

National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy 2016–2020



Solomon Islands



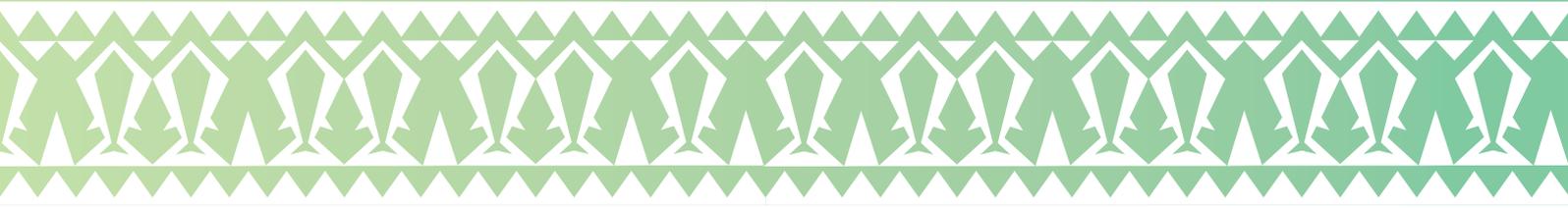


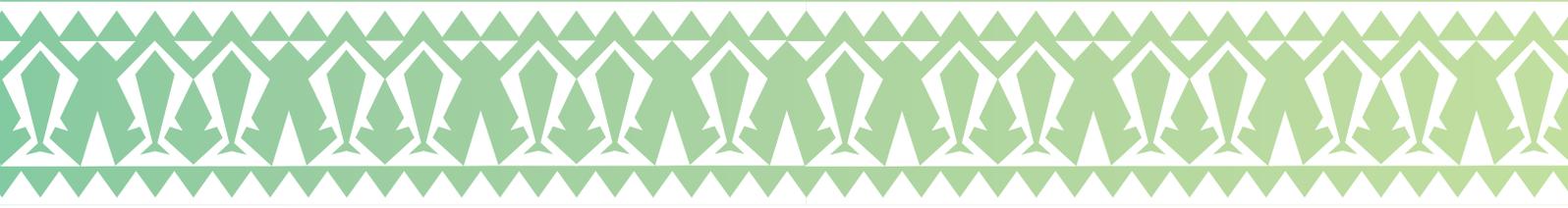
National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy 2016–2020

Solomon Islands

Ministry for Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA)

Solomon Islands





Contents

Acknowledgements	iv
Foreword	vi
I. Introduction.....	1
II. Policy Statement and Operating Principles.....	1
III. Purpose of the Policy	2
IV. Policy Goal	4
V. Policy Priority Outcomes	4
Policy Outcome 1: Gender Responsive Government Programmes and Services	4
Policy Outcome 2: Improved Economic Status of Women	5
Policy Outcome 3: Equal Participation of Women and Men at All Levels of Decision-Making, Governance and Leadership	7
Policy Outcome 4: Preventing and Responding to Violence against women and girls.....	7
Policy Outcome 5: Increased Awareness and Recognition of the Role of Women in Peace and Security	8
Policy Outcome 6: Increased Access to Education and Providing a Supportive School Environment	9
Policy Outcome 7: Improved Access for Women’s Right to Sexual and Reproductive Health.....	10
VI. Policy Action Plan of Action 2016–2020	11
Policy goal and objectives.....	11
Policy priority outcomes	11
VII. Institutional Arrangement for the Monitoring and Coordination, and Implementation of the National Gender Equality and Women’s Development Policy 2016–2020	18
Annex 1: Alignment of the National Gender Equality and Women’s Development Policy 2016–2020 with the Solomon Islands National Development Strategy 2016–2035 (NDS).....	20
Annex 2: Glossary of Terms.....	21
Annex 3: Terms of Reference for the Advisory Reporting and Coordination Committee (ARCC)	22
Annex 4: References	25



Acknowledgements

It is with pride that I present the Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy (GEWD 2016 – 2020). This is the second policy (GEWD 2010-2013) the Solomon Islands Government has ever produced taking both a gender equality and a women's development approach. The shift from a welfare to a gender and development approach has been necessitated by the need to address gender inequalities facing women and girls and to ensure that gender equality is central to development.

The design, development and completion of this Policy has been a partnership between the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFCA) and the Pacific Community (SPC). The Ministry is greatly indebted to the SPC team for its technical and unwavering support to the entire policy review and development process. SPC's support to the development of the Solomon Islands Gender Statistics: "Where Do We Stand?" further sharpened the focus and direction of this Policy.

Aligned with the National Development Strategy 2016-2035 to ensure greater buy-in and emphasis on women's human rights and gender equality, the GEWD Policy 2016-2020 is built on key achievements made and lessons learnt during implementation of the GEWD Policy 2010-2013 and its sub-set policy, the Eliminating Violence against Women Policy (EVAW). Assessment on implementation of other government and stakeholder programmes and initiatives was also done to best inform this Policy.

Visits to four provinces were made during the policy review consultations. Meetings and consultations with key stakeholders within Government and with Civil Society Organisations and Development Partners were also convened. A validation workshop for stakeholders to authenticate the review findings, content, structure and focus of this Policy was also organized.

Beyond that, it is fair to say that we are ready to implement the GEWD Policy 2016-2020. This is possible as a number of gender frameworks and key indicators have been set. I wish therefore to acknowledge the crucial role played by the Government including successive governments through their endorsement of the Eliminating Violence against Women Policy (EVAW); the legislation for Family Protection; the National Strategy for Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls, the CEDAW Combined Report, and the Country Gender Assessment Report, all of which have been developed to guide and strengthen implementation as well as address gender equality issues and concerns. Having these structures and instruments in place is key to achieving Government's Policy outcomes for gender equality.

As we journey on, it is important that we look to the future by acknowledging the past as this is what has set the basis for the next phase. Much is owed to our development partners who have supported implementation of the GEWD policy 2010-2013. In particular, may I thank the Australian and New Zealand Governments for resourcing the GEWD Policy 2010-2013, which was a turning point for the Solomon Islands Government in a shift in approach to addressing women's issues and concerns.

In addition, the Government is truly indebted to the Government of Australia for resourcing the MWYCFCA with technical support through GEWD Policy Advice, coordination of the EVAW Policy and Family Protection Bill and later Act, scoping, development and coordination of the Women's Economic and Empowerment Strategy and development of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

The SPC Regional Rights Resource Team's (RRRT) ongoing and steadfast support on the areas of human rights and Family Law legislation in particular the Family Protection Act has been of immense value. Where we lack, you gave us the boost; where we were weak and helpless, you believed in us and instilled confidence we needed to rise above our challenges.

I wish to also acknowledge the ongoing support of UN-Women in Women in Leadership and Decision Making, Eliminating Violence against Women under the joint UN and SIG programme, Women, Peace and Security, CEDAW reporting and support to Women in Markets. We look forward to working in collaboration with you in the implementation of this Policy.



Our partners have multiplied as well. The World Bank provided support to building the capacity of the SAFENET, which is the national referral network for victims and survivors of domestic violence. The Asian Development Bank helped us develop the Country Gender Assessment, which is a key milestone given that constructive information is a crucial area of need. In addition, work with the private sector to advance economic empowerment of women and girls has picked up and hence I would also like to acknowledge the support of our new stakeholders. Thank you indeed.

Gender mainstreaming will continue to be the implementation approach this policy will take. As such, I wish to acknowledge the Public Service Commission for strengthening the basis for gender mainstreaming work in the Public Service through the integration of gender mainstreaming indicators in Performance Agreements for Permanent Secretaries as well as the appointment of Gender Focal Points in all 24 ministries of Government. Focus to effectively implement gender mainstreaming will continue.

Civil society organizations (CSO) continue to provide the strength to implement the GEWD policy. This is so much dependent on. The Ministry has been blessed with all the support provided by our CSOs. We look forward to working with you in the next phase of the GEWD.

I wish to also commend our provincial women's desks, women and community leaders who have taken the responsibility to ensure the GEWD Policy is translated into action on the ground.

To the individual women and girls who have volunteered their time and resources to address specific areas of women's issues and concerns, we will look to you for wisdom and guidance in the next phase of our journey.

Thank you one and all for providing the inspiration that is needed to move the policy agenda forward.

We look forward to working with you.

Yours in Partnership



Ethel F. Sigimanu
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs

Foreword

The Gender Equality and Women's Development (GEWD) Policy 2016 – 2020 is an overarching policy framework for achieving gender equality and women's human rights in Solomon Islands. As such, other national and international frameworks and commitments for gender equality and human rights which the Solomon Islands Government has adopted or to which it is already a party such as the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is fundamental to the purpose of this Policy.

The Policy is premised on the vision that gender equality contributes substantially to improving the wellbeing of women, men, girls and boys—and that the promotion of gender equality must be at the heart of the government's mission. **It is important to understand here that Gender Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.**

The Policy recognizes that continuing to invest in women's empowerment is vital to achieving gender equality. It also recognizes the need for women and men to work together to address attitudinal and institutional barriers to gender equality. Gender equality can only be achieved through partnerships between women and men.

The Policy is informed by the review of the GEWD Policy 2010 – 2013 and in particular its policy outcomes such as: improved access by women and girls to health services and education opportunities; improved economic status of women and girls; equal opportunities for women in leadership and decision making; elimination of violence against women and girls and increased capacity for gender mainstreaming. These outcomes will continue to be the focus of this Policy.

There are emerging issues, which have dictated increased focus on other areas of women's issues and concerns by this policy. This will have much bearing on the capacity that is needed to expand work to these areas.

Given that women's issues are cross-cutting, it is imperative that we continue to work together to be united in our mission to work towards a shared vision for the fulfillment of gender equality and the protection of women's human rights. May I call upon all national leaders, government ministries, development partners, civil society organisations, the private sector, chiefs and community leaders, women, men, girls and boys to work collaboratively as never before so as to ensure that we can all benefit equitably and have access to the same opportunities for services and resources available.



Hon. Freda Tuki Sorikomua, MP
Minister of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs



I. Introduction

In the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2016–2035, our government committed to the creation of ‘a modern, united and vibrant Solomon Islands founded on mutual respect, trust and peaceful coexistence in a diverse yet secure and prosperous community where tolerance and gender equality are encouraged and natural resources are sustainably managed’ (ADB 2015). The NDS further identifies gender equality priorities through a detailed reference to the national gender equality and women’s development policy, the national disability strategy and the national children’s policy.

In recognition of growing gender inequalities, the Solomon Islands Government has agreed to several international and regional commitments to gender equality. These overarching commitments – to which the Solomon Islands Government aligns its national gender policies – are: The Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED) and the Revised Pacific Platform for the Advancement of Women (RPPA) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This National Gender Equality and Women’s Development Policy 2016–2020 provides the framework for the implementation of the Solomon Island’s international and regional commitments to gender equality.

What do we mean by gender equality or equality between women and men?

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women’s issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development (OSAGI 2001).

Our government commits all its Ministries and Departments to create the necessary conditions to ensure that our policies and services benefit women and girls, as well as men and boys.

II. Policy Statement and Operating Principles

The National Gender Equality and Women’s Development Policy 2016–2020 (the Policy) recognises that women and men are equal partners in the development of the Solomon Islands and it places gender equality at the heart of economic and social progress, which thereby gives equal value to the roles and responsibilities of the Solomon Islands’ women and men. It also recognises that in order to redress gender inequalities, women and men need to work together to address attitudinal and institutional barriers to gender equality.

The Policy is guided by the following principles:

- Understanding and acknowledgment of the fundamental human rights that women and men are entitled to.
- Women and men are equal partners in all development areas of our country.

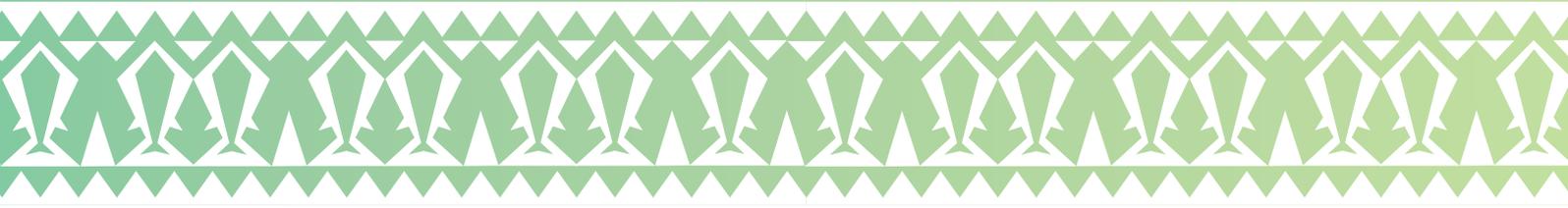
- Respect for our cultural heritage and religious practices that promote gender equality.
- Recognition of women in all their diversity, including young women, elders, women with disabilities and rural women.
- Women in the outer islands need to be given special consideration in all outcomes and actions of the Policy.
- Importance of partnerships, stronger engagement and coordination between all line and sectoral ministries, outer islands governance mechanisms, civil society organisations and development partners.
- Acknowledgement of Solomon Islands' international and regional commitments to gender equality and human rights.

The Policy aims to address gender inequality for the overall population and to benefit all women living in the Solomon Islands. However, the Policy acknowledges the fact that some women face additional disadvantages and there is an urgent need to recognise the following: the human rights of women with disabilities and the specific intersections some women and girls face due to the space and place they occupy in society (women living with disabilities), their location (women living in remote areas), their age (adolescents and girls), or their limited assets (unemployed women and heads of household). Government institutions and civil society organisations are requested to prioritise women who face greater disadvantages and pay particular attention to their needs to make sure that they benefit from development programmes and government services.

III. Purpose of the Policy

The first Solomon Islands National Policy for Women was endorsed by our government in 1998. It was reviewed in 2010 and replaced by the Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy (GEWD). The latter identified a series of priorities in order to progress gender equality in the Solomon Islands. It included targets to improve health and education, economic status of women, equal participation in decision-making and leadership, as well as the elimination of violence against women and an increase in the capacity for gender mainstreaming. Progress has been realised: school enrolments of girls have increased, there is improvement in overall health indicators and more women have access to incomes. However, more needs to be done to achieve equal opportunities and equal outcomes in all those areas. Despite government efforts and numerous campaigns of information, women's participation in leadership and decision-making at senior levels is low, and incidences of violence against women and girls remains very high. Similarly, while there is recognition that gender mainstreaming is a strategy to advance gender equality in government, this has not been systematically implemented.

In 2015, the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs conducted a review of the GEWD policy through a series of consultations with women and men across the country and updated the policy. This National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy (NGEWD) 2016–2020 provides a framework for the implementation of the Solomon Island's international and regional commitments to gender equality, which are based on priorities expressed by the women and men of the Solomon Islands.



Issues that require our full attention include the following:

- Net enrolment rates at secondary school are low for both girls and boys, and women made up only 38% of the total estimated enrolment in tertiary education in 2012 (ADB 2015).
- According to the 2009 census, 62% of women and 64% of men aged 12 and older were in the labour force, but only 26% of women were in paid work (ADB 2015).
- Only 5% of senior public servant positions and 22% of mid-level positions are occupied by women (ADB 2015).
- The sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls are not protected (SIG 2009).
- Two out of three women between ages 15-49 have experienced physical and/or sexual abuse in their lifetime by an intimate partner (SIG 2009).
- There are structural obstacles to women's access to justice, which include women's lack of awareness of their own rights, scarce presence of justice systems beyond Honiara, and limited presence of females in the top levels of the judicial system and law enforcement (ADB 2015).

The purpose of the Policy is to address the current gender inequalities in the Solomon Islands. The Policy will inform the process of developing gender sensitive legislation, policies, procedures and practices that will address the needs, priorities and aspirations of all women and girls. It will shed light on several gender priority areas that require the attention of all sectors of government as well as our civil society partners.

The action plan that is promoted through the Policy is based on multi-sectoral and coordinated approaches across the government in line with the NDS. The Policy has been conceived as a tool for dialogue and coordination between government, civil society organisation, faith-based organisation and development partners to achieve the following objectives:

- Define agreed priorities and targeted support for empowering women and achieving gender equality.
- Create an enabling environment for translating our government's commitments to gender equality and women's human rights into reality.
- Ensure that gender equality is pursued through culturally appropriate and sensitive approaches.
- Involve men as informed partners for gender equality.
- Define a mechanism for monitoring and reporting on the progress.



IV. Policy Goal

The goal of the Policy is to advance gender equality in all areas of life and at all levels so that women and men in the Solomon Islands can fully enjoy their human rights to participate and access equal opportunities and development outcomes in order to fulfil their needs and support their well-being.

It provides a comprehensive framework for the government, civil society and development partners for accelerating gender equality and the well-being of women and girls in the Solomon Islands.

V. Policy Priority Outcomes

The Policy contains seven priority outcomes:

1. Gender responsive government programmes and services.
2. Improved economic status of women.
3. Equal participation of women and men at all levels of decision-making, governance and leadership.
4. Preventing and responding to violence against women and girls.
5. Increased awareness and acknowledgement of the role of women in peace and security.
6. Increased access to education and providing a supportive school environment.
7. Improved access for women's right to sexual and reproductive health.

Policy Outcome 1: Gender Responsive Government Programmes and Services

The delivery of gender responsive programmes and services requires a good understanding of the diversity of needs that women and men have across all spheres of their lives. Gender mainstreaming is recognised globally, regionally and nationally as an important approach to ensure that the diverse needs of women and men are met (SPC, 2004).

A 2010 stocktake of the capacity of the Solomon Islands Government to mainstream gender reported that there was very little awareness across government sectors about the existing legal and policy frameworks for gender equality. In addition, gender issues were not reflected in a meaningful way across government policies and plans. Like many other Pacific countries, production of sex-disaggregated data and its use was also limited.

Although the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA) plays a strategic role in advancing gender mainstreaming across the Solomon Islands Government, it is the responsibility of all government sectors and ministries to support the process. While efforts have been made to integrate women's concerns into some sector policies, plans and processes, more systematic efforts need to be made to achieve significant results. Thus, the mainstreaming gender perspective across government sectors is a major focus of this policy outcome, which includes data collection and analysis, and legislative review in order to comply with CEDAW.

In 2014, gender focal points were appointed in each ministry as part of the Public Service Commission reform processes. The role of the focal points is to support senior managers in the institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming within the ministry. The gender focal point system is a key entry point for supporting the achievement of this policy outcome. The MWYCFA will continue to provide technical advice and support to gender focal points in order to strengthen their ability to undertake gender analysis and to build a cadre of civil servants with gender expertise.

Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

(ECOSOC 1997)

During the life of the Policy, the MWYCFA will redefine and clarify its core functions and increasingly move towards a role of policy-setting, monitoring and coordination. However, in order for the Solomon Islands Government to deliver gender responsive programmes and services, institutional arrangements need to be put in place to support gender mainstreaming. The Solomon Islands Government is confident that a supportive environment, in addition to a wide range of civil servants who are skilled in gender analysis, will greatly address the social, cultural and economic inequalities faced by the Solomon Islands' women and girls.

Objectives

1. To adopt measures to effectively mainstream gender across government programmes and delivery of gender responsive public programmes and services.
2. To review the legislative framework to ensure compliance with CEDAW and the protection of women's human rights.
3. To establish mechanisms for monitoring progress, and report on gender equality in all spheres of society.
4. To enhance MWYCFA's capacity as the catalyst and enabler in the promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

Policy Outcome 2: Improved Economic Status of Women

Women's economic empowerment is the ability of women to bring about positive changes in their lives and that of their families and societies as a result of their participation in economic activities.

Many reports have highlighted the constraints to women's participation in formal employment (World Bank 2012). A desk review commissioned by the MWYCFA in 2012 revealed the low economic status of women in the Solomon Islands and the challenges they face in accessing economic opportunities. It found that women need increased opportunities to access credit – especially rural women and that specific targeted agricultural support for rural women is a priority. It also found that there is a skills and education gap for women and girls. The study further stressed that markets are a key area of economic activity for women.

Women of the Solomon Islands are in more vulnerable employment positions than men. For example, there are more women working as contributing family members or helping in small family businesses and production work for own use, which is commonly known as subsistence work. Research shows that women of the Solomon Islands do a lot of work and are economically active; they are just not paid for this work compared with men who are. There are also very few protection mechanisms for workers in unpaid work and in the informal sector. This means they do not have protection or get compensation for accidents, injuries, long-term illnesses or maternity leave cover.



As highlighted in the Solomon Islands National Strategy for Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls (MWYCFA, 2015), research points to strong reasons for emphasising women's economic empowerment in development programmes as follows:

- Economic empowerment is one of the most powerful routes for women to recognise their potential and advance their human rights.
- Since women make up the majority of the world's poor, meeting poverty-reduction goals requires addressing women and their economic empowerment.
- Discrimination against women is economically inefficient. National economies lose out when a substantial (half the Solomon Islands population are females) part of the population cannot compete equitably or realise their full potential.
- Working with women makes good business sense. When women have the right skills and opportunities, they can help businesses and markets grow.
- Women who are economically empowered contribute more to their families, societies and national economies. It has been shown that women invest extra income in their children, providing a route to sustainable development.

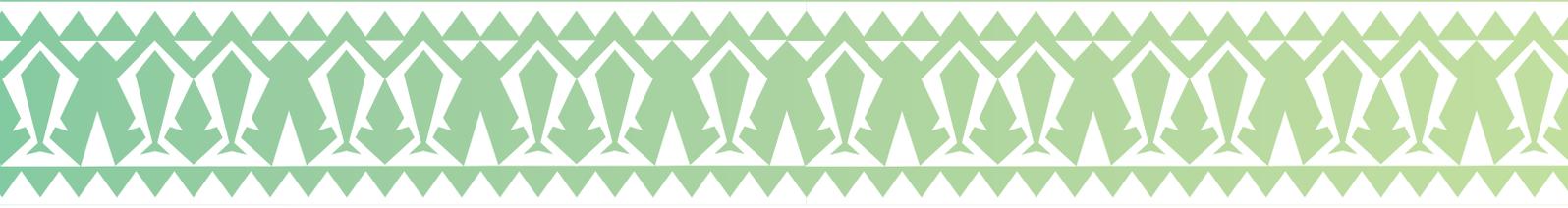
The Solomon Islands National Strategy for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls was developed in response to the continued marginalisation of women in economic growth and development initiatives. Thereby, six key strategic areas are required to realise the outcome. These are as follows:

- I. Gender mainstreaming in resource sector.
- II. Financial inclusion.
- III. Enterprise development and business training.
- IV. Creating an enabling environment through legislation and policy changes.
- V. Sharing applied research and knowledge.
- VI. Institutional strengthening of MWYCFA.

This policy outcome reiterates the government's engagement to implement the strategy and recognises that a twin-track approach is necessary for investing in women's agency and efforts, while simultaneously addressing wider societal attitudinal and institutional barriers.

Objectives

1. To resource and implement the National Strategy for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls in a coordinated approach across all government sectors.
2. To strengthen coordination around women's economic empowerment programming and establish frameworks to support women's economic participation.



Policy Outcome 3: Equal Participation of Women and Men at All Levels of Decision-Making, Governance and Leadership

Recent research has identified a number of barriers that are faced by women aspiring to be members of parliament in the Solomon Islands. A study by the Young Women's Parliamentary Group on voting intentions that was conducted before and after the 2014 Solomon Islands general election found that 98% of people who were questioned supported, in theory, the idea of women parliamentarians. However the same people questioned after the election found that only 27% actually voted for women candidates (YWPG 2015). The study identified barriers including vote buying practices, 'as women candidates did not practice money politics as people have come to expect from men' (ibid). It also attributed gendered cultural perspectives on leadership that males are the main decision-makers. Male numerical dominance was a factor in that there was a tendency not to vote for a candidate who was perceived to be unlikely to win.

According to Solomon Islands statistics (MWYCFA/SPC 2015) there has been little progress in increasing the participation of women in decision-making and leadership. While the number of women who are working in occupations grouped as 'senior officials' has increased, the number of women employed as 'managers' has decreased.

However, the Solomon Islands Government recognises that interventions cannot only be targeted towards women's representation in national parliament but also in the number of women in formal employment. The achievement of equal participation of women and men at all levels of decision-making, governance and leadership requires a comprehensive approach to addressing the barriers to women's participation and representation in the first place. For example, in some provinces women are prevented from casting their votes independently in national elections or women are not encouraged to vote during elections. Research also reveals that women are marginalised from community meetings. In this instance, that Solomon Islands Government recognises the important role played by civil society organisations at the provincial and local level to encourage and raise awareness on the right of women to participation and representation in public life.

Objectives

1. To foster an enabling environment for women's participation in public life.
2. To increase women's participation and representation at all levels of decision-making, governance and leadership positions.

Policy Outcome 4: Preventing and Responding to Violence against women and girls¹

According to the 2009 Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study, 64% of women between ages 15–49 who had ever been in an intimate relationship reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner. Furthermore, 42% of women reported experiencing such violence in the previous twelve-month period of the study. Violence against women is an epidemic in the Solomon Islands. Women who experienced intimate violence or other forms of violence were more likely to report poorer health outcomes than those who did not.

¹ The Solomon Islands Government has a National Policy on Eliminating Violence against Women, which sits alongside the 2010–2015 GEWD policy and was due to be revised in 2015.



Despite a range of interventions led by both government and civil society organisations, a stronger coordinated approach to ending violence against women and girls is required. There are weaknesses in legal, judicial and protection mechanisms, which undermine efforts by government and civil society, and the government's weak capacity to build coordinated responses continues to be a challenge. The complexity and entrenched nature of violence against women makes elimination one of Solomon Islands' biggest development challenges. It will require strong leadership from both women and men – particularly in the justice and policing sectors, but also by churches and community leaders.

The passing of the Family Protection Act 2014 (FPA) marked the culmination of many years of lobbying by the government and civil society. This Act criminalises domestic violence and provides increased protection, and promotes the safety, health and well-being of victims of domestic violence. This includes physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse. It also defines the types of relationships in which domestic violence can occur. The FPA is a mixture of criminal and civil law. While it criminalises behaviours relating to domestic violence, it also provides civil remedies to protect victims and ensures their safety.

To date, the focus of programming has largely been in response to the victims of domestic violence. The Solomon Islands Government acknowledges that this type of intervention needs to be strengthened and expanded during this policy period, and extended to the provinces. However, a renewed focus on the prevention of violence against women is required. Women and girls with disabilities experience some of the highest rates of violence in the Solomon Islands and globally. As such, interventions in the policy must explicitly address violence against women and girls from a comprehensive human rights perspective and ensure that current approaches to prevention of violence against women and girls don't further marginalise women and girls with disabilities. The sexual exploitation of women and girls associated with logging, fishing and mining industries is also a huge concern in the Solomon Islands and is requires targeted interventions at national and provincial level.

Objectives

1. To enhance the coordination, implementation and monitoring of the National Policy on Elimination of violence against women and girls and the Family Protection Act 2014.
2. To enhance support for victims of violence against women and girls and extend quality services to rural areas.
3. To create a shared understanding amongst stakeholders who work in eliminating violence against women and girls and girls of primary and tertiary prevention measures, and improve coordination of primary prevention activities.

Policy Outcome 5: Increased Awareness and Recognition of the Role of Women in Peace and Security

From 1998 until 2003, conflict erupted in Solomon Islands. This conflict, which is more commonly known as 'the tensions', marks a period of violent civil unrest where a significant number of people were displaced. The violence included torture, rape, sexual violence, murder, beatings, arson, kidnapping, looting and extrajudicial detention. Violence against women was extremely common during the tensions. Women played a significant role as peacemakers despite being victims of violence themselves. Shocked by what was happening in Solomon Islands, women united to form the Women for Peace movement. The women of Solomon Islands who were mobilising for peace, approached militants in the various camps with food, betel nut and cigarettes, and then used the opportunity to persuade them to put down their weapons through songs and prayer. Despite the role that women played in brokering peace during the



tensions, they were not included in the discussions and negotiations that led to the signing of the Townsville Peace Agreement in October 2000.

The Solomon Islands Government is party to the United Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR1325), which calls on member states to ensure equal opportunities for women in security, peace building and conflict prevention context and making changes to cultural and social practices that undermines gender equality. In recognition of this commitment as well as the crucial role women play in peace-building, the Solomon Islands Government has revised the National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security 2012 with a renewed focus on women's participation and decision making in peace processes and incorporating gender perspectives into training, especially law enforcement.

Objective

1. To endorse and implement the Solomon Islands National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2016-2019 in partnership with civil society organisations and development partners.

Policy Outcome 6: Increased Access to Education and Providing a Supportive School Environment

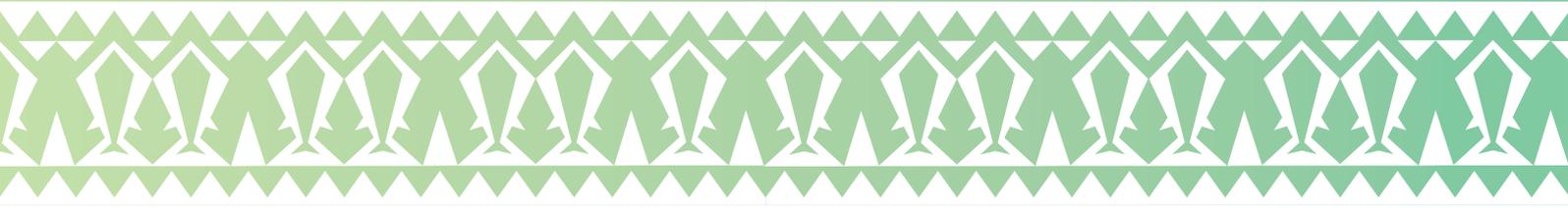
Education provides an opportunity to change gender stereotypical mind-sets, thus it is a critical entry point for promoting gender equality. There have been improvements in the access to education for girls, but there are still barriers to full participation and enjoyment of the school process for these girls.

According to existing data on education, there are no significant gender differences between girls and boys at primary school level (MWYCFA/SPC 2015). The 'fee free' policy is critical for creating an enabling school environment for girls, and global studies show that where there is a lack of safe, private and hygienic sanitation facilities at school, girls are less likely to continue their education.

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development has published its performance assessment framework that makes sex-disaggregated education statistics readily available. However, the Solomon Islands Government recognises there is an urgent need to strengthen gender analysis into education policy plans and strategies to ensure gender equity in access to education.

Objectives

1. To ensure opportunities and equal access for women and girls, including those with disabilities, to excel in the Solomon Islands education system.
2. To ensure a gender sensitive teaching and learning curriculum in the education system.



Policy Outcome 7: Improved Access for Women’s Right to Sexual and Reproductive Health²

Although health services in the Solomon Islands are free, the cost of healthcare itself is not necessarily the issue. Geographic inequity of healthcare centres is an issue that makes accessibility harder for women – especially if they cannot afford costs for transportation or if they need to seek permission from their husband or partner to attend a health clinic.

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), the burden of caregiving, infrastructure services and attitudes to health-seeking behaviour are some of the key gender issues in the health sector. Although NCDs impact both women and men, women are more likely than men to be overweight or obese due to a different lifestyle in terms of work and recreation, and daily life routines. As primary care givers, women are responsible for most of the household chores in addition to actively contributing to agriculture and community work.

The Solomon Islands Government recognises that more efforts needs to be undertaken to incorporate gender analysis and gender costing of health issues into the Ministry of Health and Medical Services budgeting, strategic planning and programming, and increased coordination between education and health policies to strengthen health outcomes for all.

There is an urgent need to promote modern methods of contraception as the fertility rate in Solomon Islands is one of the highest in the Pacific region and there is a very high teenage pregnancy rate. Thus, Adolescent girls are an important target group for comprehensive health and development education. Socio-cultural barriers that restrict the knowledge, access and use of contraception need to be addressed, and the family life curriculum needs to be fully implemented. This is aligned with commitments that the Solomon Islands Government has made under CEDAW, CRC and the International Conference for Population and Development (ICPD).

Objectives

1. To improve access to healthcare, and in particular to reproductive and sexual healthcare services.
2. To raise widespread awareness of women’s rights to sexual and reproductive health.

² Information sourced from: Solomon Islands, Country Gender Assessment 2015.

VI. Policy Action Plan of Action 2016–2020

This five year strategic plan of action describes outputs, key actions and sectors that are concerned with the achievement of the outcomes of the Solomon Islands National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy 2016–2020. The MWYCFA recognises this policy cannot be implemented in isolation of other Solomon Islands Government policies. However, the coordinated approach and collective ownership of this policy will enhance and contribute to gender specific outcomes in policies across the government. The actions identified in this action plan are based on feedback received from stakeholders during the review of the Solomon Islands Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy 2010–2015.

Policy goal and objectives

To advance gender equality in all areas of life and at all levels so that women and men in the Solomon Islands can fully enjoy their right to participate and access equal opportunities, and achieve equal development outcomes in order to fulfil their needs and support their well-being.

To provide a comprehensive framework for the government, civil society and development partners for accelerating gender equality and the well-being of women in the Solomon Islands.

Policy priority outcomes

The Policy contains seven priority outcomes:

1. Gender Responsive government programmes
2. Improved economic status of women
3. Equal participation of women and men at all levels of decision-making, governance and leadership
4. Preventing and responding to violence against women and girls
5. Increased awareness and acknowledgement of the role of women in peace and security
6. Increased access to education and providing a supportive school environment
7. Improved Access for Women's Right to Sexual and Reproductive Health

The following section proposes a series of inputs, and key strategies and actions that will support the achievement of each outcome.

Policy Outcome 1: Gender Responsive Government Programmes

Key Strategies and Actions

1. **Awareness raising for improved implementation of policies and legislations.**
 - ▶ Raise awareness on specific CEDAW articles relating to the work of sector ministries.
 - ▶ Disseminate and raise awareness on the recently published *Country Gender Assessment and the Gender Equality, Where do we stand?* Reports (MWYCFA/SPC 2016).

- Develop brief communicative materials using information in existing publications, specifically for provincial women's offices.
2. **Gender sensitise corporate and human resources policies of the Solomon Islands Government.**
 - Provide technical assistance to sector ministries to review or establish systems for collection of sex-disaggregated data.
 3. **Coordination and multi-sectoral approaches.**
 - Establish the Advisory Reporting and Coordination Committee to monitor implementation of the NGEWD.
 - Strengthen existing mechanisms for gender equality across the government, such as the gender focal point system.

Sectors That Will Contribute to Policy Outcome 1

- Social development.
- Good governance and corporate governance.
- Information and statistics.
- Sustainable and economic development.
- Environment and climate change, and resiliency.

Policy Outcome 2: Improved Economic Status of Women

Key Strategies and Actions

1. **Advocacy for, and development and/or review of policies and legislation that impact women's economic advancement**
 - Advocate for enabling legislation for micro banking in the informal sector, including exploring opportunities to regulate and increase social and financial protection for women in the informal section
 - Development of policy on security of land and property ownership rights for women
 - Initiate a process for gender analysis of government's development policies and plans to increase employment opportunities for women across different industry sectors
2. **Exploring and coordination of activities and projects to support women's economic advancement**
 - Establish and coordinate networks with resource sector agencies to facilitate women's access to funds and opportunities for markets
 - Explore successful models in the Solomon Islands that promote the national drive on savings including, establishing savings clubs for women and young girls

- ▶ Together with Government stakeholders, support the inclusion of enterprise development and business training for women in the formal and informal sector
- ▶ Improve facilities and governance of local produce markets, including fair and transparent local regulation, and taxation policies

3. Empowerment of women through participation

- ▶ Strengthen women's visibility and voice in social dialogue mechanisms at all levels, including women's representation in trade unions, public service unions, boards and similar organisations

4. Changing attitudes to support women's economic empowerment

- ▶ Carry out education and advocacy campaigns to reduce negative social and attitudinal barriers, to enhance women's engagement in formal and informal business

Sectors That Will Contribute to Policy Outcome 2

- ▶ Social development.
- ▶ Good governance and corporate governance.
- ▶ Information and statistics.
- ▶ Sustainable and economic development.

Policy Outcome 3: Equal Participation of Women and Men at All Levels of Decision-making, Governance and Leadership

Key Strategies and Actions

1. Review and amend electoral legislation to increase participation of women in leadership and political participation.

- Work with the Office of the Electoral Commission to review electoral laws to enable the introduction of special measures including:
 - ▶ an increase in the minimum quota in the Political Parties Integrity Act for women's representation on electoral lists of political parties to at least 30%, establishment of a mechanism to effectively monitor the implementation of such legislation, and consideration of the adoption of sanctions for political parties that do not comply with the quota; and
 - ▶ an enactment of the legislation for at least 30% of reserved seats for women in parliament and encouragement of the creation of a special parliamentary committee on equality of women and men.

4. Awareness raising to inform leaders and public of the benefits of women's participation in leadership and decision-making levels.

- ▶ In partnership with strategic stakeholders in the provinces, conduct awareness raising activities for politicians, community leaders and the general public on the importance of women's full and equal participation in leadership and decision-making.
- ▶ Provide targeted training on gender awareness, good governance, leadership and civic education for provincial and national decision makers and community leaders.

5. Advocate for policy and legislative changes to create an enabling environment for women leaders.

- ▶ Conduct mock parliament sessions for women and youth to maintain awareness of opportunities and to profile their ability and potential to be influential decision makers.
- ▶ Promote (and share the information) the introduction of temporary special measures in parliament, provincial assemblies, political parties and the public service to support women in senior decision-making positions .
- ▶ Coordinate and agree on the roles of stakeholders (including the private sector) in advancing this priority area.

Sectors That Will Contribute to Policy Outcome 3

- Social development.
- Good governance and corporate governance.
- Information and statistics.
- Sustainable and economic development.

Policy Outcome 4: Preventing and Responding to Violence against Women and Girls

Key Strategies and Actions

1. Strengthen and improve protective, social and support services

- ▶ Strengthen the SAFENET referral system for women victims of violence and ensure quality services for women in all provinces, and ensure accessibility for all women, including women with disabilities
- ▶ Strengthen the technical capacity of civil society organizations, in particular women's organizations, to provide services and redress for women victims of violence

2. Increase understanding of different programming and issues of violence against women and girls

- ▶ Disseminate information (including disability sensitive) that is clear and easy to understand on the criminalisation of different forms of violence under the Family Protection Act among the general public but for women in particular.

- ▶ Initiate awareness to create a shared understanding of primary and tertiary prevention programming and conduct a mapping of organizations providing primary and tertiary prevention programming

3. **Prevent violence against women and girls**

- ▶ Strengthen the coordination of primary and tertiary prevention programmes

Sectors That Will Contribute to Policy Outcome 4

- ▶ Social development.
- ▶ Good governance and corporate governance.
- ▶ Information and statistics.
- ▶ Sustainable and economic development.
- ▶ Service related sectors.
- ▶ Civil society organisations.

Policy Outcome 5: Increased Awareness and Acknowledgement of the Role of Women in Peace and Security

Key Strategies and Actions

- ▶ Finalise and implement the Solomon Islands National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.
- ▶ Undertake a gender response assessment of national security sector institutions' policies, procedures, practices and capabilities for monitoring, responding to and reporting on violations of women's rights.
- ▶ Document and support women's knowledge of formal and informal approaches to preventing, mediating and defusing conflict as identified at community and national levels, and share findings with stakeholders at national and provincial levels.

Sectors That Will Contribute to Policy Outcome 5

- ▶ Social development (for e.g. MWYCFA).
- ▶ Law enforcement sector.
- ▶ Education sector.
- ▶ Civil society organisation.

Policy Outcome 6: Increased Access to Education and Providing a Supportive School Environment

Key Strategies and Actions

1. **Increasing gender awareness in the education sector through research**
 - ▶ Identify the gender norms by way of national research that are disadvantaging girls from participating in secondary education
2. **Institutional strengthening through gender sensitive education policies**
 - ▶ Put in place measures to encourage teachers to seek higher qualifications to enable a transition from primary school teaching to secondary school teaching, and address the training and motivation of teachers
 - ▶ Reinforce or introduce gender sensitive policies that allow girls who are pregnant to remain in school during and after pregnancy
3. **Developing gender sensitive education curriculum**
 - ▶ Continue to develop and promote age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health
 - ▶ Ensure that materials for the newly revised education curriculum do not include gender stereotypes
4. **Capacity development of education stakeholders to promote gender sensitive environment of the education sector**
 - ▶ Advocate and raise awareness amongst educators, parents and other stakeholders about the importance of educating the girl child (especially transitioning from primary to secondary school level)
 - ▶ Provide training and awareness to educators on eliminating gender stereotypes, occupational streaming, sexual harassment and violence against women (including awareness of the importance of educating girls)

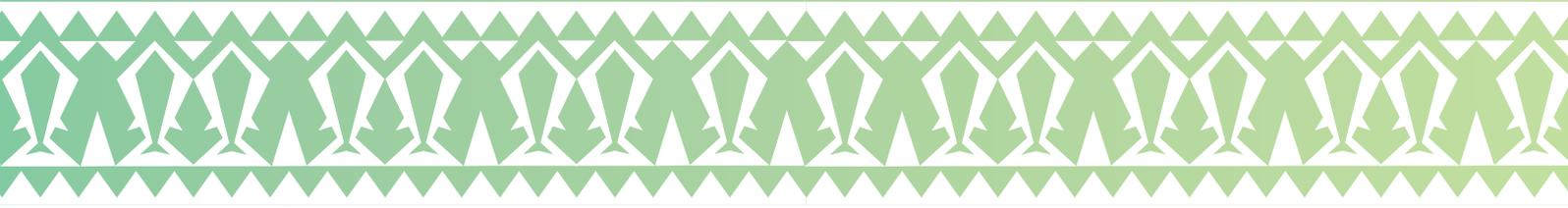
Sectors That Will Contribute to Policy Outcome 6

- ▶ Social development (for e.g. MWYCFA).
- ▶ Education sector.
- ▶ Health sector.

Policy Outcome 7: Improved Access for Women's Right to Sexual and Reproductive Health

Key Strategies and Actions

1. **Gender sensitive health policies and budgets**
 - ▶ In partnership with the Ministry for Health and Medical Services incorporate gender analysis and gender costing of health issues through gender budgeting, strategic planning and programming



2. Increased coordination between education and health sector

- ▶ Develop and strengthen coordination between education and health sectors (including through policy) to improve maternal and child health outcomes, and to enhance education about sexual and reproductive health, especially for young people

3. Strengthening gender sensitive health data collection and research

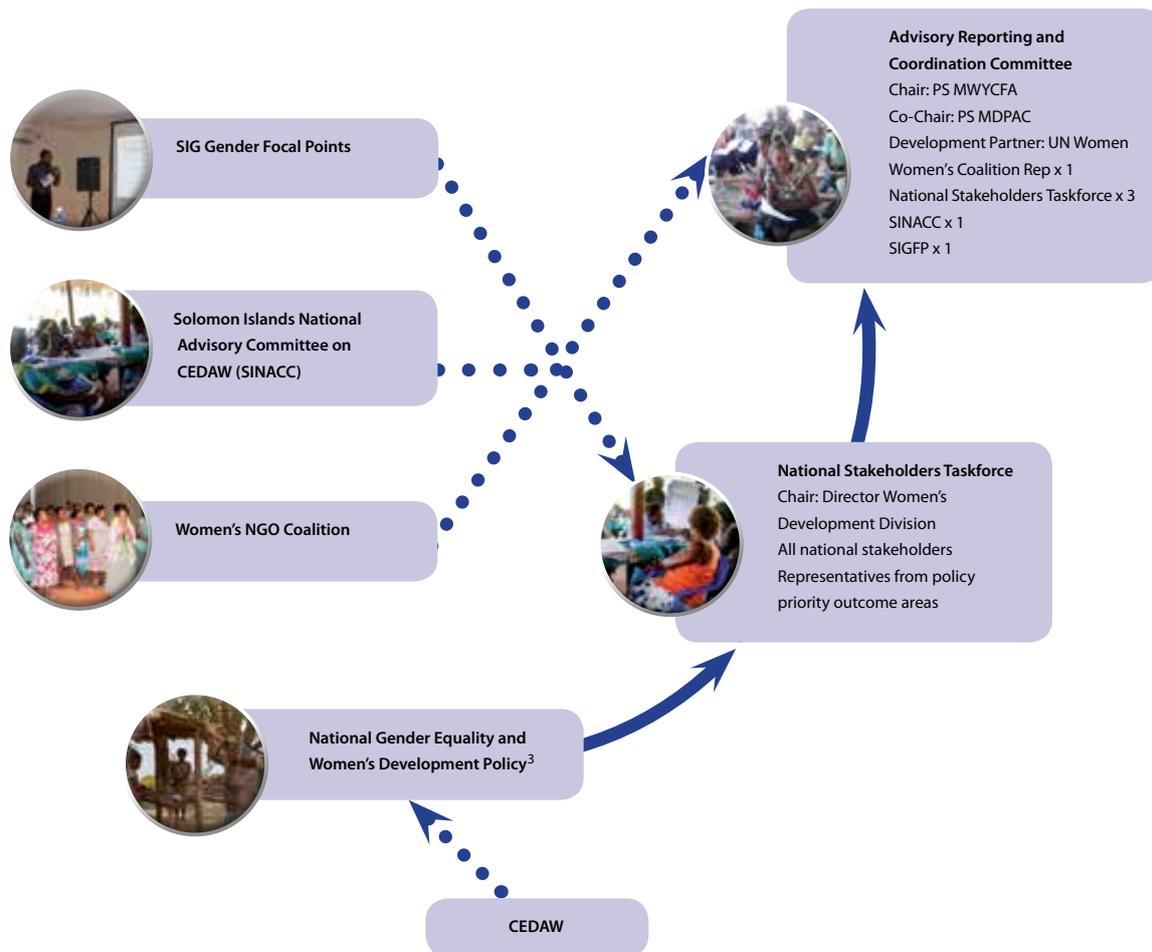
- ▶ Strengthen health sector data collection, monitoring and gender analysis to better assess improvements in health outcomes and identify specific constraints to health service delivery across provinces
- ▶ Undertake a mapping exercise to determine the agencies that work in sexual reproductive health and rights advocacy and awareness with a view to strengthening coordination and increasing awareness

Sectors That Will Contribute to Policy Outcome 7

- ▶ Social development.
- ▶ Health sector.
- ▶ Education sector.
- ▶ Civil society organisations.

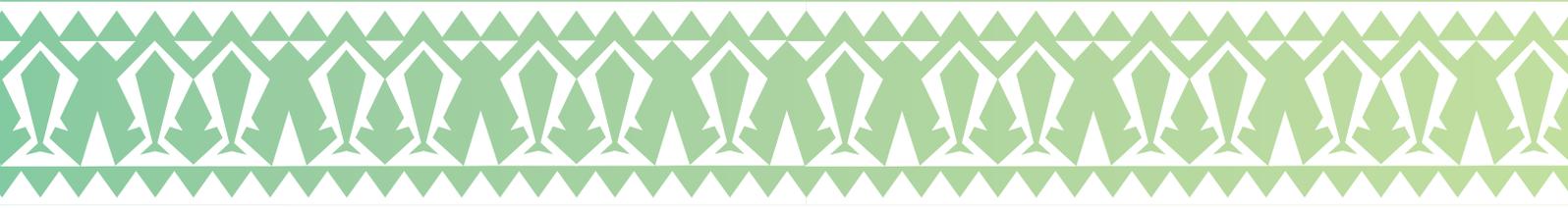
VII. Institutional Arrangement for the Monitoring and Coordination, and Implementation of the National Gender Equality and Women’s Development Policy 2016–2020

Figure 1. The Advisory Reporting and Coordinating Committee



The monitoring and reporting against the implementation of the national gender equality policy will be conducted through a two-step process. As highlighted in Figure 1, the MWYCF will convene a National Stakeholders Taskforce meeting twice a year to encourage collaboration between stakeholders and monitor and report against the policy. Depending on the agenda it is envisaged that the National Stakeholders Taskforce (NST) meetings will be held over 2 – 3 days to allow discussion on all priority areas. Stakeholders may wish to attend all or part of the sessions, depending on their various mandates.

3 The National Gender Equality and Women’s Development Policy 2016–2020 draws from global and regional commitments to gender equality, in particular – the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)



The outcome of these Taskforce meetings will be presented to the Advisory Reporting and Coordination Committee (ARCC). The ARCC comprises high-level representatives from key implementing parties, Solomon Islands Government and civil society organisations (CSO), as well as the relevant development partners and the private sector. The ARCC will also meet twice a year, after every NST meeting, to discuss progress and challenges and provide strategic direction – see terms of reference (Annex 3). The ARCC will report to the Minister responsible for women who then reports to Cabinet twice a year. Achieving gender equality requires the efforts of the whole of government in the implementation of the National Gender Equality and Women’s Development Policy 2016–2020.

As highlighted in Figure 1, it is envisioned that current existing processes within the Solomon Islands Government such as the SIG Gender Focal Point group⁴ and the Solomon Islands National Advisory Committee on CEDAW (SINACC)⁵ will input at both the NST level and the ARCC.

There are various gender specific policies and frameworks in place such as the National Strategy for the Economic Empowerment of Women and the National Policy on Elimination of violence against women and girls. These policies and similar policies will complement the National Gender Equality and Women’s Development Policy 2016–2020. This national policy is the overarching gender equality policy for the Solomon Islands. However, the implementation of these gender ‘issue specific’ policies will contribute to the successful achievement of the outcomes in this Policy.

The Solomon Islands Government gender focal points that are established in each ministry will perform a key coordinating role within their respective ministries. The MWYCFA will continue to provide technical advice and support to the gender focal points, in order to support gender mainstreaming within government ministries. The gender focal points will provide the necessary updates, in accordance with their terms of reference, to ministry representatives on the ARCC. However, not all government ministries will be represented in the ARCC.

⁴ The SIG Gender Focal Point group is made up of government staff across all Ministries, who have been appointed by their respective Permanent Secretaries. The group does not have an official Terms of Reference but over the last 3 years have had access to gender training and technical support from the MWYCFA and the Pacific Community (SPC).

⁵ The Solomon Islands National Advisory Committee on CEDAW (SINACC) is an advisory group set up to oversee the implementation of CEDAW in Solomon Islands. The group has an endorsed terms of reference. For more information on the SINACC please contact the Director, Women’s Development Division, MWYCFA.



Annex 1: Alignment of the National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy 2016–2020 with the Solomon Islands National Development Strategy 2016–2035 (NDS)

The Constitution of the Solomon Islands provides for rights and freedoms regardless of the race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex of a person. This further provides the basis for claiming full and equal citizenship rights for women.

The Solomon Islands National Development Strategy 2016 - 2035 (NDS) is an indication of the Government's commitment to gender equality. Gender equality is as strategic objectives in the NDS and complemented with a range of indicators in the monitoring and evaluation framework of the NDS to ensure the gender equality goals in the NDS are met.

The Policy is reflected in the NDS, which reiterates the aim to reduce gender disparity in education and employment. The highest priorities include gender mainstreaming, a gender sensitive education system, gender mainstreaming across the public service, and poverty alleviation through equitable distribution of development and resources. A number of plans and policies within the Solomon Islands Government also explicitly refer to gender equality.

Annex 2: Glossary of Terms

Discrimination against women is defined by the CEDAW as ‘any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of women and men, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field’ (CEDAW).

Empowerment ‘is the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Central to this process are actions which both build individual and collective assets, and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organizational and institutional context which govern the use of these assets’ (Word Bank, 2011).

Equity refers to the concept of fairness and involves access to equal opportunities and the development of basic capacities. To ensure equity, it is necessary to recognise that some groups have been disadvantaged and even though the rules do not specifically discriminate against some people, they could, in fact, induce some forms of discrimination when social inequalities are overlooked. Therefore, equity could necessitate special measures to compensate for the disadvantages. Equity is an essential element to equality.

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles held by women and men in a specific society, including their responsibilities, behaviours and attitudes towards each other. Even if they sometimes look ‘natural’, these roles are learned and could be different from one society to another, and are changing over time.

Gender analysis is the process, including methods and tools, to identify gender inequalities and the causes of those inequalities. It aims to plan efficient development programmes that address both men’s and women’s needs, and reduce existing gender and other social inequalities. A gender analysis is not limited to women’s roles and needs only, but also includes men’s. It focuses on the causes of gender inequalities that are embedded in social relations and institutions. Thus, a gender analysis includes the study of social organisations and institutions for the identification of what needs to be changed in order to ensure equity, equality and social inclusion.

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. “Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women’s issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development” (OSAGI 2001).

Gender mainstreaming is ‘the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality’ (ECOSOC, 1997).

Annex 3: Terms of Reference for the Advisory Reporting and Coordination Committee (ARCC)

The Advisory Reporting and Coordination Committee (ARCC) on Gender Equality and Women's Development

Terms of Reference

Background

The National Gender Equality and Women Development Policy 2016–2020 has been developed and endorsed to address the current gender inequalities in the Solomon Islands. The policy will inform the process of developing gender sensitive legislation, policies, procedures and practices that will address the needs, priorities and aspirations of all women and girls. It will shed light on several gender priority areas that requires the attention of all sectors of government as well as our civil society partners.

The strategic approach promoted through the Policy is based on a multi-sectoral and coordinated approach across the government in line with the National Development Strategy 2016–2035 (NDS). It has been conceived as a tool for dialogue and coordination between governments, civil society organisation, faith-based organisation and development partners to achieve the following objectives:

- Define agreed priorities and targeted support for empowering women and achieving gender equality.
- Create an enabling environment for translating our government's commitments to gender equality and women's human rights into reality.
- Ensure that gender equality is pursued through culturally appropriate and sensitive approaches.
- Involve men as informed partners for gender equality.
- Define a mechanism for monitoring and reporting on the progress.

The National Gender Equality and Women Development Policy 2016–2020 contains seven priority outcomes:

1. Gender responsive government programmes and services.
2. Improved economic status of women.
3. Equal participation of women and men at all levels of decision-making, governance and leadership.
4. Preventing and responding to violence against women and girls.
5. Increased awareness and acknowledgement of the role of women in peace and security.
6. Increased access to education and providing a supportive school environment.
7. Improved women's access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

During the review of the Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy 2010–2015, stakeholders emphasised the importance of monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the new policy. The Advisory Reporting and Coordination Committee (ARCC) will be the mechanism that is set up to monitor and report on progress in the implementation of the National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy 2016–2020.

Goal

To strengthen governments' efforts to improve coordination and monitoring of the gender equality programming and interventions in Solomon Islands with particular emphasis on the priority areas in the National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy 2016–2020.

Objectives

The objectives of the ARCC on the NGEWD Policy 2016–2020 include but are not limited to:

1. identifying, sharing and addressing data and information gaps on gender equality and women's empowerment, with an emphasis on the NGEWD priority areas, and outlining an agenda to address them;
2. Promoting inter-agency (including civil society organisations and private sector) collaborations to enhance coordination and implementation of the NGEWD policy;
3. Assisting in mobilising financial and technical resources for undertaking specific activities that are envisaged in the implementation plan; and
4. Discuss the outcomes of the National Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting and contribute to an annual report that outlines progress and challenges in the implementation of the NGEWD policy to be tabled in Cabinet and Parliament through the Minister responsible for women and gender.

Membership

As indicated in Figure 1 membership of the ARCC includes, a representative from each of the three groups: the SIG Gender Focal Points group, the SI National Advisory Committee on CEDAW, Women's NGO Coalition. UN Women will represent development partners.

CSOs are invited to choose 3 representatives who participated in the national stakeholder taskforce meeting to represent this group in the ARCC meeting. Given not all stakeholders will be given a place in the ARCC meeting, it is important that the different stakeholders coordinate their respective representation within the ARCC at the national stakeholder taskforce meeting.

The PS MWYCFA and PS MDPAC are Chair and Co-Chair respectively.

Roles and Responsibilities of Members

Within the framework of their existing mandates, comparative advantages, capacity and technical expertise, the ARCC members are expected to:

- commit to the goals and objectives set out in this TOR, which are in turn consistent with the goals of the Policy, and other regional and international gender equality commitments;
- ensure coordination and information sharing within and across other stakeholder groups that are working on advancing gender equality in the Solomon Islands;
- advocate for the awareness and implementation of the Policy at the national and provincial levels;
- attend the ARCC meetings and actively participate, share and contribute to the meetings; and
- contribute to the development and timely reviews or reporting of the ARCC products (for e.g. minutes from meetings, annual reports, etc.) and to disseminate these to other stakeholders.



Meetings

The ARCC will meet twice a year after each National Stakeholders Taskforce meeting in order to discuss progress and challenges, provide strategic direction and report to the Minister responsible for women.

Secretariat

The Women's Development Division in the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs will be the lead agency and Secretariat for the ARCC. The Women's Development Division will have the primary role of facilitating communication between the ARCC members and other external institutions, such as the media and/or individuals. The Director of the Women's Development Division will serve as the facilitator of the group and will represent the ARCC in broader meetings on gender equality and women's empowerment across the Solomon Islands Government in particular the National Stakeholders Taskforce.

National Stakeholders Taskforce

As highlighted in Figure 1, the MWYCFA will convene a National Stakeholders Taskforce meeting twice a year to encourage collaboration between stakeholders and monitor and report against the policy. Depending on the agenda it is envisaged that the National Taskforce meetings will be held over 2 – 3 days to allow discussion on all priority areas. Stakeholders may wish to attend all or part of the sessions, depending on their various mandates.

The outcome of these Taskforce meetings will be presented to the Advisory Reporting and Coordination Committee (ARCC). The Taskforce meeting is open to all stakeholders working on gender equality and these stakeholders may wish to participate in the meetings based on capacity and interest. Should members/stakeholder groups wish to form such sub-working groups, funding may be available through the MWYCFA in order to convene annual meetings. Interested stakeholders should get in touch with the ARCC facilitator.

Funding

The MWYCFA will fund all meetings convened by the ARCC and the National Stakeholder Taskforce. Expenses would typically include venue and catering costs. Funding for the implementation of activities or programming on gender equality will not be given by the MWYCFA, unless expressly agreed to by the Permanent Secretary of MWYCFA. Membership of the ARCC as highlighted in Figure 1, is indicative of what the membership might look like. Ultimately, membership within the ARCC is also based on the comparative advantage and technical capacity that exists within such organisations/agencies.



Annex 4: References

Asian Development Bank (ADB). 2015. *Country Gender Assessment: Solomon Islands*. Manila.

Government of Solomon Islands, the (SIG). 2009. *Solomon Islands Family health and Safety Study*. Solomon Islands.

Government of the Solomon Islands, the (SIG). 2016. *National Development Strategy 2016–2035*. Solomon Islands

Ministry for Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs and Pacific Community (MWYCFA/SPC). 2016 *Gender Equality: Where do we stand?* Noumea.

Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI). 2001. *Gender Mainstreaming: Strategy for Promoting Gender Equality* (Factsheet). New York.

Pacific Community, 2005. *The Revised Pacific Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women*. Noumea.

Tekulu, W and Wini, L. 2015. *National Parliament of Solomon Islands Report on Voter Behaviour towards Women Candidates Before and after the 2014 SI National General Election*. Solomon Islands. (unpublished).

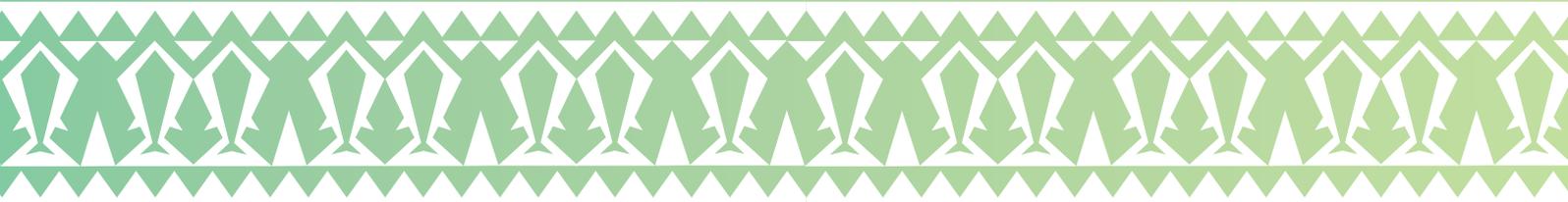
United Nations Economic and Social Council (1997). *ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions*. New York.
See: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gmrolesmادتgenfp.htm>

World Bank. 2012. *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equity and Development*

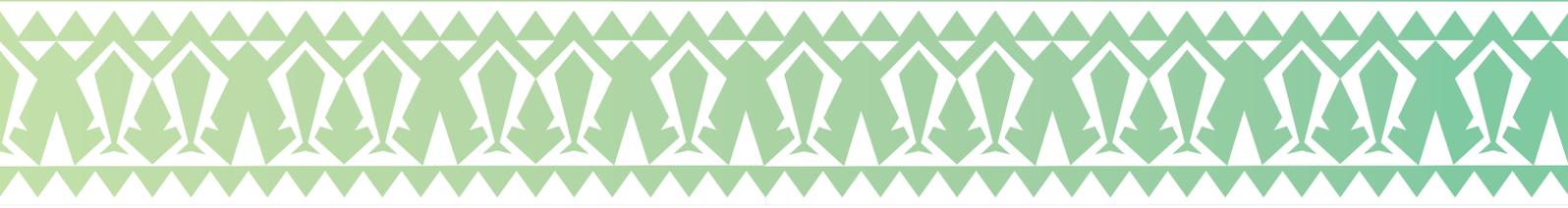


Solomon Islands





Photos: Chris Paletthorpe



Notes:



Produced with the assistance of the Pacific Community (SPC)

