

# UN WOMEN IN THE PACIFIC

December 2016 | Issue 9

Advancing gender equality in the Pacific



## A Year in Review



What a year 2016 has been for the Pacific! Cyclone Winston left a path of destruction through Fiji; the Pacific's first female head of state was elected when Hilda Heine became President of the Marshall Islands; and the Paris Agreement came into force, setting out a global action plan to address climate change.

For UN Women in the Pacific, this year saw us take huge strides in supporting women's economic empowerment, progress towards women and girls living lives free of violence, supporting programmes for women in leadership, advising states about their CEDAW commitments, and tackling gender inequalities in the Pacific.

We also took up new focus areas – building on our work over a number of years in gender and protection in humanitarian action by taking on Regional and National Protection Cluster and Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Sub-Cluster leads and co-lead roles, working more closely with the sporting sector to challenge harmful gender attitudes, and partnering with faith-based organisations to end violence against women and girls. We joined with partners from across the Pacific to strategise on how we can prevent violence against women and girls from happening in the first place, are developing a regional prevention framework, and have begun laying the groundwork for a new programmatic strategy of tackling the underlying causes of gender-based violence through transforming harmful social norms.

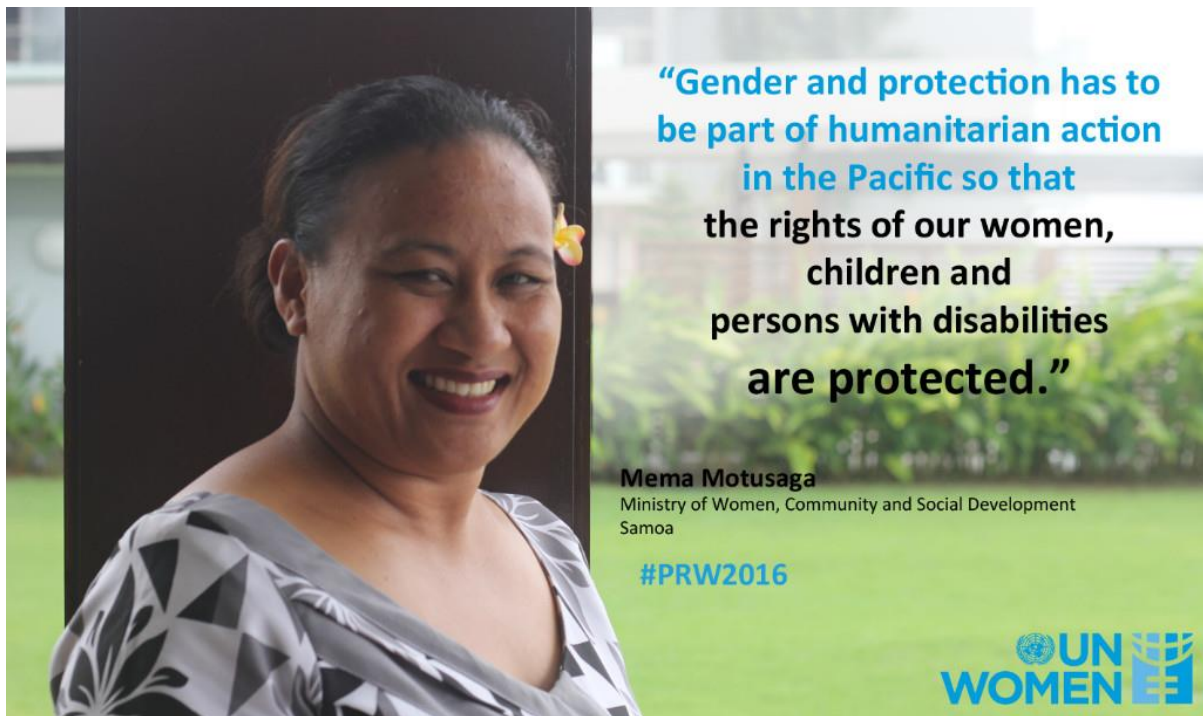
We're looking forward to 2017 to continue this work and to continue to grow partnerships with civil society and government actors working together towards gender equality and women's empowerment across the Pacific.

Aleta Miller  
UN Women Representative  
Fiji Multi-Country Office

# Gender & Protection in Humanitarian Action

In 2016 UN Women invested heavily in our role in the coordination of gender, protection, and gender-based violence in emergency work – both in training and preparedness and in response. This year, UN Women became the Pacific Humanitarian Protection Cluster lead, tasked with a coordination role to ensure the needs of all groups – women, girls, men, boys, people with disabilities, the elderly, and LGBTQI communities – are considered and met before, during and after a disaster.

In the wake of Cyclone Winston in Fiji, UN Women, together with UNICEF, co-led the Fiji Safety and Protection Cluster under the Fiji Government's leadership. We advocated for all groups to be consulted and included in decision-making and response to the cyclone. We worked closely with the Fiji Government and many partner agencies including Fiji NGOs to undertake assessments about safety and protection concerns for affected populations, including women and girls.



Under the Government's lead, the Safety and Protection Cluster established a Code of Conduct for all emergency workers. We took an active role on gender-based violence in emergencies response in the aftermath of the cyclone as co-lead of the Fiji Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Sub-Cluster, which is led by the Government. We also supported four gender-based violence service delivery partners working on the ground in the response. As a result of our work, close to 20,000 women and girls had access to information on where to receive lifesaving care and treatment in cases of violence and more than 13,000 women and girls received direct care and services through mobile clinics and direct support, including 361 women and girls living with disabilities.

Our humanitarian and recovery response to Winston was built upon and well integrated with our already established programmes. In the immediate aftermath of the disaster we engaged our Markets for Change (M4C) and Ending Violence Against Women teams to assess the needs of the communities and local organisations we partnered with and provide immediate assistance where needed.

Moving out of the cyclone response phase, we invested in expanding UN Women's long-term gender and protection in humanitarian action work across the Pacific in a rigorous and sustainable way, to put gender and protection on the humanitarian agenda, and to support National Governments and organizations in-country to have the skills, resources and plans to fully integrate gender and protection as they prepare and respond to disasters. We brought together key partners from Pacific governments and civil society from five countries for a Regional Gender and Protection in Humanitarian Action training in Suva in August. This was followed by a series of five national trainings in Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and Tonga.





*You Dance group opened the Protection Session at the Pacific Humanitarian Protection Meeting in Suva with a theatre piece during Pacific Resilience Week in October, demonstrating the importance of inclusion in disaster preparedness.*

We also brought together key actors from Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and Tonga before the Pacific Humanitarian Partnerships meeting in November to discuss opportunities and entry points for integrating gender and protection throughout the Pacific Humanitarian Partnerships meeting advocating for the needs of affected populations, in all their diversity, so they are considered in all aspects of humanitarian action by all actors, from shelter to water and sanitation needs.

Finally we worked with NGOs, DIVA for Equality and FemLINKPacific to convene a dynamic panel and discussion about gender in humanitarian action in the Pacific at the Pacific Feminist Forum with a session titled 'Beyond Pads and Buckets, Gender in Humanitarian Action'.

In 2017 UN Women will continue to lead and invest in gender and protection preparedness and response across the Pacific – investing further in developing the capabilities of national responses, and deepening our partnerships with the range of humanitarian actors – actions that are fundamental to saving lives in our Pacific context.

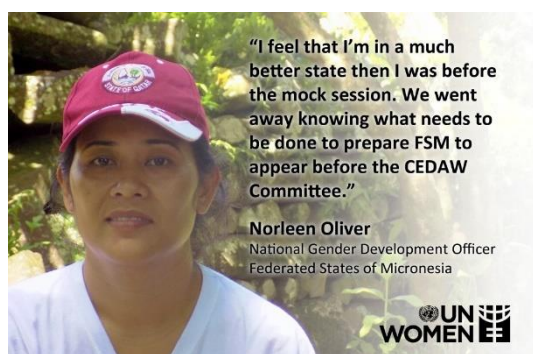
## **The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**

This year we provided technical assistance to 10 Pacific Island Countries and Territories about CEDAW reporting and implementation. In the Pacific region, it is not uncommon to have delays of more than 10 years in CEDAW reporting and treaty body reporting more generally. In the last few years, however, a concentrated surge has brought almost every CEDAW State party in the Pacific over the line to report at least once under the Convention. Kiribati remains the only State party in the Pacific yet to have reported under the Convention and is expected to submit its combined initial report in early 2017.

The CEDAW reporting process is critical to the achievement of gender equality. Far from just a bureaucratic checklist, reporting shines a light on the most salient issues and obstacles to women's full and equal enjoyment of human rights. It forces us to reflect critically on our record of serving all women without distinction, to ask ourselves and each other difficult and confronting questions, and it illuminates a path forward for gender-responsive legislation, policy and action. And, no less important, it gives us time to acknowledge the many achievements and significant progress made in the region.

In 2016, UN Women provided technical advice and feedback on the draft CEDAW State reports of Cook Islands, Nauru, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Samoa. UN Women hosted mock constructive dialogues, in Vanuatu in February and the Federated States of Micronesia in November, simulating the conditions of the real dialogues

in Geneva and preparing State delegations to face the CEDAW Committee. Government officers in Vanuatu were also supported to develop a CEDAW implementation plan following on from their successful dialogue. In FSM and Kiribati, UN Women conducted CEDAW shadow report workshops for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), introducing them to ways in which they can participate and have a voice in this important process and, in the Solomon Islands, CSOs were trained to develop advocacy and lobbying strategies for CEDAW implementation. In Fiji, UN Women helped train government officers to take CEDAW awareness out to the villages, and in Tuvalu UN Women supported a series of CEDAW awareness-raising activities in the outer islands.



## Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW)

Across the Pacific region, UN Women drives and implements a robust agenda aimed at advancing ending violence against women (EVAW) legislation and policy, progressing access to essential multi-sectoral services for survivors of violence, and more recently, advancing a rigorous agenda on the primary prevention of violence.

UN Women has trained close to 150 people from 20 organisations on community-based primary prevention theory and approaches, including SASA!, one of the world's most successful prevention approaches from Uganda, which documented a 52% reduction in intimate partner violence. To build on this work, in September, UN Women convened a three-day consultation on Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls, bringing together key stakeholders from the region to discuss prevention programming and advance the dialogue on violence prevention in the region. Forty-two participants attended from across seven countries. During three days of engaging conversations, presentations were given by international, regional and national actors about what evidence-based primary prevention programming has worked, how sport and faith-based organisations can be avenues to prevent violence against women and girls and how to challenge and change gender inequality norms which underpin violence. Working constructively with our ending violence against women and girls colleagues we produced and agreed upon principles of a primary prevention framework for the Pacific.



*Dreamcast Theatre Group performed a drama about the impact of family violence on the community and stood in solidarity with UN Women and Honiara Netball Association during the 16 Days of Activism Netball event in Solomon Islands on 3 December*

During the 16 Days of Activism Campaign to end violence against Women and Girls in the Pacific, violence prevention was a key message. In Fiji we supported the Fiji Council of Churches in developing [videos](#) featuring



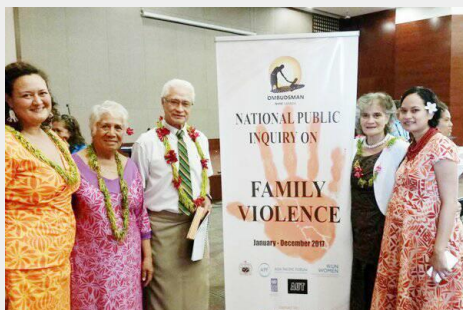
senior leaders from the faith community speaking out against violence against women.

The increased focus on prevention this year did not mean we forgot about services. Women-centered quality essential services must be available to all survivors to support women in healing and recovering from violence. In the Pacific, UN Women continues to advance access to quality multi-sectoral services through targeted technical support to governments and civil society actors. In Fiji for example, UN Women provided intensive support to the Ending Violence Against Women Government Taskforce this year, including drafting the first ever national guideline for services delivery across health, police, social service and legal sectors.

We are excited for 2017 as we believe now is the opportune time to catalyze the investments made to date on violence prevention and take forward an investment which reduces rates of violence.

## EVAW Highlights

### Samoa National Inquiry into Family Violence launched



*The Samoa National Inquiry into Family Violence was launched on 8 December*

In Samoa, National Human Rights Day on December 8 was an opportunity to highlight family violence as a violation of human rights by launching the National Public Inquiry on Family Violence - the first of its kind in the Pacific.

Conducted by the Samoa National Human Rights Institute, and co-funded by UN Women, UNDP and other partners, the Inquiry investigates the nature and extent of family violence in Samoa through a series of data-gathering activities. These include public consultations, collecting personal stories and experiences of survivors and perpetrators, and recording evidence from various institutions and subject matter experts.

### Awareness to end violence against women through sport



*Samoa vs Tonga Pacific Nations Cup Test Match*

On 25 June, six million viewers worldwide watched the Pacific Nations Cup test match between *Manu Samoa* and *Ikale Tahi Tonga* which was dedicated to raising awareness of violence against women. Players, officials and supporters wore orange, showing solidarity for the UN Secretary-General's UNiTE to End Violence Against Women campaign.

The event was the result of a new partnership between UN Women, Samoa Rugby Union, and the World Rugby Union and was the first time a professional match had been dedicated to raising awareness on the issue. The match was followed by a national awareness campaign televising the [Manu Says No to Violence video](#).

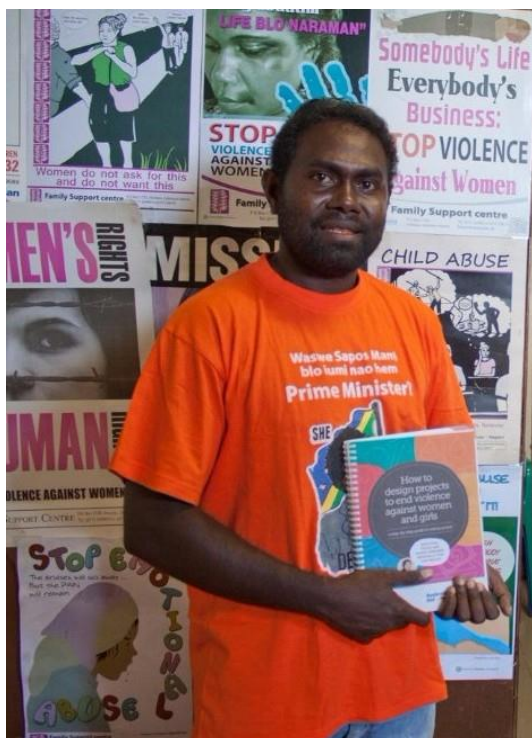
### Other 2016 highlights include:

- **Access to Justice:** In August, we launched a [new report looking at how women and children experience justice through the formal justice system](#) in Vanuatu. In response to findings from the report, UN Women provided support to the Vanuatu Women Centre (VWC) to open a branch and extend its services which include counselling, psycho-social support and legal aid for victims of violence, to the women and girls of Penama Province, the only province which was not covered by VWC.
- **Essential Services Joint Programme:** The Essential Services Programme is a partnership by UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, and UNODC that has been developed with the aim of providing women and girls who have experienced gender-based violence greater access to a coordinated set of essential multi-

sectoral services – i.e. health, social services, justice/policing. In the Pacific UN Women will be coordinating the rollout of the Essential Services Programme in Solomon Islands and Kiribati in close coordination with the Australian Government, UN partners, and government counterparts.

- **Review of Solomon Islands national policy:** In Solomon Islands, UN Women has supported the review of the National Policy to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) 2016-2020; the launch and implementation of the Family Protection Act; and has substantially improved multi-sectoral response to VAWG through the service provider coordination committee, SAFENET.

## Pacific Fund Grantees on EVAW



*"Men have the power, strength and resources to end violence against women. Men must acknowledge that family violence is their issue."*

**Hendrick Barai**  
Family Support Centre  
Solomon Islands



*"To all men and boys, one cannot solve problems by using violence. Acts of violence only escalate the problem - not resolve it."*

**Lynffer Wini-Maltungtung**  
Family Support Centre  
Solomon Islands

## Markets for Change (M4C)

Markets for Change works in over 20 market locations to improve gender equality and women's economic empowerment by creating safe, inclusive and non-discriminatory marketplaces in Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. 2016 saw the project add two new market locations (Savusavu and Levuka) in Fiji.

The M4C teams have been in full swing supporting the strengthening of Market Vendor Associations (MVAs). In Fiji, the team held a networking and learning forum for Fiji bringing together motivated MVA representatives from 12 markets across the country in order to share their experiences and learning. The Solomon Islands team, through the provision of leadership training to Honiara City and Auki MVAs, supported those associations in hosting successful AGMs which saw an increase in vendor participation as well as an increase in MVA memberships. The Vanuatu team was kept busy supporting national activities for International Day for Rural Women, and the first AGM for the Silae Vanua MVA, which is the largest association working with UN Women in the Pacific.

We have piloted and started rolling out Akvo Flow software in Fiji to help us collect data more efficiently, gain valuable insights at a click of a button, and to enhance the efficacy of our programming work. This will be rolled out in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in early 2017.





*Timaima Dobui, a Suva Market vendor has attended several UN Women trainings under the Markets for Change project, which she says have helped improve her business skills*

Markets for Change continuously engages at a local level with market management and local government, and in November brought together actors from across the three countries for the second Regional Stakeholders Forum, facilitating Pacific-to-Pacific exchange about how to improve marketplaces for women. Despite the diversity of markets in the region, the Forum discussed common challenges including crowding, security, waste management and the need for disaster response plans. Discussions also centered around the need for more training and awareness in gender responsive budgeting and planning, and the inclusion of women in decision-making. Here are some of our M4C country highlights for 2016:

## Markets for Change Highlights

### Fiji

A number of Fiji marketplaces felt the brunt of Cyclone Winston in February this year. The Fiji M4C team immediately switched into response action, reaching out to affected market vendors, providing mobile tents, tables and chairs to affected markets including Ba, Lautoka, Nadi, Namaka, Rakiraki, Sigatoka and Tavua. Through discussions with MVAs, it became evident produce was in short supply due to the impact of the cyclone, and seeds and tools were much needed to regain what had been lost and to sustain livelihoods of farmers and vendors. Thanks to the generous support from the Australian Government, we were able to mobilize funds to procure agro-inputs for affected market vendors and started distribution across affected areas. The additional funding from the Australian Government enabled UN Women's M4C project to support markets in repairing, upgrading or rebuilding (e.g. Rakiraki market, which was totally destroyed).

UN Women Pacific added 4 new photos.  
Published by Lauretta Ah Sam (7) · November 5 at 12:37pm ·

UN Women's Markets for Change Team was at Rakiraki Market this week with partners #Fiji Ministry for Local Government, Environment and Housing and #DFAT Australia, distributing packs of agro-supplies to 200 farmers, including #womenfarmers whose farms have been affected by #TCWinston.  
Photo Credit: UN Women/Lauretta Ah Sam  
@UN Women Asia and the Pacific... See More



*The Markets for Change team worked with Local Government, and the Australian Government, to distribute agro-supplies, including vegetable seeds, tools, fertilisers and pesticides to over 1,500 farmers across Fiji.*

In addition, the Fiji team still managed to deliver 'business as usual' throughout the year providing gender-responsive training to public servants and government officials, offering Continuing Market Business Education to

vendors, undertaking resilience assessments of all 12 markets we work with, and improving infrastructure at Ba Market with new reinforced concrete floor, benches and tables.

## Solomon Islands

The Auki MVA has taken a lead to ensure the market and vendors are incorporated into provincial budget exercises. In partnership with Malaita Provincial Government, UN Women worked collaboratively with the Market Manager in ensuring the participation of the Auki MVA into provincial budget processes, which impact the market place. Previously, provincial budget exercises did not focus on the maintenance and infrastructure needs of the Auki Market, resulting in disrepair of the marketplace. Through this process, the Auki MVA were able to advocate to the provincial government on issues such as outstanding water and electricity bills not being paid. This resulted in a greater understanding of the marketplace status and issues by the Malaita Provincial Government officials, who took action almost immediately, resulting in access to water and electricity in the market for the first time in three years.

An increased understanding of budget processes and planning also contributed to the successful lobbying for a toilet refurbishment in the budget by the Auki market management. Further funding commitments towards improved market conditions have been made by the Provincial Secretary. The Auki MVA is now more confident in raising issues and to participate in budget processes having gone through this experience. Now, the association is actively part of the budget consultation process and is an included partner in decision-making with positive flow on effects for the daily lives of market vendors, management and market customers.



*Honiara City Market Vendor Association President, Maureen Sariki, addresses members at Annual General Meeting*



*Auki Market Vendors Association member (L) and AMVA President (R) Janet Ramo donate two wheelie bins to Auki Market in support of a waste management initiative*

## Vanuatu

Long queues and hot sun could not keep women from exercising their right to be part of democratic processes in Vanuatu earlier this year in the Northern Island MVA executive elections. Market vendors from Sanma province, Vanuatu's largest province, travelled from far and wide to participate in the first Northern Islands MVA executive elections. Ninety percent of 1,402 members cast their votes – 98% of which were women. Of the six executive positions to be decided, four women were elected, and both the president and secretary positions are now held by women.



*Women of all ages at different stages of life and with varying needs, including four deaf women, enthusiastically took part in the election day with voting lines extending far into Unity Park in Luganville on Espirtu Santo.*

Mainstreaming accessibility was evident during the elections as elderly persons, women with small babies and sick women were managed in a separate queue and given faster access to voting. Support for the election by national government services was evidenced by the Vanuatu National Police providing security and support to the elections, and Luganville Council Municipal Wardens helping organise voters, who queued to vote from 6.00am and throughout the day.



# Women's Leadership & Political Participation

Supporting women's leadership and political participation continued to be a strong focus of our work this year.

In March, the elections in Samoa were a moment of truth for Increasing the Political Participation of Women in Samoa (IPPWS), the UN Women-UNDP joint project supported by the Australian Government. The elections saw the highest ever number of women candidates run for office and the election of five female MPs (four elected directly and one elected through the application of a reserved seat under the constitution). Following the elections, the first female Deputy Prime Minister, the first female Chair of the Budget Committee and the first female Minister for Natural Resources and Environment were appointed.

In Nauru, thanks to generous funding from the Australian Government, UN Women supported women candidates through a series of transformational leadership trainings and a practice parliament organised in partnership with UNDP.



*Solomon Islands Permanent Secretary for Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, Ethel Sigimanu (C) launches new research on voter preferences at the National Women's Summit and Dialogue in Honiara.*



*Participants at the Regional Consultation on Women's Political Empowerment and Leadership engage in groupwork to align plans to national contexts and priorities.*

In June, we launched our new UN Women-UNDP Joint Programme on Supporting Peaceful and Inclusive Transition in the Solomon Islands. Under this project, which is funded by the Peace Building Fund, UN Women will work in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs and other local stakeholders to support women's voice, participation and leadership in national dialogues about peace and security with a specific focus on young women. Under the project the Ministry convened a three-day National Summit from 10-12 October, which brought together women from all the provinces to finalise the 2016 National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security. The Summit was also the opportunity to launch a new UN Women research report looking at the [influence of gender attitudes and norms on voter preferences in Solomon Islands](#).



*Participants take a selfie break at the Pacific Regional Consultation on Women's Political Empowerment and Leadership held in Nadi, 11-13 September.*

From 11-13 September we convened a Pacific Regional Consultation on Women's Political Empowerment and Leadership, in Nadi, in partnership with the UNDP Regional Pacific Office. The consultation brought together key actors and stakeholders from nine countries including representatives from electoral management bodies, Ministries of women, civil society, female MPs, female candidates and development partners to review the status of programming initiatives to advance women's political participation in the Pacific, and share and discuss best practice and lessons learned, and agree on a comprehensive programming framework which reflects national contexts and priorities. The outcome of the consultation is currently being used by UN Women and UNDP to plan future programming.

## Our work in pictures



### TONGA

#### Gender & Protection in Humanitarian Action National Training, 6-8 December

The Tonga Protection Cluster addresses participants at the National Training.



Participants engage in groupwork presentations on the role of effective and inclusive communication during disaster response.



### SOLOMON ISLANDS

#### 16 Days of Activism with Honiara Netball Association - 3 December



Over 50 keen netball players, including 30 youth, joined Honiara Netball Association and UN Women to mark 16 Days of Activism and raise awareness to end violence against women through sport.



### VANUATU

#### International Day for Rural Women (IDRW), Erakor Village, 13-14 October



Hundreds of women gathered in Erakor Village for the IDRW opening parade and enjoyed string bands, dancing, speeches, displays, local food and handicraft stalls over the two-day event.





## KIRIBATI

### 16 Days of Activism, Kiribati, 25 November

A procession to mark 16 Days of Activism kicked off celebrations attended by the Ministry for Women, Youth and Social Affairs, Civil Society Organisations and UN Women donor partners.



Celebrations took place on 25 November with over 10 womens and community groups showcasing handicrafts, local produce and other items including a formal event to mark White Ribbon Day.



## FIJI

### Challenging gender stereotypes

We partnered with the Fiji Rugby Union, Oceania Rugby and the Fijiana 15s Rugby Team to challenge negative stereotypes and promote women's empowerment through sport.

### Celebrating International Rural Women's Day

Vendors from the Savusavu Market, the latest market to join our M4C project, celebrate IRWD for the first time.



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