



UN WOMEN IN THE PACIFIC

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Pacific countries devastated by Pam



Ceriel (11 months) and his mother Marie in Taunono community, on the road to Mele, near Port Vila.
Credit: UNICEF.

We all saw it slowly build and preparations were made, but nothing could really prepare Vanuatu, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Solomon Islands for the wrath of Tropical Cyclone Pam.

Vanuatu received a direct hit from the Category 5 “super cyclone”, with around 90% of the infrastructure in the capital damaged or destroyed and thousands in evacuation centres across the islands. The outlying islands, especially Tanna, were particularly badly hit, and could only be reached for the first time several days after the storm passed. The World Food Programme estimates that 171,000 people have been affected.

In Tuvalu around 42% of the population has been affected, while several communities in Solomon Islands Eastern province have also been affected and Kiribati experienced storm surges and flooding.

Global statistics show that women and children are 14 times more likely to die or be injured in a disaster and this is often compounded by the number of secondary, intangible impacts they face in the aftermath. These can include an increased risk of gender-based and sexual violence, unequal access to food, water,

medical and humanitarian assistance, a loss of economic opportunities and an increase in their workload. After two tropical cyclones hit Vanuatu’s Tafe province in 2011, the Tanna Women’s Counselling Centre reported a 300% increase in new domestic violence cases.

It is therefore essential that all humanitarian assessments are gender-sensitive, considering the needs and potential of women and girls and that women be fully involved in the recovery and reconstruction efforts.

UN Women’s team in Port Vila is currently working from temporary premises, checking in with partners, especially market vendors, and supporting government and UN humanitarian response efforts on the ground. In addition, as part of the Pacific Humanitarian Team, UN Women is deploying a gender and protection adviser particularly to assist with the Gender and Protection Cluster’s work.

UN Women’s National Committee of Australia has also initiated a fundraising appeal, where 100% of the donation goes towards UN Women’s work in Vanuatu.

support.unwomen.org.au/pages/vanuatu-cyclone-pam-emergency-relief

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Highs and lows

Welcome to the latest issue of the “UN Women in the Pacific” newsletter. It’s our way of keeping in touch; spreading the word about our programmes, our staff, our partners and more.

This issue is one of extremes – the celebrations of International Women’s Day alongside the devastation caused across the Pacific by Tropical Cyclone Pam.

It has been heartbreaking to watch the extent of the destruction unfold, especially in Vanuatu. We are grateful that our staff there are safe but are very aware of the thousands of people who have lost their homes, livelihoods and, in some cases, their loved ones.

UN Women is supporting the humanitarian effort and, as we look ahead, it will be critical to ensure that the needs of women and girls are considered in the recovery and reconstruction phases.

In the meantime, our thoughts are with the people of Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Kiribati and Solomon Islands and their families.

Nicolas Burniat
Deputy Representative
UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office

Pacific voices raised ahead of NY visit



(L-R) Seema Naidu, Gender Officer at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat; Miki Wali, Haus of Khameleon and femLINK Pacific; Nicolas Burniat, Deputy Representative and Officer in Charge, Fiji MCO at UN Women, and Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls, Director at femLINK Pacific. Credit: UN Women/Olivia Owen.

In the lead up to their departure for the 59th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York from January 9-20, representatives from UN Women, regional organisations and civil society gathered in Suva to highlight Pacific participation.

The two-week conference is held annually to promote women's rights and shape global standards on gender equality and women's empowerment. This year it celebrates the 20th anniversary of the historic Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; celebrating the progress we've made towards global gender equality while highlighting what still needs to be done.

UN Women's Fiji Multi-Country Office and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and worked in partnership with the Secretariat of

the Pacific Community, the Pacific Beijing +20 Civil Society Steering Committee and UNFPA Pacific to ensure that Pacific government and civil society delegations reflected the diversity of women's voices in the Pacific, including youth, veteran activists, the LGBT community and women with disabilities.

UN Women also directly supported four advocates in attending and participating in CSW: Miki Wali from Haus of Khameleon (Fiji); Kathryn Relang from Women United Together Marshall Islands; Chelle Fruean from the Young Women's Christian Association (Samoa); and Naomi Navoce from the Pacific Disability Forum (Fiji).

A full summary of Pacific participation at CSW 59 will be in the April issue of this newsletter.

Market vendors hone leadership skills

Members of the market vendors' association executive committees at Suva and Nausori markets were the first in Fiji to take part in the "Leadership and Communications – Module 1" workshop in Suva earlier this month.

The training follows on from the "Getting Started" workshops that have been held around Fiji as part of the Markets for Change project. Many of these workshops resulted in the formation or revitalisation of associations to represent market vendors' needs and interests with market management.

Just over 30 market vendors, the majority of whom were women, attended the two-day workshop, which was facilitated by staff from FemLINK Pacific. It focused on enhancing executive committee members' skills to help ensure that their associations are strong, inclusive, representative and democratic, as well as able to play an effective part in decision-making processes.

Ilibera Cava is on the Executive Committee



Market vendors from Suva and Nausori Markets with invited guests and UN Women staff at the certificate presentation. Credit: UN Women/Olivia Owen.

of the Nausori Market Vendors' Women's Club and has worked at the market for five years. She says the workshop was a great opportunity.

"The training has provided me with knowledge and skills that will help me as a member of the executive committee and in leading my section in the market."

The Markets for Change project is principally funded by the Australian Government.

Tonga agrees to ratify CEDAW

On the eve of the 59th Commission on the Status of Women, the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga agreed to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

CEDAW is the principal UN treaty on women's human rights. It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979 and has so far been ratified by 188 countries. Any state that ratifies the convention is legally bound to eliminate discriminatory practices against women and girls and incorporate gender equality into law.

In announcing the decision, Tonga's Prime Minister clarified that it came with some reservations, namely where provisions of the Convention clash with national laws around succession to the throne and nobility, abortion and same sex marriage.



CEDAW is the principal UN treaty on women's human rights. Credit: UN Women/Audrey Pina Liti, Tonga.

Nicolas Burniat, UN Women's Officer in Charge and Deputy Representative at the Fiji Multi-Country Office, says ending gender inequality in the Pacific requires urgent and concrete action from leaders across the region and Tonga's decision is a step in the right direction.

Satya Jennings, Officer in Charge of the Regional UN Human Rights Office in Suva agrees, pointing out that, with Tonga, all but one of the Pacific Island countries and territories have ratified CEDAW.

"Once Tonga has undergone the actual ratification process, the focus will need to be on effective implementation of the human rights treaty, for example by bringing national legislation in line with international standards," she says.

UN Women and the UN Human Rights Office continue their work to support Pacific states in achieving gender equality and ending discrimination against women.

SNAPSHOT: International Women's Day 2015

Women and men, boys and girls from across the Pacific joined millions more worldwide in celebrating International Women's Day on and around March 8.

This year the official UN theme was Empowering Women, Empowering Humanity: Picture it! in recognition of the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Market vendors in Fiji and Vanuatu participated in a number of events in Nadi, Suva and Port Vila, while the public came out in force for the Family Fun Day in Suva organised by Fiji Women's Rights Movement. Heavy rain in Solomon Islands – a precursor to Tropical Cyclone Pam – hampered the planned event in Honiara, but a hardy crowd still turned out for entertainment, speakers and Zumba.

In Samoa churches of all denominations were encouraged to focus on women and gender equality in their Sunday services, while young women and entrepreneurs took part in two separate events. In Papua New Guinea, UN Women joined more than 100 women from the country's Customs service in their celebration. Events also took place in Tonga, Kiribati and Nauru.



1] A team finishes a puzzle as part of the "Amazing Race" at the Family Fun Day in Sukuna Park, Suva, Fiji. Credit: UN Women/Olivia Owen. 2] A member of the audience at the Papua New Guinea Customs International Women's Day celebrations in Port Moresby. Credit: UN Women/Kim Eaton. 3] Entertainment at the Solomon Islands International Women's Day celebrations in Honiara. Credit: UN Women/Marni Gilbert. 4] Two market vendors dance at the International Women's Day celebrations and certificate presentation at Marobe Market House near Port Vila, Vanuatu. Credit: UN Women/Michelle Kenney. 5] Messages for International Women's Day from participants at the Family Fun Day in Suva, Fiji. Credit: UN Women/Ellie van Baaren. 6] Australian Deputy High Commissioner, Karinda D'Aloisio, with UN Women staff and Suva Market vendors in Suva, Fiji. Credit: UN Women/Olivia Owen. 7] As part of the International Women's Day celebrations in Vanuatu, market vendors receive their certificates for participating in the "Getting Started" workshops. Credit: UN Women/Michelle Kenney.



SNAPSHOT: International Women's Day



1| A team competes in the “Amazing Race” contest as part of the Family Fun Day in Suva, Fiji. Credit: UN Women/Olivia Owen. 2| A participant at the “dance” tent at the Family Fun Day in Suva, Fiji. Credit: UN Women/Olivia Owen. 3| The UN Women information booth at the Solomon Islands International Women’s Day celebrations in Honiara. Credit: UN Women/Marni Gilbert. 4| Nadi and Namaka market vendors compete in a tug of war as part of the International Women’s Day celebrations in Nadi, Fiji. Credit: UN Women/Ellie van Baaren. 5| Two of the women taking part in the Papua New Guinea Customs International Women’s Day celebrations in Port Moresby. Credit: UN Women/Kim Eaton. 6| At the International Women’s Day celebration in Nadi, Kelera Tamuse shows off the certificate she received for participating in the “Getting Started” workshop, Fiji. Credit: UN Women/Ellie van Baaren. 7| A message for International Women’s Day at Sukuna Park, Suva, Fiji. Credit: UN Women/Taina Williams.

For more photos visit UN Women Pacific’s Flickr albums: <http://bit.do/Vyrl>



Gender and climate change funding



The team from the Tongan Government, UNDP and UN Women in Nuku'alofa for in-country consultations on the Climate Finance and Risk Governance Assessment. Photo credit: Supplied

In January UN Women was in Tonga supporting a Climate Finance and Risk Governance Assessment. While these kinds of assessments have been conducted in five Pacific countries so far, the Tonga assessment is the first in the region to include a gender and social inclusion component.

The assessment is designed to assist countries in identifying where and how climate and disaster funds are allocated at national and community levels, and across all the agencies and organisations working in climate change and disaster risk reduction. It also looks to identify opportunities for strengthening access to climate change and disaster risk reduction funding.

The assessment was requested by the Ministry of Finance and National Planning and is led by UNDP.

Strengthening national practice on gender and social inclusion in climate change and disaster risk reduction projects will not only improve the effectiveness of projects and help to meet the specific needs of women, girls, men and boys, but will also strengthen countries' ability to access funding through international climate funds.

Many of these funds are starting to require concrete actions on gender and social inclusion as a pre-requisite to receiving funding for projects.

UN Women's Protection and Gender Adviser Pip Ross worked with a local consultant on the initial in-country consultations, which took place in Nuku'alofa from January 19 to 30. The full assessment will be released in mid-2015, following further consultations and endorsement of its findings.

Auki vendors' association launches

On March 6, Auki Market's first ever vendors' association launched in the Malaita province of Solomon Islands, giving market vendors – the majority of whom are women – collective representation in decision-making processes about their workplace.

This step is part of UN Women's Markets for Change project, which is working to help create an enabling environment for the economic empowerment of market vendors across Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The project is principally funded by the Australian Government.

"Women play very important role in marketplaces but are often side-lined for any decision-making," Permanent Secretary for Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, Ethel Sigimanu, says.

"Through the association, market vendors, especially women, now have a voice – she now belongs to a group, can stand up, and now speak out through a group."

Joy Janet Ramo is one of 16 women who were voted onto the Association's Executive Committee in 2014 by market vendors attending UN Women's "Getting Started"



Registration opens for the first ever Auki Market Vendors' Association after its launch in Solomon Islands. Credit: UN Women/Marni Gilbert.

workshop. She told the audience how big a step this is for Auki's market vendors.

"We have a space for talking about any issues in the market place ... We can put forward our voice together and start linking with others."

Patrick Taloboe, Provincial Secretary of Malaita Provincial Government, and Brenda Waleka from Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade were also present.

facebook

Top posts February

Fiji Red Cross Society
Total Post Reach: 8,800
Post Clicks: 83
Likes: 304
Comments: 40
Shares: 38

Gender Equality Fund
Total Post Reach: 1,486
Post Clicks: 55
Likes: 85
Comments: 4
Shares: 14

Tuvalu CEDAW session
Total Post Reach: 806
Post Clicks: 45
Likes: 48
Comments: 4
Shares: 8

One Billion Rising – Vanuatu
Total Post Reach: 672
Post Clicks: 12
Likes: 48
Comments: 0
Shares: 9

Women in Politics – Palau
Total Post Reach: 551
Post Clicks: 27
Likes: 43
Comments: 7
Shares: 1

12,825

The number of likes on the UN Women Pacific Facebook page as at February 27, 2015.

A lifetime of service for survivors



Sister Rosarin Tataua is the Director of Kiribati's Crisis Centre. Credit: UN Women/Israella Abrahamson.

Sister Rosarin Tataua witnessed violence for the first time when she was 15 years old when she saw a man dragging a young girl along the beach by her hair and beating her head with a stick in an attempt to rape her. Without a thought about her own safety, the teenager intervened; the event would determine her life path.

Today Sister Rosarin is the Director of Kiribati's Crisis Centre and over the past 10 years she has seen her fair share of battered women enter her refuge. The island nation has one of the world's highest rates of violence against women with 68% of women aged between 15 and 49 experiencing physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime.

The Crisis Centre is a former grantee of UN Women's Pacific Regional Ending Violence against Women Facility Fund (Pacific Fund), which sponsored Sister Rosarin to attend a month-long training in Suva, Fiji on human

rights-based approaches to ending violence against women.

"The training was an eye-opener. I learned about human rights for the first time. I had heard about it and I knew we all have rights, but I did not know any more beyond that. All I knew was that women had a right to a good life.

"The training helped me to understand more about the rights of women and children, and has helped shape the services that we provide at the Crisis Centre."

The Crisis Centre is part of the Kiribati Safenet, a collaborative network of service providers working together to provide services to battered women and their families.

UN Women's Israella Abrahamson interviewed Sister Rosarin at Safenet's Case Management on March 2 and 3, 2015. The Pacific Fund is principally funded by the Australian Government.

MP mentions markets project

UN Women and its work with market vendors in Fiji was mentioned during a parliamentary session on February 12.

In a ministerial statement Fiji's Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment, Hon. Parveen Kumar, thanked UN Women for its financial assistance in building accommodation centres at Ba, Rakiraki and Lautoka Markets.

In doing so, he acknowledged the varied contribution made by women market vendors.

"These women are strong family-focused individuals, whose efforts put food not only on their tables, but also on the tables of many of our urban dwellers," Hon. Mr Kumar said.

The funding for the accommodation centres

was provided with the support of UN Women's New Zealand and Australia National Committees under the Markets for Change project.

The project itself is principally funded by the Australian Government and is currently working with councils in Nausori, Sigatoka and Labasa on further gender-responsive infrastructure projects.

The centres are open to all women market vendors but are of most value to those from rural areas. These women usually stay in town from Thursday to Saturday, either sleeping with their produce, staying with family, or in paid accommodation. This affects how much money they take home to their families, and can increase the risks of sexual and/or physical violence.

Tuvalu prepares for CEDAW dialogue

A two-day session at UN Women's Suva office in Fiji helped Tuvalu's state delegation prepare to face the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women in February.

The five-member delegation (pictured below) was heading to Geneva to take part in a constructive dialogue with the Committee following the submission of their latest report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The delegation was headed by Puaita Etuati, Senior Assistant Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister of Tuvalu.



Led by UN Women with support from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), day one focused on workshops and training on the international human rights legal framework and context, the CEDAW Committee process and the Convention's 16 articles. This was followed by a full mock committee session and debrief on day two.

"After the mock session, I have a real feeling of how it will be in Geneva," Ms Etuati said before departing. "It showed us we need to be really focused, and to really hit the question when we respond to the Committee. Without this session, I would not be as prepared."

The dialogue took place on February 20 and the resulting report highlighted several areas for improvement, including: the impact of climate change on Tuvalu and in particular on women; participation of women in decision-making; economic empowerment of women; a large number of discriminatory provisions in laws and long delay in revision of national legislation; elimination of all forms of violence against women.

<http://bit.do/2yqH>