



## GLOBAL PROCESSES AND GENDER IN THE PACIFIC



### OVERVIEW

Global and intergovernmental processes on gender, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and Beijing Platform for Action, provide opportunities for countries to agree on and measure progress towards global gender equality norms and standards. These commitments highlight actions to be taken by

governments and other stakeholders to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment at the global, regional and national levels. Further, they provide a catalyst for adopting and enhancing laws, policies and programmes that bring about equality between women and men, and provide the mechanisms for how to measure progress.

### PACIFIC PLATFORM FOR ACTION

In 1994, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community coordinated the Pacific Platform for Action on the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality, a platform that formed the basis of the Pacific region's contribution to the Beijing Conference. The Pacific Platform for Action was endorsed at the Fourth Regional Conference of Women and the First Ministerial Conference on Women and Sustainable Development and identified 13 critical areas

that provided additional contextual information and recommendations for action specific to the Pacific.

In 2004, the Platform was reviewed at the Ninth Triennial Conference of Pacific Women. The review included an in-depth look at national and regional achievements, challenges and obstacles to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.



Photo: UN Women / Marni Gilbert

### CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979 and by 188 states in the past four decades including all but two Pacific Island countries and territories, CEDAW is the principal treaty on women's human rights. The Convention sets out a framework for achieving gender equality, as well as placing obligations on states to eliminate discriminatory practices and incorporate gender equality into law. It also lays down the first globally agreed definition of discrimination against women. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is the treaty body that monitors application of the Convention. The Committee expands the scope and the applicability of CEDAW through general recommendations. In addition, states must periodically

report to the Committee on the progress they have made. The Committee then makes recommendations for improvement, which are called concluding observations.

To date, six Pacific Island countries and territories – Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa, Tuvalu and Cook Islands – have submitted at least one CEDAW report, with Tokelau reporting as part of the New Zealand report.

The Optional Protocol to the CEDAW allows the Committee to examine individual complaints and inquiries into grave and systematic violations of the rights covered by CEDAW, where domestic remedies have been exhausted.

Further information: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm>



Photo: UN Women / Olivia Owen

### BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 and sets out 12 critical areas of concern in the achievement of gender equality and women's rights. Accelerating the progress in implementing the CEDAW framework, the Platform defines concrete policies to be applied by Member States to promote gender equality, as well as establishing an international mechanism for monitoring the situation of women. The adoption by Member States has prompted concerted actions by governments and civil society to address discrimination against women.

A comprehensive national and regional review process of progress towards implementing the Platform for Action takes place every five years.

The 20th anniversary of the Platform is in 2015 and will be marked by a global review of the progress of towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. In the Pacific, 11 of 13 countries and territories submitted either national reviews or regional surveys. Due to its timing, this review will connect with the post-2015 development agenda and will be evaluated at the Commission on the Status of Women's 59th session in March 2015. Member States will also be invited to make concrete commitments towards the Platform for Action, in September 2015 events, with a view to frontload gender equality as part of the new post-2015 development agenda.

Further information: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>.

### COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Established by the UN in 1946, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Commission meets annually for a two-week session, and representatives from Member States, civil society organisations and UN entities attend to discuss successes and challenges around the year's priority theme. Themes have included: the Millennium Development Goals; Violence against Women; and the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, and development.

The primary outcome from the CSW is the Agreed Conclusions, which analyse the priority theme, and set concrete recommendations

for governments, civil society organisations and other stakeholders, to be implemented at the international, national, regional and local levels.

Achievements of the Commission include the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 which concluded with the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Since 1995, the CSW has regularly reviewed progress and challenges in the implementation of the Platform for Action. Additionally, working groups within the Commission were responsible for preparing the CEDAW text.

CSW59 will be critical for feeding into negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda.

Further information: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>.



Photo: UN Women / Olivia Owen

### POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA/ SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

As the 2015 target date for reaching the Millennium Development Goals approaches, Member States have started negotiating the shape and priorities of the post-2015 development agenda. The new global development framework will be adopted at a High Level Summit in September 2015. Negotiations build upon an unprecedented global consultation process led by the United Nations, which has connected with more than 1 million people across the world with special efforts being made to reach those whose voices are not usually heard.

They also build on the work of the General Assembly Open Working Group which proposed a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals in September 2014. These included one on "achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls", which will form the basis of the post-2015 development agenda.

Gender inequality remains the most pervasive form of discrimination globally. It is therefore critical for the new development agenda to focus on the voice, choice and safety of women. The post-2015 agenda must reaffirm and build on international norms and standards on gender equality, such as CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development

Pacific governments and gender equality advocates have been supporting the call for a stand-alone goal on women's rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as a need to mainstream gender throughout all other goals in the post-2015 development agenda.

Further information: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/post-2015>, <http://post2015.org/>.

### OTHER GLOBAL PROCESSES: CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Climate change is one of the biggest threats to achieving gender equality and sustainable development. And yet, adopting gender-responsive approaches is essential in achieving cost-effective adaptation measures, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development.

In an effort to address these threats, several global processes are taking place in 2015-2016 which will have a huge bearing on the Pacific region and its ability to respond to them.

- The Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction will be held in Japan in March 2015 and will, amongst other agendas, review the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, and adopt a new post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

- The World Humanitarian Summit will be held in Istanbul,

Turkey in 2016. The summit is expected to produce a set of commitments on humanitarian action, as well as a clear action plan for implementing the recommendations. Pacific consultations will take place in New Zealand in June 2015, following online consultations in May.

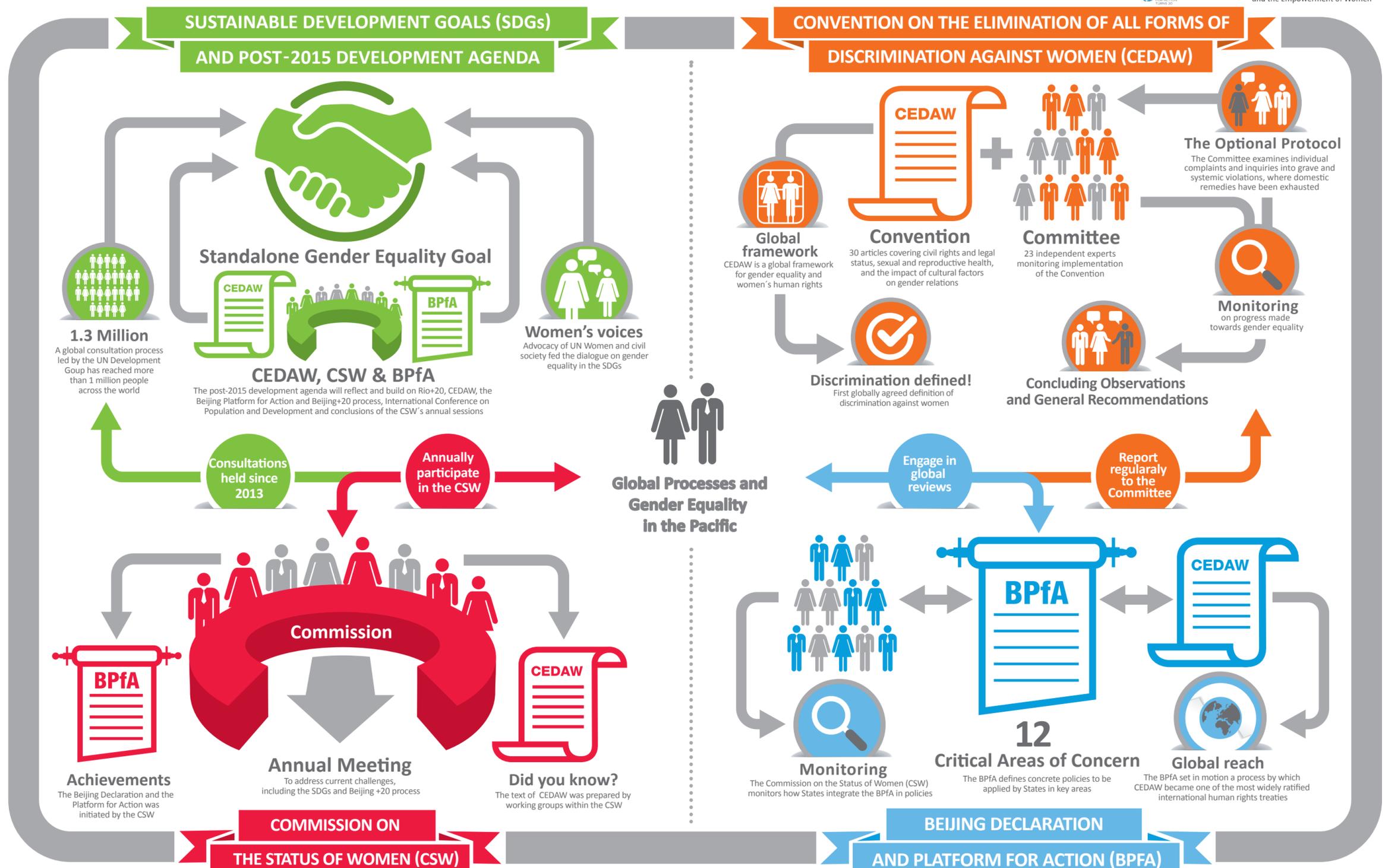
- France will host the 21st Session of the Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in December 2015. The conference aims to produce a legally binding and universal agreement on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which are the root cause of climate change. Discussions around national targets will occur throughout 2015.

Further information: <http://www.wcdr.org/conference> [http://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/whs\\_about](http://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/whs_about)



Photo: UN Women / Olivia Owen

# GLOBAL PROCESSES AND GENDER



Post-2015 Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA)

## GLOBAL PROCESSES AND GENDER IN THE PACIFIC: GETTING INVOLVED

During 2015 and 2016 a number of key events are taking place that the Pacific can participate in. Active participation, as well as advocacy and lobbying - both to national governments in the lead up as well as when attending the events themselves - is critical to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment is at the forefront of decision-makers minds and taken into account in all development agendas.

