



# UN WOMEN IN THE PACIFIC

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## Supporting recovery in Vanuatu



Shaline Nimal walks through what is left of the village of Rangorango on Efate island. She and the other women rely on income earned through selling their produce, all of which has been destroyed. Credit: UN Women/Ellie van Baaren

It has now been more than a month since Tropical Cyclone Pam hit Vanuatu, destroying 96 per cent of crops and affecting around 166,000 people, more than half the population. Since then, the Ni-Vanuatu people, with the support of local organisations and the international community have been focusing on reconstructing all aspects of their lives and building resilience against future disasters.

UN Women has deployed a number of specialist staff to Vanuatu as part of a wider effort to ensure the voices of women and girls affected by the cyclone are heard and that their needs are incorporated at all levels of the recovery and reconstruction efforts.

As well as supporting the team in our Port Vila office, UN Women’s Gender and Protection Advisor, and Climate Change and Disaster

Risk Reduction Policy Advisor support the government in mainstreaming gender equality through humanitarian and post-disaster assessments. This includes the Post Disaster Needs Assessment Report, which has now been submitted to the Vanuatu Government.

Two particular areas of concern are income streams for women – many of whom rely on their gardens for food and income as market vendors – and an increased risk of gender-based violence. UN Women is working closely with partners and stakeholders, including market associations, to facilitate inter-island trade of fresh produce and craft materials with Espiritu Santo, which was less affected by the cyclone, and to ensure women have access to services and information.

[Read more about markets in Vanuatu on page 4.](#)

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## Show of strength and support

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 celebrates the unique resilience and voice of the Pacific people, with stories from Vanuatu, joint programmes in Solomon Islands and Samoa, and participation in a number of global events.

After seeing Pam’s destruction firsthand, it is heartwarming to see the smiles returning to Ni-Vanuatu faces and the new partnerships forming as they rebuild. The re-opening of the urban markets is a great step for many women market vendors who rely on the income it represents.

I was also honoured to take part the 59th Commission on the Status of Women in New York in March alongside such strong, diverse and vocal Pacific advocates.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

**Nicolas Burniat**  
Deputy Representative  
UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office



The Epau ring road market on Efate island before and after Tropical Cyclone Pam. It is one of five ring road markets taking part in UN Women’s Markets for Change project. Credit: UN Women/Nicolas Burniat & Ellie van Baaren.

## Joint programme launches in Honiara



UN Women staff with invited guests and workshop participants at the launch of the Solomon Islands Government-UN Joint Programme to End Violence against Women and Girls in Honiara. Credit: UN Women/Marni Gilbert.

The first phase of a programme that leverages the combined strengths of six UN agencies and the government to help end violence against women and girls in Solomon Islands launched in Honiara last month.

The UN-Solomon Islands Government Joint Programme on Eliminating Violence against Women and Girls (Joint Programme) involves UN Women, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, ILO and WHO in partnership with the Government of Solomon Islands, recognising that the issue cuts across range of areas and that changing the statistics requires a holistic approach.

The Family Health and Safety Study of 2008 showed that 64 per cent of women aged 15-49 in Solomon Islands have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner. Of those, 70 per cent never sought

help and only 17 per cent sought help from formal services.

The Joint Programme looks to help strengthen capacity within government and civil society organisations to expand survivor services and primary prevention activities as well as changing the environment in which those services are delivered, making violence less acceptable through social transformation.

The activities launched in March have received a US\$600,000 grant for three years from the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) through a joint proposal. It is the first of its kind in Solomon Islands and the first in the country to receive funding from the UN Trust Fund.

Read more: <http://bit.do/3tSh>

## Beijing +20 Pacific Review launches

The Pacific Beijing +20 Review Report was launched at the 59th Commission on the Status of Women in March and highlights the progress and setbacks experienced by 16 Pacific Island countries and territories.

Compiled by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community with support from UN Women, the report highlights significant breakthroughs such as breaking the silence around violence against women and girls, increasing their access to justice and opening dialogue at the regional and national levels on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The report also notes, however, that progress has been mixed and that there are still some areas of deep concern, including the continuing high levels of violence against women.

For example, women's access to paid work is still impacted by discriminatory practices, traditional beliefs and economic structures, while women's participation in the labour force has in many cases declined, in some places by as much as 30 per cent.



Credit: UN Women/Bill Jaynes, Federated States of Micronesia.

Women's political representation in the Pacific region is the lowest in the world, and there is a high level of teenage pregnancy, accounted for by a lack of sex education and access to contraception, as well as exposure to unwanted or sexually abusive relationships.

Speaking at the launch in New York, Samoa's Minister of Women, Community and Social Development, Hon.

Tolofuaivalelei Famlemoe Leiautau, called for renewed commitment to gender equality in Pacific Island countries and territories.

"We ought to refocus our efforts to ensure that our women and girls enjoy their human rights and have improved quality of life as members of society today, tomorrow and in the future ahead of us."

Download the report: <http://goo.gl/yE6Fi4>

## Tonga rugby players support HeForShe

Tonga's sevens rugby team proudly displayed their support for ending violence against women and girls and UN Women's HeForShe campaign as they trained for the IRB World Sevens Series matches at the Hong Kong Sevens last month.

The players wore training kit sponsored by Talitha Project, one of UN Women's Pacific Regional Ending Violence against Women Facility Fund (Pacific Fund) grant recipients, which called for everyone to "Unite to End Violence against Girls".

Coach Andy Katoa says while developing his players physically is important, "I seriously doubt they can be wholesome men if they do not recognise gender equality".

The Tonga Rugby Union Facebook page has also been featuring posts raising awareness of violence against women and girls, incorporating messages such as "this is pride, this is family, this is #One team #One Tonga".

The sevens team also showed their support for the HeForShe campaign, a call for men to take responsibility for, and stand alongside women



The Tongan sevens rugby team shows support for UN Women's He For She campaign and ending violence against women. Picture supplied.

in, working for gender equality.

The Talitha project has received a grant and capacity building from the Pacific Fund for its three-year "My Body, My Rights" project, which involves young women advocating to peers on standing up and ending violence against women. The Pacific Fund is supported by the Australian Government.

[www.heforshe.org](http://www.heforshe.org)  
[www.talithaprojectonga.org](http://www.talithaprojectonga.org)

## CYCLONE PAM AFTERMATH: #VanuatuStillSmiles



1| An example of the destruction caused by Tropical Cyclone Pam on the east coast of Efate island. 2| Area Councillor Edwin Tapasei looks after a number of villages on Efate, including Mangaliului, one of the five ring road markets covered by the Markets for Change project. The market serves around 500 people from a number of different villages. 3| Director of Local Authorities, Cherol Ala has been working closely with UN Women, the local authorities and market associations to encourage collaboration and cooperation. 4| Area Councillor Joseph Kalpeau with market vendors Annie James and Leisong Bob in the ruins of the Epau ring road market. 5| UN Women's National Project Coordinator for Markets for Change in Vanuatu, Morris Kaloran, on his way out to Lelepa Island to talk to market vendors. 6 & 7| The Solar Mamas workshop in Epau village before and after the cyclone. 7| Residents of Emua stand in what remains of their roadside market structure. The women of the village rely on the income from the market; all their crops have been destroyed. Credits: UN Women/Ellie van Baaren

For more photos head to our Flickr site: <http://bit.do/3tNN>



## Support for women in politics in Samoa



L-R: Peseta Noumea Simi, Assistant CEO for the Division of Aid Coordination from Samoa's Ministry of Finance, Australian High Commissioner to Samoa, Sue Langford, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, Jaime Aguinaga and UN Women Country Programme Coordinator for Samoa, Mele Maulaivao, sign the Increasing Political Participation of Women in Samoa programme in Apia. Credit: UNDP/Susan Faoagali.

UN Women is working with UNDP, and the governments of Samoa and Australia to increase the number of women in parliament through a new joint programme launched in April.

The 2016 general election in Samoa is the first since the passing of a constitutional amendment to reserve 10 per cent of seats in the Legislative Assembly for women.

The Increasing Political Participation of Women in Samoa UN Joint Programme will work on facilitating discussion and awareness at the community level, and capacity building with potential candidates and political parties ahead of the election, as well as continuing to provide mentoring after the election. It is supported by UN Women, the Australian Government and UNDP.

Samoa is currently ranked 174th out of 188 when it comes to women in parliament, with just 6 per cent of seats held by women. Out of the 162 candidates that contested the March 2011 general election, only eight were women.

Nicolas Burniat, UN Women's Deputy Representative and Officer in Charge at the Fiji Multi-Country Office, says that through the programme the UN will provide training, support and resources to candidates, government, and civil society organisations to affect change at every level.

"The aim is to encourage Samoans to register to vote in both national and local elections and to encourage more women to stand up and have a voice in parliament."

UN Resident Coordinator Lizbeth Cullity says the programme is a key milestone for Samoa.

"It will be exciting to see the activities of this programme roll out in communities as voters become increasingly aware of the value of more women parliamentarians, political parties show their support for women candidates and finally, more women are voted in during the general elections."

Read more: <http://bit.do/3Gtu>

## UNTV profiles Solomon Islands violence against women programme

A behaviour change project run by Correctional Services of the Solomon Islands (CSSI) and targeting perpetrators has been featured in a UNTV documentary.

The project is part of the rehabilitation at Rove maximum security prison in the capital of Honiara and puts inmates through a three-day course that covers gender and gender-based violence.

Changing the mindset of perpetrators is one of the biggest challenges in ending violence against women and girls and this project is the first of its kind in Solomon Islands.

It has received funding, technical support and capacity building from UN Women through its Pacific Regional Ending Violence against Women Facility Fund (Pacific Fund), which is principally funded by the Australian Government.



George Walahoula from the Correctional Services of the Solomon Islands took part in the Pacific Fund's Knowledge and Learning Exchange in Melbourne in October 2014. Credit: UN Women/Ellie van Baaren.

Joseph is eight years into a life sentence for killing his wife and went through the course in 2013.

"I used to beat my wife and that made me feel like I'm the man, I'm the boss," he says.

"The training molded my life and put me back on the right way of thinking. Beating and hurting a woman is wrong; it is a crime."

In March 2014 he was moved to a low security prison, the first of the course's graduates to be re-classified.

"One day I hope I will be released from this prison. I am really sorry for what I did. No one should kill or beat a woman."

Watch the video: <http://bit.do/3GFo>

## Follow UN Women Pacific on Twitter



UN Women in the Pacific now has its own Twitter page! The account is an important component of the regional media and communications strategy and provides UN Women with a further opportunity to share the latest information on our projects with a global audience, as well as providing links to resources, statistics and media coverage on the challenges and achievements of women in the Pacific. It also complements the Facebook page, which was launched last year.

Follow us and share with your networks: [ww.twitter.com/unwomenpacific](http://ww.twitter.com/unwomenpacific) | [@unwomenpacific](https://twitter.com/unwomenpacific)

## Women return to Marobe Market



A market vendor at the official re-opening of Marobe Market in Vanuatu after Tropical Cyclone Pam. Credit: UN Women/Ellie van Baaren.

When Marobe Market Manager Aaron Kalo came into UN Women's Port Vila office in Vanuatu after Easter, he had good news – the market was running out of tables. The market had only been open a few days and the demand for tables was evidence of the small steps being taken to restore the trade that so many women and their families depend on.

The market officially re-opened on April 2 as a result of a UN Women-facilitated agreement between Port Vila Municipality and Shefa Provincial Government, under the oversight of the Department of Local Authorities. It was the first to re-open for fresh produce sellers almost three weeks after Tropical Cyclone Pam hit.

"Markets are often dismissed as part of the formal economy but they are vital to national growth and the economy," explains Cherol Ala, Director of the Department of Local Authorities. "We need women to recognise that they are important and that they deserve help; we need to support them as much as we can."

Originally opened in June 2014 and funded by

UN Women's Australian National Committee as part of UN Women's Markets for Change project, Marobe Market House was largely undamaged by the cyclone. It is now open to all market vendors while the Port Vila Market is being repaired, with a two-month grace period on table fees for market vendors' association members.

Three market vendors' associations actively involved in getting markets up and running again were established mere months ago after UN Women's "Getting Started" workshops under its Markets for Change project, which is principally funded by the Australian Government. A fourth association received support under the Women's Economic Empowerment programme.

All four associations are now working with UN Women and the Vanuatu Technical and Vocational Education and Training programme to organise inter-island produce trade so the market vendors on Efate have something to sell.

Read more: <http://bit.do/3ELf>

## Video captures learning experience

The experiences of Pacific ending violence against women practitioners at a UN Women knowledge and learning exchange have been captured on video.

Representatives from 15 organisations across seven Pacific Island countries gathered in Melbourne, Australia in October last year as part of an opportunity to share experiences and learn both from each other and from a number of organisations working in the state of Victoria.

The Australian state employs a holistic approach to ending violence against women, with the support and involvement of civil society organisations, police, justice system and government.

The exchange was part of the capacity building component of UN Women's Pacific Regional



Videographer Sam Horton interviews Stephen Fontana of Victoria Police at the knowledge and learning exchange. Credit: UN Women/Ellie van Baaren.

Ending Violence against Women Facility Fund, which is principally funded by the Australian Government. The video itself is intended to capture not only the experiences of the Pacific representatives, but also of the Australian organisations they interacted with.

Watch the video: <https://youtu.be/tx0-4bfixqk>

### story from the field

## Gaining skills and experience

In February Julieanne Wickham from Solomon Islands' Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs attended a five-day workshop for UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) grantees in Marrakech, Morocco. She attended alongside UN Women's Ayako Irooi as part of the recently launched joint programme to end violence against women and girls in Solomon Islands (see page 2), which has received a UN Trust Fund grant.

"This was the first time I had attended training around monitoring and evaluation and I was able to learn so much. I feel confident that I can contribute so much more to the project after the training, plus I got to meet some really amazing and committed women and men. Some of them had many years of experience in gender-based violence, and others, like me, had just started, but we all had this common goal.



UN Women's Ayako Irooi with Julieanne Wickham from Solomon Islands' Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs at the UN Trust Fund training in Morocco. Credit: UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.

Having the training in Marrakech was an added bonus – the city is just amazing and I spent a couple of evenings exploring the narrow streets of the Medina, doing some hard bargaining with the vendors, sampling the local food and just taking in the sights.

Working in partnership can be both challenging and rewarding and there were lots of both during the development of the Joint Programme, as well as the preparations towards the launch and inception workshop. But I think what came out strongly for me was that we couldn't have done it without each other. The UN-Government of Solomon Islands partnership is a great one and this project is just the start."

# Pacific advocates take to global stage



Some of the Pacific civil society representatives who marched alongside New Yorkers and international delegations ahead of the 59th Commission on the Status of Women in March. Photo credit: UN Women/Nicolas Burniat.

Pacific voices were raised loud, clear and proud at the 59th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York in March. The contingent was highly visible, diverse and vocal, actively participating in the two week-long conference, as well as a number of high profile side events.

In addition to the government delegations, UN Women, UNFPA, the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the CSO Steering Committee – which represents a wide range of civil society organisations – financially supported more than 20 non-governmental participants to attend the conference.

UN Women directly sponsored Naomi Navoce from Pacific Disability Forum, Cherelle Fruean from YWCA, Katherine Relang from Women Unite Together Marshall Islands, and Miki Wali from Haus of Khameleon, the first transwoman from Fiji to participate in CSW.

“UN Women is proud to able to contribute to the diversity of the Pacific representation through such strong Pacific advocates from the youth, women with disabilities and transgender communities at CSW,” says Nicolas Burniat, Deputy Representative at UN Women’s Fiji Multi-Country Office.

Miki Wali was a panellist on the Intergenerational Dialogue and joined Cherelle Fruean in the group that drafted the youth statement for the conference, while Naomi Navoce was a panellist in multiple side events on sexual and reproductive health, violence and the intersectionality between gender and disability.

The Pacific was well represented through government delegations, with nine Pacific Island countries making statements. Eight of those voiced support for the Standalone Goal on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and called for the mainstreaming of gender in all Sustainable Development Goals.

UN Women also partnered in a side event that gave Pacific Island governments and development partners an opportunity to make a stronger call for the inclusion of gender equality and human rights in global negotiations and discussions on climate change and sustainable development.

Among the other Pacific representatives to actively participate throughout the conference were Noelene Nabulivou, a member of UN Women’s Asia-Pacific Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG), and Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, a member of UN Women’s Global CSAG.

Read the Youth Statement: <http://bit.do/3M3k>



#PacificCSW59: Miki Wali from Haus of Khameleon participating in panel for the intergenerational dialogue; (L-R) UN Women Deputy Representative Nicolas Burniat, UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Fiji Minister for Women Rosy Akbar and Fiji’s Permanent Representative to the UN, Peter Thomson; Palau’s Minister for Community and Cultural Affairs, Baklai Temengil addresses the plenary. Credits: UN Women/Nicolas Burniat.

## facebook

### Top posts March

Commonwealth award winner  
 Total Post Reach: 35,216  
 Post Clicks: 530  
 Likes: 632  
 Comments: 21  
 Shares: 135

Samoa CEDAW translation  
 Total Post Reach: 11,396  
 Post Clicks: 682  
 Likes: 838  
 Comments: 47  
 Shares: 95

CSW 59 press briefing  
 Total Post Reach: 2,215  
 Post Clicks: 399  
 Likes: 71  
 Comments: 0  
 Shares: 9

Inagaro Vakaafi at Sendai  
 Total Post Reach: 2,200  
 Post Clicks: 69  
 Likes: 154  
 Comments: 5  
 Shares: 15

Solomons Joint Programme  
 Total Post Reach: 2,008  
 Post Clicks: 91  
 Likes: 121  
 Comments: 6  
 Shares: 19

# 12,983

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

## In my own words: Tura Lewai, Fiji



*Tura Lewai speaks at UN Women's celebration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women at Lautoka Market in Fiji. Credit: UN Women/Sereana Narayan.*

"Being brought up in a very traditional and Christian family helped implant a strong sense of justice in me; I also know that if I have a daughter, I don't want her to grow up in a community or place where she is a second-rate citizen, just because she is born a girl.

As a man, there is a lot of personal change that needs to happen to be able to do more of this work [violence against women]. I have had to un-learn and re-learn a lot of the concepts I learned when I was a child. You are challenging the concept of what it is to be a man and re-defining it, not only for others but for yourself.

The best part is seeing the sense of justice that develops when a man goes through this change, or realises they need to change. They realise that what they have been doing before is actually wrong. So the reward is when that

lightbulb goes off inside their head; when you see the change this person undertakes.

Don't lose track of why we do this work, which is to make an impact on society, in our own lives and, more importantly, in the lives of our loved ones. Something that has really helped me is to always take a human rights-based approach; drawing on the woman's perspective of violence.

There are always opportunities to challenge myths about rape and gender-based violence, and it's important that we do so in our own personal space – among friends and families, in the churches, in the educational system. Change is happening and there is always hope."

*Tura Lewai is from Fiji and is one of the UN Secretary General's Network of Male Leaders.*

## In my own words: Adi Bale, Fiji

"I am a widow and my eldest child has an intellectual disability. I have one son in Sydney and a daughter in the police. In Fiji you really need two to three family members to be working [to support everyone], so I started working at the market.

I have now been selling vegetables, fruit and root crops at the Lautoka market for the past four years. I'm here six days a week from 7am until later in the afternoon.

I had high blood pressure but since I started selling, all the pressure is gone because my need is gone.

After six months I was picked to be the secretary for the market vendors' association. I did it for a year and then I resigned, now I've been appointed again. Getting members



*Credit: UN Women/Ellie van Baaren.*

is a challenge because many of the vendors don't fully understand the benefits it offers. The workshop is helping them to see what membership can do for them."

*Adi attended the "Getting Started" workshop held in Lautoka as part of UN Women's Markets for Change project. The project is principally funded by the Australian Government.*

## Radio series available in comic book form

Meri and Isabelle's stories about being a first-time political candidate and a first-time voter, respectively, is now available in comic book form.

The two are lead characters in a radio series called "A Time to Stand" that was developed by UN Women, the European Union (EU) and Vois Blong Mere, and produced by Pasifika Communications. The 10-part drama was broadcast in Pidgin by Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation in the lead-up to the country's general election last year; an English version was launched online later in the year.

The series is part of a wider EU-supported programme in Solomon Islands called Strongim Mere and uses Meri's and Isabelle's stories to encourage Pacific societies to reflect on what a leader looks like and the roles that women can and should play in politics.



The Strongim Mere project falls under UN Women's Advancing Gender Justice in the Pacific programme, and aims to help encourage Pacific Islanders to engage in political participation and more women to stand up and have a voice in key leadership and decision-making positions.

"A Time To Stand" has so far reached an estimated 430,000 people through being broadcast to Honiara and more than 5,000 rural villages via Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation, as well as exposure through traditional and social media. The series was also featured online in late March as the EU's story of the week as part of its European Year of Development celebrations.

The comic book is free to download: <http://bit.do/3G3H>