) recognising and supporting all forms of women workers' organisation at all levels.

67. For example, the 'Market for Change', a project implemented by UN Women in Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands, works with market vendors to support the formation of inclusive and representative market-place groups or associations that advocate for improved infrastructure in markets through effective representation of members. Currently, the project supports 17 market vendor associations, with a total of 7000 members, in the three countries.

## The theory for change for Pacific women’s economic empowerment

68. The new Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women’s Human rights 2018-2030 (PPA) proposes a pathway to accelerate progress in implementing commitments to gender equality at the regional and national level. The theory for change have identified a set of measures – or strategic objectives – to support this process. It includes a) improvements in terms of knowledge and data; b) mainstreaming gender across legislation, policies, programmes and services; c) developing and strengthening partnerships for change; d) sustained investment; e) accountability.

Figure 2. Theory for change for progressing gender equality and women’s human rights in the Pacific islands



69. In order to make progress in terms of women’s economic empowerment, the PPA proposes the following means of implementation:

**Knowledge:** 1) Strengthen understanding of (a) economic pathways and measures to support women’s economic empowerment, and (b) the impact of macroeconomic and fiscal policies and trade agreements on women and their rights. 2) Strengthen collection of data on gender wage gaps and the contribution of women to the economy through unpaid or informal employment.

**Gender mainstreaming:** 1) Implement appropriate regulations, legal and policy frameworks to remove barriers to economic opportunities (including equal employment opportunities, paid parental leave, international resources, land resources, fee and tax regimes) and contribute to protecting women’s human rights. 2) Support access to inclusive financial services and improve infrastructure and access to markets for women of all diversities. 3) Implement gender-responsive workplace policies and contribute to safe, respectful places of work and employment and equality. 4) Adopt policies to ensure equal employment opportunities and equal pay for work of equal value.

**Partnerships:** 1) Strengthen partnerships between government, including local government, the private sector, business associations, education and training providers, CSOs and women’s organisations that support and provide pathways for women’s economic empowerment. 2) Support the participation of women in economic decision-making (at household, community and institutional levels).

**Investment:** 1) Realign available resources and identify additional sources of financing to support women’s economic opportunities and develop their productive assets. 2) Implement social protection programmes to support women by alleviating the burdens of paid and unpaid work, including providing paid parental leave in both the private and public sectors.

**Accountability:** 1) Strengthen economic structures and access to resources to build gender equality in employment, equal remuneration for women and men, non-discrimination in employment and occupation type, and better reconciliation of work and family life.

70. The measures proposed by the PPA are in line and complement the 7 drivers identified by the UNHLP-WEE. While the 7 drivers provide the information on “what” need to change, the PPA provide “tools” on “how”, or “what to do” to make it happen.

**Figure 3: The relationship between the PPA strategies and the UNHLP-WEE’s 7 primary drivers for women’s economic empowerment**



71. The recommendations to progress women's economic empowerment in the Pacific are structured around the PPA's strategic objectives and include the recommendations from the UNHLP-WEE's 7 primary drivers for women's economic empowerment.

## Recommendations to accelerate progress

72. At both national and regional levels in the Pacific, governments have committed to promoting women's economic empowerment in both the formal and informal sectors. These commitments have been backed by support from civil society, regional organisations and various development partners, but most countries have not yet made real or sustained progress.

73. The following recommendations are made to accelerate women's economic empowerment, based on the framework of the new PPA, which proposes measures for implementing commitments to gender equality through knowledge development, gender mainstreaming, partnership development, investment and accountability,

### G.1 Knowledge and data

72. Governments, in partnership with academics, civil society organisations, and the private sector, and with the support of regional organisations and development partners, need to produce sex-disaggregated data on a regular basis and conduct gender analysis to better understand the drivers of women's economic empowerment and identify economic opportunities for women, including those living in rural and remote areas, young women, women with disabilities, and LBT women.

#### Recommendations

To improve information and knowledge on women's economic empowerment:

73. Improve statistical data on women's economic empowerment in the region.

74. Conduct studies and gender analysis to generate knowledge on:

- a. women's contribution to economic development, especially in the informal sector including cultural industries
- b. unpaid work and care, including community-related activities
- c. conditions for work and activities in the informal sector, to inform legislation and policies
- d. causes of pay disparity between women and men from different segments of the population and potential measures to ensure women and men of all diversities receive equal pay for work of equal value
- e. effective measures to support the resilience of women's economic activities in the context of climate change and disaster impacts
- f. income-generating activities, including development of niche products, and employment opportunities for women, especially for women with disabilities, young women, rural women, and LBT women
- g. causes and social and economic impacts of gender-based violence, and strategic approaches to combat harmful social norms

- h. examples of practices in the Pacific region that contribute to the redistribution of unpaid work and care
- i. impacts – both positive and negative – of legislation and policies, including macroeconomic policies, structural reforms and trade agreements, on women's productive assets and economic empowerment
- j. economic models and measures adapted to the Pacific context that protect traditional knowledge and communal property rights, respect the human rights of women of all diversities, and acknowledge the benefits of technological and social innovations.

## G.2 Mainstreaming gender in economic development policies and practices

75. Women's economic empowerment must be supported by all sectors – education, finance, justice, public service, agriculture, marine resources, infrastructure – and by local government and the private sector. Central and local governments, with the assistance of civil society organisations, regional organisations and development partners, are encouraged to mainstream gender across their policies, legislation, programmes and services.

### Recommendations

76. Adopt, review, and implement legislative measures to:
- a) reform discriminatory legislative and regulatory frameworks to promote gender equality and women's rights to decent work and employment, equal pay, decent living wages, justice, freedom and personal safety, sexual and reproductive health, property, inheritance and citizenship
  - b) ensure appropriate social protection measures for poor women and their dependants that provide income or consumption transfers, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks and enhance the social status and rights of marginalised people
  - c) protect migrant workers and the human rights and social protection of women migrant workers
  - d) increase the number of women in national parliaments and legislatures and senior decision-making positions in government
  - e) address all forms of sexual and gender-based violence in all areas of life
  - f) ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action
77. Support the development of women's productive assets by:
- a) reviewing primary and secondary education curricula, teacher education and student assessment to promote gender equality and human rights and challenge gender stereotyping and similar harmful norms
  - b) promoting lifelong learning for all women, of all diversities, and encourage and support young women and young men to develop skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and gain qualifications that enhance their employment prospects
  - c) improving the educational environment for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to attract girls and young women into technical fields and apprenticeships

- d) adopting measures to ensure that all places of learning and working are safe places for women and girls of all diversities.
- a) providing incentives for the private, not-for-profit and state sectors to train and employ young women
- b) taking measures to ensure women with disabilities have access to decent work in the public and private sectors, and that work environments are inclusive of, and accessible to, all persons with disabilities
- c) designing programmes and services that support women's role in farming and fishing and as managers and custodians of natural resources
- d) promoting financial literacy programmes and access to financial services
- e) including cultural industries and small-scale farming and fisheries, which include a high proportion of women, in measures for climate change adaptation and disaster preparedness and recovery
- f) improving the provision of basic services and infrastructure, such as water, sanitation and energy, to alleviate women's unpaid care work
- g) providing high-quality, accessible and affordable childcare
- h) implementing mechanisms to support gender mainstreaming processes across central and local government programmes and services
- i) improving delivery of gender-responsive financial services and increasing women's access to finance
- j) increasing women's access to digital services, including for women with disabilities and women living in remote areas
- k) conduct gender analysis of government budgets and regional organisations' budgets to identify gaps and opportunities for supporting women's' economic empowerment

78. Improve working conditions for women by:

- a) adopting gender and social inclusion policies across the public service sector
- b) supporting enterprises to conduct gender audits to identify measures to ensure gender equality at all levels, establish respectful and safe workplace environment for women and men, and enable reconciliation of work and family responsibilities
- c) removing biases and stereotypes in human resource policies and practices to reduce gender gaps in hiring, promotion and pay, and establishing accountability mechanisms including appropriate protocols for pay equity processes, with objective criteria for initial pay and promotion, and regular reviews of pay equity
- d) improving infrastructure and governance of market places to create inclusive and gender-responsive environments
- e) implementing training, mentorship, internship, apprenticeship and sponsorship programmes to enable female employees to develop their skills
- f) ensuring that budgets, economic policies, structural reforms and trade agreements do not disadvantage women or increase gender inequality
- g) introducing appropriate gender equity measures in public procurement to encourage women-led businesses in the formal and informal sector to bid on government tenders, or providing assistance to women-owned enterprises, such as setting mandatory procurement targets and subcontracting goals in supply chains.

79. Adopt measures to promote gender equality in all areas of life by



- a) setting appropriate targets for the representation of women, men and marginalised groups across the key decision-making areas noted in the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration, and considering adopting temporary special measures to increase women's representation in legislatures
- b) encouraging women's participation and leadership in trades unions, organisations for informal workers, employers' and business membership organisations, and professional associations.
- c) promoting women's influence and agency by supporting the development of special interest groups, such as market vendors, to develop their bargaining power in economic areas.

### G.3 Partnerships

80. Strong and effective partnerships at all levels of Pacific governments and the private sector are required to lift women's economic empowerment by developing and implementing policies and practices that support their employment and entrepreneurship. Similarly, regional organisations and development partners must make sure their own programmes are gender responsive and support women's economic empowerment. In many countries, civil society organisations play a part in informing women (and men) of their rights, and raising awareness in the public and private sectors of areas for improving women's working conditions.

#### Recommendations

81 Develop and strengthen partnerships between women and men, and between government institutions, civil society organisations including unions, and the private sector, to:

- a) promote gender equality and the human rights of all women of all diversities in the workplace
- b) establish high-level corporate leadership of gender equality to advance policies for addressing gender-based violence, discrimination and sexual harassment, and promote appointment of women to leadership positions
- c) support family life education that promotes gender equality and human rights, including sexual and reproductive health rights
- d) support the initiatives of civil society organisations to challenge harmful gender norms, gender-based violence and discriminatory practices, and to promote equality and the human rights of women and girls of all diversities
- e) support programmes that engage men and boys as allies in challenging gender stereotypes and reducing women's double burden of paid and unpaid work
- f) support dialogue with customary institutions on reviewing practices that hinder women's access to productive assets
- g) work with women, particularly the most marginalised, to amplify their voices and support representative organizations to negotiate with local and national government and private sector bodies
- h) promote a safe and enabling environment for all civil society actors and more resources for grassroots, local, national, and regional women's and civil society organisations to support women in asserting their economic rights

## G.4 Investment

82. Achievement of gender equality and women's economic empowerment in the Pacific requires governments to work alongside civil society organisations, regional organisations and development partners. Long-term investment is needed to address the issues that combine to create gender inequality in the region. More specifically, there is a need to develop effective action on the commitments made by Pacific Leaders and economic ministers.

### Recommendations

83. Increase financing and sustained investment to:

- a) support women's entrepreneurship
- b) facilitate financial inclusion of women
- c) support cultural industries
- d) build women's resilience to climate change impacts and sustain their livelihood in agriculture and fisheries
- e) provide affordable, high-quality and accessible care services such as childcare, elder care and disability care
- f) improve basic infrastructure and services, including sustainable energy, ICT and transport
- g) expand access to digital technology and services
- h) strengthen social protection measures to support women's economic security throughout their lives
- i) support programmes implemented by organisations active in challenging harmful gender norms, gender stereotypes and all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence
- j) establish and sustain scholarship programmes supporting studies of young women, of all diversities, in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).
- k) support the implementation of legislation, policies and services aimed at achieving gender equality
- l) implement a campaign to change social and cultural norms that inhibit gender equality

## G.5 Accountability

84. Pacific governments have made repeated commitments to gender equality and women's economic empowerment but there are major weaknesses in follow-up and monitoring to ensure accountability for results. In many cases, there is not enough reliable data to establish baselines and benchmarks and limited qualitative analysis to monitor the results of gender budgeting efforts or targeted interventions. The lack of effective tracking tools for gender is in stark contrast to the availability of tools and data to monitor issues such as environmental sustainability. Pacific governments have made repeated commitments to gender equality and women's economic empowerment but there are major weaknesses in follow-up and monitoring to ensure accountability for results. The paper recommends regular and rigorous monitoring and reporting process for the governments and CROP

agencies to demonstrate their efforts in terms of practices and resourcing to effectively progress the implementation of commitments to gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

### **Recommendations**

85. Establish accountability mechanisms that:
- a) demonstrate adoption and implementation of legislative and policy measures to increase women's digital, financial and property assets
  - b) demonstrate that women's human rights are protected by macroeconomic policies, in structural reforms and trade agreements
  - c) demonstrate investment of government budget in basic infrastructure and services that help alleviate the burden of unpaid care work and support women's economic empowerment
  - d) demonstrate the removal of barriers to women's participation in the workforce and in decision-making, and enforce equal opportunity practices
  - e) demonstrate the implementation of legislative measures, policies and programmes aimed at eliminating gender-based discrimination and violence, and harmful gender norms in the workplace
  - f) demonstrate adoption and implementation of laws and policies promoting decent work and equal pay, and support for reconciliation of work and family responsibilities

Pacific governments have made repeated commitments to gender equality and women's economic empowerment but there are major weaknesses in follow-up and monitoring to ensure accountability for results. The paper recommends regular and rigorous monitoring and reporting process for the governments and CROP agencies to demonstrate their efforts in terms of practices and resourcing to effectively progress the implementation of commitments to gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

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## Annex 1: Selected Labour Force Indicators

Table 1: Key labour force indicators

	Labour Force Participation Rate				Employment-Population Ratio				Unemployment Rate				Vulnerable employment				Share of women in wage employment in the non-ag sector	GDP per person employed		
	Men	Women	GPI	Total	Men	Women	GPI	Total	Men	Women	GPI	Total	Men	Women	GPI	Total		Year	(US\$)	
<b>American Samoa</b>																				
2010	61.7	48.4	0.78	55.1	61.4	48.2	0.79	54.8	7.8	11.0	1.41	9.2	6.4	3.9	0.61	5.3		44.5	2009	43,633
<b>Cook Islands</b>																				
2006	76.1	64.2	0.84	70.2	68.7	57.5	0.84	63.1	8.5	9.4	1.11	8.9						55.0	2006	27,341
2011	76.6	65.4	0.85	71.0	68.9	59.3	0.86	64.0	8.2	8.1	0.99	8.2				9.9		47.3		
<b>French Polynesia</b>																				
2002	67.9	47.6	0.70	58.0	60.7	41.2	0.68	51.2	10.6	13.4	1.26	11.7								
2007	64.7	47.2	0.73	56.2	57.6	41.2	0.72	49.6	11.0	12.8	1.16	11.7							2007	73,310
2012	63.3	49.1	0.78	56.3	50.0	37.9	0.76	44.1	21.1	22.8	1.08	21.7						44.8	2012	64,458
<b>Niue</b>																				
2001	75.3	48.7	0.65	67.4	64.9	45.1	0.69	54.9	2.4	3.4	1.4	2.8	18.7	8.3	0.4	14.6				
2006	85.0	71.0	0.84	78.0	84.5	70.2	0.83	77.3	0.6	1.2	2.00	0.9				13.2		76.0	2006	16,452
2011	76.6	61.1	0.80	68.9	65.5	56.1	0.86	67.0	2.7	2.8	1.03	2.7	21.1	16.7	0.8	19.2		46.0		
<b>Samoa</b>																				
2006	65.1	33.4	0.51	49.8	45.1	21.9	0.49	83.0	1.1	1.6	1.45	1.3							2006	7,865
2011	58.3	23.2	0.40	41.3	55.3	21.7	0.39	39.0	5.2	6.8	1.31	5.7				11.3		39.3	2011	7,719
<b>Tokelau</b>																				
2011	87.3	65.5	0.75																	
<b>Tonga</b>																				
2006	64.2	49.0	0.76	56.6	45.4	29.0	0.64	37.2	1.1	1.1	1.00	1.1				4.2		39.2	2006	8,254
2011	60.4	42.3	0.70	52.3	44.0	29.6	0.67	36.7				6.4				33.1		47.9		
<b>Tuvalu</b>																				
2002	69.6	47.9	0.69	58.2	44.9	22.7	0.51	33.2	4.9	8.6	1.76	6.5						36.0	2002	4,728



## Overview of Pacific Women's Economic Empowerment

	Labour Force Participation Rate				Employment-Population Ratio				Unemployment Rate				Vulnerable employment				Share of women in wage employment in the non-ag sector	GDP per person employed	
	Men	Women	GPI	Total	Men	Women	GPI	Total	Men	Women	GPI	Total	Men	Women	GPI	Total		Year	(US\$)
2012	67.6	51.1	0.76	59.4	40.1	31.6	0.79	35.9	40.7	38.1	0.94	39.6	23.1	18.1	0.78	21.0	43.5	2011	3,327
<b>Wallis and Futuna</b>																			
2013	55.4	47.2	0.85	51.1	49.7	40.9	0.82	45.1	10.3	13.3	1.29	11.8					50.1	2005	55,481
<b>Fed States of Micronesia</b>																			
2000	67.2	50.1	0.75	58.6				58.6	15.7	17.3	1.10	16.4					14.4	2000	7,926
2010	66.1	48.4	0.73	57.3				48.1				72.7				12.8	37.9	2010	7,746
<b>Guam</b>																			
2010				64.2				58.9				8.2				6.6	44.5	2009	71,312
<b>Kiribati</b>																			
2005	71.5	56.3	0.79	63.6	28.9	16.7	0.58	22.6	18.2	14.6	0.80	12.2					38.5	2005	2,907
2010	66.8	52.3	0.78	59.3	48.3	34.5	0.71	41.1	27.6	34.1	1.24	30.6	17.7	13.1	0.74	15.7	47.4		
<b>Marshall Islands</b>																			
1999	66.3	35.4	0.53	51.1				38.6	27.6	37.3	1.35	30.9				26.7	35.9	1999	7,103
2012				0.0				0.0				32.6				0.0	36.7		
<b>N Mariana Islands</b>																			
2010				66.2				65.9				11.2				3.7		2010	29,526
<b>Nauru</b>																			
2002	85.2	68.5	0.80	76.7	82.5	85.8	1.04	83.9	17.0	29.6	1.74	22.7					42.0		
2006	82.5	68.8	0.83	75.8	53.5	38.5	0.72	95.6	31.5	42.3	1.34	36.3							
2011	78.9	49.3	0.62	64.0	58.2	60.5	1.04	46.7	21.4	25.5	1.19	22.9				5.6	37.6		
<b>Palau</b>																			
2005	76.9	59.7	0.78	69.1	74.1	56.8	0.77	66.3	3.7	4.9	1.32	4.2				7.9	39.6	2005	14,253
2015	75.2	58.2	0.77	67.4	72.0	54.8	0.76	64.0	1.9	1.9	1.03	1.9	1.8	2.9	1.62	2.2			
<b>Fiji</b>																			
2007	71.9	37.6	0.52	55.0				50.3	9.6	16.1	1.68	11.8				27.7	34.0	2007	9,104
<b>New Caledonia</b>																			
2009	67.2	55.1	0.82	61.2	59.2	46.2	0.78	52.7	11.9	16.2	1.36	13.8				0.0	45.1	2009	91,356

Overview of Pacific Women's Economic Empowerment

	Labour Force Participation Rate				Employment-Population Ratio				Unemployment Rate				Vulnerable employment				Share of women in wage employment in the non-ag sector	GDP per person employed	
	Men	Women	GPI	Total	Men	Women	GPI	Total	Men	Women	GPI	Total	Men	Women	GPI	Total		Year	(US\$)
2014	69.1	58.9	0.85	64.0					13.7	15.6	1.14	14.6							
<b>Papua New Guinea</b>																			
2011	62.2	60.5	0.97	61.4	59.7	59.4	0.99	59.6	2.6	3.7	1.42	1.4							
<b>Solomon Islands</b>																			
1999	45.1	22.6	0.50	34.2				87.1	14.0	8.0	0.57	11.1					30.8	1999	4,217
2009	72.1	60.4	0.84	66.4	67.0	57.2	0.85	62.2	7.1	5.4	0.76	6.3	5.6	2.0	0.36	3.9	33.2		
<b>Vanuatu</b>																			
2009	80.4	61.4	0.76	70.9	37.2	23.4	0.63	30.3	4.1	5.2	1.27	4.6	15.2	14.9	0.98	15.0	41.3	2009	6,431
2016					37.5	22.2	0.59	29.8											

Source: SPC Statistics for Development Division

**Table 2: Gross Domestic Product, current prices, '000 in local currency**

	Currency	Gross Domestic Product in Current Prices ('000 in currency)				
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
American Samoa	US\$	641,000	647,000	718,000	711,000	
Cook Islands	NZ\$	346,399	357,491	372,854	367,719	382,847
Federated States of Micronesia	US\$	297,451	310,213		314,600	
Fiji Islands	FJ\$	5,051,000	5,738,800	6,010,100	6,440,000	7,129,800
Guam	US\$	4,597,000	4,562,000	4,756,000	4,882,000	
Kiribati	AU\$	167,101	171,739	181,614	193,854	206,423
Marshall Islands	US\$		173,700		190,900	
Nauru	AU\$	83,000	83,861			143,160
Niue	NZ\$	25,073	26,970	28,125	30,381	31,273
Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)	US\$	733,000			682,000	
Nouvelle-Calédonie	XFP	842,913,000	871,175,982	873,618,326	885,996,528	
Palau	US\$	183,685	200,854	215,604	228,341	259,634
Papua New Guinea	PGK	26,395,000	30,500,000	32,100,000	34,595,000	39,800,000
Pitcairn	NZ\$					
Polynésie française	XFP	632,310,030	531,861,000	643,357,000		538,600,000
Samoa	SAT	1,480,643	1,560,190	1,637,000	1,701,000	1,920,734
Solomon Islands	SB\$	5,595,200	629,660	6,703,400	7,327,700	
Tokelau	NZ\$					
Tonga	TOP	711,359	799,273	786,200	767,800	803,722
Tuvalu	AU\$	36,724	38,100	38,500	39,700	41,700
Vanuatu	VUV	71,526,375	70,347,000	72,400,000	75,803,000	

Source: SPC Statistics for Development Division

**Table 3: Gross Domestic Product, current prices, '000 in local currency**

.	Average annual rate of inflation						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
American Samoa	4.8	7.2	2.4	2.1	-0.3		
Cook Islands	-0.3	2.2	3	1.9	2.1	1.9	-0.3
Federated States of Micronesia	3.7	4.6	2.5	0.9	0.4	-0.8	
Fiji Islands	5.6	8.7	3.4	2.9	0.5	1.4	3.9
Guam	2.9	3.3	3.2	0	0.8	-0.9	6.0
Kiribati	-3.9	2.6	-3	-1.5	2.1		
Marshall Islands	1.6	5.4			3.1		
Nauru	-4.6	-1.2	-0.8	0	6		
Niue		3	2	-1.6	1.5		
Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)		3.7	1.1	-0.2	0.1	-3.4	
Nouvelle-Calédonie	2.7	2.6	1.6	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6
Palau	1.4	2.6	7.9	2.1	5.3	0.9	-1.0
Papua New Guinea	6	7.2	4.5	5	5.2	6.0	6.7
Polynésie française		1.8	1.2	1.1	0	-0.4	-0.5
Samoa	0.8	5.2	2	0.6	-0.4	0.7	1.3
Solomon Islands	1	9.4	5.9	5.4	5.2	-0.6	
Tokelau				2.2	2.6	4.7	-3.7
Tonga	3.6	6.3	1.2	0.8	2.5	-1.1	2.6
Tuvalu	-1.9	-0.6	1.4	2			
Vanuatu	3	0.9	1.4	1.5	0.8	2.5	0.8
Wallis et Futuna		3.6	5	2.1	0.4	0.4	-1.7

Source: SPC Statistics for Development Division