



Ministry of Women, Youth,
Children and Family Affairs

National Strategy on the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls 2020-2023



**“there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of
women.”**

Kofi Annan



National Strategy on the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls 2020-2023

Solomon Islands

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Foreword



It is with great honour that I present the revised *National Strategy on the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls (NSEEWG) 2020-2023*. I was also very privileged to present the preceding National Strategy in 2015, a first ever for Solomon Islands.

This revised strategy seeks to address gaps identified in the review of the first Strategy conducted in 2019 and pave the way for women to realise their economic potential so women's economic status can be improved.

While my Ministry acknowledges that the implementation progress had been slow for the first strategy, we must thank and acknowledge the on-going work of all our 'economic' stakeholders and partners despite many challenges, and whom, must join us in celebrating our small gains especially in the areas of Financial Inclusion and Enterprise Development. Encouraging for all of us is that the review of the first strategy had concluded that ***'there is widespread support for the goals of the NSEEWG and value of women's economic empowerment and general enthusiasm from both women and men for women to be more economically successful'***. Critical to continuing this momentum is the need for all of us – national and provincial governments, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, private sectors, donor and developmental partners and communities – to continue to work together.

This Strategy also highlights the importance of mainstreaming gender across whole of government; preventing and ending violence against women and girls; addressing the issue of women's low representation and participation in decision making and governance levels; and increasing girls access to education and providing supportive school environment, as cross-cutting issues that is 'part and parcel' of improving women's economic status in Solomon Islands and only then can we fully see the benefits of this Strategy.

The Democratic Coalition Government for Advancement is committed to the economic development of the whole of Solomon Islands and recognises that integral to this is the need to economically empower our women and girls of Solomon Islands in line with the principles and standards of gender equality.

I once again want to sincerely thank all our stakeholders and partners for past supports and the Ministry looks forward to your continuing support in ensuring the effective implementation of this revised National Strategy on the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls 2020-2023. It is on this note that I would like to thank the Australian Government through DFAT for supporting the review of the first strategy and for all your support to the Ministry's women's economic empowerment programs and activities.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Freda', with several horizontal lines drawn underneath it.

Honorable Freda Rotutafi Rangirei

Minister, Ministry of Women Youth Children and Family Affairs

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACOM	Anglican Church of Melanesia
CEDAW	The Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CBSI	Central Bank of Solomon Islands
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
GESI	National Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy
GEWD	National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development
HCC	Honiara City Council
ICRW	International Centre for Research on Women
M4C	Markets for Change
MFMR	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEHRD	Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development
MoFT	Ministry of Finance and Treasury
MPS	Ministry of Public Service
MWYCFA	Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs
NCW	National Council of Women
NDS	National Development Strategy
NGOs	Non-Governmental-Organisations
NPF	National Provident Fund
NSEEWG	National Strategy for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls
NYP	Solomon Islands National Youth Policy, Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Livelihoods, 2017-2030
PLGED	Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RPPA	Revised Pacific Platform for the Advancement of Women
RPPID	Research, Policy, Planning and Information Division (MWYCFA)
RTC	Rural Training Centre
SDGs	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals
SFFYDESI	Strategic Framework for Youth Development and Empowerment in the Solomon Islands
SICCI	Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry
SICUL	Solomon Islands Credit Union League
SIG	Solomon Islands Government
SINU	Solomon Islands National University
SIWIBA	Solomon Islands Women in Business Association
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
youSave	NPF fund available for people between 16 and 51 in the informal economy
WARA	West 'Are'Are Rokotanikeni Association
WES	Women's Economic Strategy
WDD	Women's Development Division (MWYCFA)
WDD Officer	Provincial government women's development officers
WRAM	Women's Rights Action Movement

Presenting the Second National Strategy for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls 2020 - 2023

Summary of strategy

Strategic Focus Area 1. *Gender Mainstreaming*

Strategic Focus Area 2. *Financial Inclusion*

Strategic Focus Area 3. *Enterprise Development and improved employment opportunities*

Strategic Focus Area 4. *Creating an Enabling Environment through Legislation and Policy changes*

Strategic Focus Area 5. *Strengthening of the Ministry of Women, Youth Children and Family Affairs*

Background and Purpose

The second National Strategy on the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls (NSEEWG 2020-2023) builds on the NSEEWG to enhance gender equality and improve the economic status of Solomon Islands women. It relates to Policy Outcome 2 of the Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy (GEWD)-2016-2020.

The Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA) commissioned a review of the NSEEWG in 2019. The review found good progress had been made but there is still considerable work to be done to address the low economic status of women in Solomon Islands and the challenges they face in accessing economic opportunities.

The purpose of this strategy is therefore to address these gaps and pave the way for women to realise their economic potential so women's economic status can be improved.

Outcomes

In addition to the benefits for women themselves of improving their quality of life, and becoming more independent and confident, ensuring women are economically empowered will enable them to contribute more to improving the lives of their children and families, work to strengthen their communities, participate in sustainable development, create more stable, just and equitable societies and most importantly, contribute to nation building.

When women thrive, so do their families and societies.

Key Strategic Focus Areas

The NSEEWG 2020-2023 links the work of the strategy to other government initiatives, and in particular, to the National Youth Policy - Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Livelihoods (NYP) 2017-2030. It also links economic empowerment more closely to other elements of the GEWD 2016-2020 particularly gender mainstreaming, leadership, preventing violence and education.

In order to achieve the above outcomes, the key strategic areas are similar to the NSEEWG and will involve:

- Gender mainstreaming
- Financial inclusion
- Enterprise development improved employment opportunities

- Creating an enabling environment through legislation and policy change
- Strengthening of MWYCFA

An important emphasis in the strategy is strengthening its implementation in rural and remote areas and building stronger partnerships to do this.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the strategy will be undertaken by the Women's Development Division (WDD) and the Research, Policy, Planning and Information Division (RPPID) and the MWYCFA. MWYCFA will also provide this material to the NSEEWG Task Force twice a year and report annually to the Advisory Reporting and Coordinating Committee (ARCC) of the GEWD 2016-2020.



1. INTRODUCTION

In the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2016–2035, the Solomon Islands 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’*. 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 that the Solomon Islands Government aligns the national gender policies to are:

- The Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED);
- the Revised Pacific Platform for the Advancement of Women (RPPA); and
- the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A National Policy on Gender Equality and Women’s Development (the GEWD) was developed by the Solomon Islands Government’s Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA) in 2010.

In 2015, the MWYCFA conducted a review of the GEWD policy through a series of consultations with women and men across the country and updated the policy. The 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, based on priorities expressed by the women and men of the Solomon Islands.

Improving the status of women is a policy priority of the Solomon Islands Government (SIG). The MWYCFA is mandated by the Gender Equality and Women’s Development (GEWD) Policy to coordinate the Solomon Islands Government’s commitment to addressing gender equality and advancing the status of women in the Solomon Islands. The GEWD 2016-2020 is discussed in Section 4.



Methodology

In preparation for the development of the NSEEWG 2020-2023, a review of the NSEEWG was undertaken in 2019. The review considered implementation progress of the NSEEWG and the challenges the NSEEWG faced. It also considered the processes in place for coordination, monitoring and implementation of the NSEEWG.

The work was undertaken under the supervision of and in partnership with the Women's Development Division (WDD) of MWYCFA. The approach involved:

- A desk review of official strategy and policy documents, research and monitoring and evaluation reports, official data from government agencies and any other relevant written material;
- Individual and group interviews with key civil society stakeholders, NGOs, and development partner agencies including those supporting people with disabilities, the elderly and those living in rural areas, in Honiara, Isabel, Malaita and Guadalcanal;
- Meetings with officials from CBSI, National Provident Fund and Ministries of Finance and Treasury, Commerce, Agriculture, Fisheries, Tourism, Education and Human Resources, Prime Minister and Cabinet, Environment, and Traditional Governance, Peace and Ecclesiastical Affairs;
- Meetings with provincial government officials in Isabel and Guadalcanal
- A validation meeting with all key stakeholders.

Results of Review of NSEEWG

The review concluded that:

- there is widespread support for the goals of the NSEEWG and value of women's economic empowerment and general enthusiasm from both women and men for women to be more economically successful;
- the most progress is being made in strategic focus area 2: Financial Inclusion and strategic focus area 3: Enterprise Development;
- the five strategic focus areas are a useful subdivision of the work and useful for providing focus to the work. They represent commonly understood needs and encourage activities that can support these needs;
- it is timely to give focus to implementation and sustainability of actions, particularly in provincial and remote areas, for the real benefits of the NSEEWG to be realised;
- there is some urgency to focus on how the successful initiatives can continue to gain momentum and to understand the kind of support that creates continuity;
- there is a need for stronger partnerships at the regional and local level and for a greater reach into rural and remote communities;
- there are opportunities to collaborate more and synchronise activities including collaborating with activities supporting leadership for women and preventing and responding to violence against women and girls;
- the NSEEWG would be more effective and sustainable for young women and girls if the work was linked to economic empowerment activity under the NYP 2017-2030;
- better education and training for women and girls is critical at all levels; and
- the Task Force supporting the NSEEWG should be revived and an appointment should be made with urgency to the coordinating role within MWYCFA.



The NSEEWG 2020-2023 focuses on five key strategic focus areas:

- 1. Gender mainstreaming with a particular focus on the resource sector activities especially for rural women;**
- 2. Financial Inclusion through financial literacy, savings clubs and access to affordable financial services – especially targeting the informal sector;**
- 3. Enterprise development and support and improved employment opportunities;**
- 4. Creating an enabling environment through legislation and policy changes;**
- 5. Institutional strengthening of MWYCFA including monitoring, research and knowledge sharing.**

Monitoring and evaluation will be carried out by WDD and the RPPID divisions of MWYCFA reporting annually through the NSEEWG Task Force to the Advisory Reporting and Coordinating Committee (ARCC) of the GEWD 2016-2020.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The International Centre for Women's Research¹ provides a relevant definition and the means for addressing women's economic empowerment, which is relevant to this strategy.

Defining Women' Economic Empowerment

Definition: A woman is economically empowered when she has both the ability to succeed and advance economically and the power to make and act on economic decisions.

- To **succeed and advance economically**, women need skills and resources to compete in markets, as well as fair and equal access to economic institutions.
- To **have the power and agency** to benefit from economic activities, women need to have the ability to make and act on decisions and control resources and profits.

Economic empowerment comprises of two inter-related components:

1. economic advancement; and
2. power and agency.

Both components are connected and both are necessary to achieve better lives for women and their families. Economic gain and success (economic advancement) promotes women's power and agency. At the same time, when a woman is able to control and share in resource use (power) and to define and make choices (agency), she is better able to advance economically.



¹ ICWR, 2011, pg. 4

Understanding Women's Economic Empowerment

To achieve women's economic empowerment, organisations must address the underlying factors that contribute to it, which are:

- **individual and community resources; and**
- **norms and institutions.**

Resources are the building blocks women require to draw on to succeed economically or to exercise power and agency. Resources can be at the individual or community level. They are more than financial and monetary in nature and include:

- Human capital (e.g. education, skills, training)
- Financial capital (e.g. loans, savings)
- Social capital (e.g. networks, mentors)
- Physical capital (e.g. land, machinery)

Norms and institutions are the “rules of the game” or the organisational and social systems that govern activities and mediate relations between individuals and their social and economic environment. Norms and institutions influence how resources are distributed and used.

- Norms include gender defined roles, taboos, prohibitions and expectations such as whether or not it is appropriate for women to be in public spaces, hold certain types of jobs, or manage money.
- Institutions include legal and policy structures, economic systems, market structures, marriage, inheritance and education systems.



Why women's economic empowerment matters

The OECD² refers to economic empowerment as the capacity of women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways which recognize the value of their contributions, respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth. Economic empowerment increases women's access to economic resources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets, skills development and market information.

The OECD¹ refers to economic empowerment as the capacity of women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways which recognize the value of their contributions, respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth.

It is about creating just and equitable societies.

Women's economic participation and empowerment are fundamental to strengthening women's rights, enabling them to have control over their lives and exerting influence in society. It is about creating just

and equitable societies. Women often face discrimination and persistent gender inequalities with some women facing multiple discrimination and exclusion. Gender based violence including violence against women and girls persists when they are disempowered. There is an inextricable link between economic empowerment of women and violence against women.

The economic empowerment of women is a prerequisite for sustainable development and the achievement of all the SDGs. Gender equality and empowered women are catalysts for multiplying development efforts. Investments in gender equality yield the highest returns of all development ventures³. Women usually invest a higher proportion of their earnings in their families and communities than men. Increasing the role of women in the economy is therefore critical for economic resilience and growth.

The economic empowerment of women is a prerequisite for sustainable development and the achievement of all the SDGs.

Women's economic empowerment promotes women's ability to achieve their rights and wellbeing while also reducing household poverty, increasing economic growth and productivity, and increasing efficiency.

There is increasing recognition that economically empowering women is essential both for the realisation of women's rights and to achieve broader national development goals such as economic growth, poverty reduction, health and education. The lack of understanding about this has resulted in economic development strategies leading to inequitable growth and rising feminization of poverty. Women's economic empowerment promotes women's ability to achieve their rights and wellbeing while also

reducing household poverty, increasing economic growth and productivity, and increasing efficiency. Being financially independent also enables a woman to have life choices (and escape violent relationships within which many women find themselves trapped).

² OECD, 2011, pg.6

³ OECD, 2011

Additionally, this strategy echoes the Solomon Islands Government's⁴ development policies and objectives to "encourage gender balance" as well as to "generate jobs and increase employment opportunities for the growing population, leading to high economic growth, wealth and social well-being for all Solomon Islanders". The GEWD policy vision of a Solomon Islands where women and men are equal partners in development is closely aligned to the above statements and objectives; a Solomon Islands in which

In order to redress gender inequalities, a twin track approach is necessary to invest in women's agencies and efforts while at the same time addressing wider societal attitudinal and institutional barriers.

gender equality is at the heart of social and economic progress, so both women and men are able to achieve their full potential and women have equal access to and control over economic resources. This is the vision that underpins this strategy. In order to redress gender inequalities, a twin track approach is necessary to invest in women's agencies and efforts while at the same time addressing wider societal attitudinal and institutional barriers.

There are strong reasons⁵ for emphasizing women's economic empowerment in development programs as follows:

- Economic empowerment is one of the most powerful routes for women to achieve their potential and advance their 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 - economies lose out when a substantial (half the Solomon Islands population are females) part of the population cannot compete equitably or realize their full potential;
- Working with women makes good business sense⁶ - when women have the right skills and opportunities, they can help businesses and markets grow ; and
- Women who are economically empowered contribute more to their families, societies and national economies - women invest extra income in their children, providing a route to sustainable development.



⁴ Government of the Solomon Islands, 2016

⁵ ICRW, 2011 pg. 3

⁶ This is confirmed in the 2012 World Development report, by World Bank

3. THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

Improving the status of women through their access to and share of productive resources such as land, income, financial services, training opportunities, enterprise development services and technology contributes significantly to poverty reduction⁷. The Economist 2012⁸ Women's Economic Index included the Solomon Islands for the first time in its global comparison of women's economic opportunities but the overall score placed the Solomon Islands at 124th position out of 128 countries.

A range of inter-related factors limit women's economic empowerment in the Solomon Islands. The lack of women in parliament and in positions of leadership also reflects women are not involved in decisions that directly affect their economic lives. Even though several provinces are based on a matrilineal society where land rights are inherited through the female lineage, land ownership is generally in name only for women with men making decisions related to land use and ownership resulting in women having limited access to royalties, financial services and institutions for collateral. There are also a number of critical norms⁹ affecting women's economic

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empowerment including expectations that men should not be involved in unpaid care work; that women are expected to be responsible for care work, which should always be prioritised over economic activity. Women also have primary financial responsibility for meeting household care/basic expenses for the family but must have permission from their husband to engage in economic activity. Women in the Solomon Islands also experience high levels of family violence and lack power within the home¹⁰.

Women of the Solomon Islands are in more vulnerable employment positions than men¹¹.

- According to the 2009 census, 62% of women and 64% of men aged 12 and older were in the labour force, including those who produce goods for own consumption (subsistence work). Both labour force participation and employment rates are higher in rural than urban areas, given the largely agricultural and subsistence nature of work. Gender differences are very small for overall labour force participation or employment rates.
- Of those employed, women were only half as likely as men to be in paid work (26% of women and 51% of men). Even in urban areas where paid work is much more common, women were significantly less likely than men to be in paid work (62% of women and 88% of men). In rural areas, only 19% of women and 42% of men were engaged in paid work.

⁷ Solomon Islands National Policy on gender equality and women's development, pg. 2

⁸ The Economist 2012

⁹ Strongim Bisnis and Oxfam 2018

¹⁰ Oxfam 2019

¹¹ ADB 2015

- Within paid work, men are much more likely than women to hold a wage job, particularly in the private sector. Women hold only 25% of private sector wage jobs, while they account for a greater share of public sector wage jobs at 36%.
- When subsistence work, self-employment, and unpaid family work are categorized as vulnerable employment, 75% of women and 54% of men are in vulnerable employment. Vulnerable employment is significantly less in urban areas, but women are still more likely to be in vulnerable employment (41% of urban women versus 21% of urban men).
- Despite efforts to remove discriminatory barriers to starting a business through reforms of business legislation and regulations, women continue to face challenges in starting a business due to their lower levels of education, limited functional literacy, or distance from government offices.
- Women are highly active in small-scale income generation and agriculture, but their economic participation and control of productive resources are constrained by lack of education, sociocultural discrimination, and lack of access to key resources such as transport and market infrastructure.
- Women are commonly working as contributing family members or helping in small family businesses and production work for their own use, which is commonly known as subsistence work.
- A financial competence survey¹² showed that gender differences are pervasive across financial competencies measured. The survey found that 59% of women considered they could not communicate in English; are less likely to have a bank account, less likely to use electronic payment and remittance channels, are less likely to be involved in the management of household finances and are also 20% less likely to use a mobile phone.



¹² Conducted by the Central Bank of Solomon Islands and shared at the National workshop on financial inclusion and financial competence held 4-5 June, 2013 in Honiara.

4. GEWD 2016-2020, OUTCOME 2: IMPROVED ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN

The goal of the GEWD 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.

The GEWD policy is the overarching framework for achieving gender equality and women's human rights in the Solomon Islands. The policy recognises that women and men are equal partners in the development of Solomon Islands, placing gender equality at the heart of economic and social progress, and giving equal value to the roles and responsibilities of Solomon Islands women and men.

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; and
- Acknowledgement of Solomon Islands' international and regional commitments to gender equality and human rights.

The Solomon Islands Government has committed all its Ministries and Departments to create the necessary conditions to ensure that policies and services benefit women and girls, as well as men and boys.

GEWD 2016-2020 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 2 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.

GEWD 2106-2020: Priority Policy Outcome 2, 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.

The original NSEEWG and now this second NSEEWG 2020-2023 are the mechanism to implement GEWD Outcome 2: Improved economic status of women. All GEWD 2016-2020 Priority Policy Outcomes are mutually supporting. The NSEEWG also is important to the success of the other Priority Policy Outcomes, particularly Priority Policy Outcomes 1: Gender responsive government, 3: Equal participation of women and men at all levels of decision-making, governance and leadership programmes and services, 4: Preventing and responding to violence against women and girls, and 6: Increased access to education and providing a supportive school environment. These priority outcomes are also important to the success of the NSEEWG 2020-2023.



5. STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

For the real benefits of the NSEEWG to be realised, its developments need to be sustained over time and develop their own momentum. Strong partnerships with civil society organisations, central, provincial and local government are essential for this. The NSEEWG 2020-2023 will build stronger and more sustained partnerships with all stakeholders particularly in rural and remote areas.

The NSEEWG 2020 -2023 will also be more integrated with other government policy, particularly the National Youth Policy - Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Livelihoods (NYP) 2017-2030, in order to support sustainable economic empowerment for young women and girls.

Linking the NSEEWG 2020-2023 to the NYP 2017-2030 is likely to lead to gains for both the youth and women's policies and have particular benefits for young women. Collaborating and synchronising initiatives preventing and addressing violence with financial inclusion initiatives could lead to better outcomes in relation to both objectives. Likewise if collaboration on initiatives fostering leadership is synchronised with initiatives supporting enterprise and employment opportunities women and girls will achieve greater economic empowerment.

The NSEEWG 2020-24 will be the main mechanism to implement GEWD Outcome 2: Improved economic status of women. It is also supported by and contributes to the GEWD 2016-2020 Priority Policy Outcomes 1: Gender responsive government, 3: Equal participation of women and men at all levels of decision-making, governance and leadership programmes and services, 4: Preventing and responding to violence against women and girls, and 6: Increased access to education and providing a supportive school environment.

Strong Governance and reporting will be established for the NSEEWG 2020-2023 including re-activating the Task Force that will meet twice a year and report to the Advisory Reporting and Coordinating Committee (ARCC) of the GEWD 2016-2020.

The five strategic focus areas are useful for providing focus to the work. They represent commonly understood needs and encourage activities that can support these needs. The five strategic focus areas for NSEEWG 2020-2023 are similar to those for the NSEEWG with some small changes. The five areas are described below.



5.1 Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming remains a very high priority in the resources sector and in central, provincial, local government departments. The NSEEWG 2020-2023 will continue to take a 'whole-of-government' approach, and focus on gender mainstreaming activities in key government agencies, provincial governments and with the Honiara City Council. Building on the emerging private sector initiatives to gender mainstreaming in private sector business will also become a priority.

Work will resume on gender based budgeting with the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, Councils and provincial governments.

5.2 Financial Inclusion

Financial inclusion remains a top priority. It remains the fundamental underpinning of all work on women's economic empowerment. Engagement in financial inclusion initiatives must begin at grassroots level but must also be sustainable and increase economic empowerment. All women and girls in remote communities and rural communities need financial literacy and need safe and secure means to save.

Great progress is being made with savings clubs throughout the Solomon Islands but there are still areas where these initiatives are not available. More will need to be done to ensure savings clubs are sustainable and that they become pathways to enterprise activity that generates more sustainable income.

Closely associated with savings clubs is increasing financial literacy. Ensuring girls participate in primary and secondary education and all women gain functional literacy and numeracy is very important. Including financial literacy in primary schooling throughout the country would be of great value. Strengthening the opportunities for women and girls to learn financial literacy in RTCs, TVET and SINU programmes must also be part of this strategy.

Initiatives to expand access to banking and encouraging saving through youSave should continue and effort will be made to ensure women access new technology in relation to savings.

Because supporting grassroots initiatives needs many partners the MWYCFA has a key coordination role and will build on its strong relationships with civil society groups and with other central and local government agencies to facilitate the success and expansion of these initiatives. Central to this is convening a coordinating group for savings club facilitators and other savings club partners to advance financial inclusion. The MWYCFA database of savings clubs will be a useful resource for this group.

MWYCFA also has the opportunity to connect and integrate activities preventing and addressing violence against women and girls with financial literacy initiatives. Village level women leaders are often involved in both areas of the GEWD 2016-2020 and addressing both issues concurrently will accelerate progress.

5.3 Enterprise Development and Improved Employment Opportunities

Enterprise development remains critical to the success of women's economic empowerment and to overall development in the Solomon Islands. Opportunities to support and strengthen women's enterprises will continue. Enterprise development for the informal economy where the majority of women's enterprises operate is particularly important. Much of this enterprise development is also linked to the success of savings clubs.

For market women the priorities are safety and better infrastructure. Of particular importance are safe places for women and children including access to toilet facilities and better storage opportunities for produce including access to refrigerated storage.

There is also a need for access to capital, transport and training in marketing and other business skills. Continuing to support these initiatives, including access to training, remains a priority.

There is also a need for women in business to progress to the formal economy and for their businesses to thrive. Continuing the momentum created by SICCI and Waka Mere will continue.

More emphasis on employment opportunities for women and girls is needed. Equal employment opportunities for women and girls will also be promoted and barriers identified and addressed. In addition to opportunities within the Solomon Islands opportunities for women and girls to become involved in regional employment schemes need to be explored. Savings club members may be particularly interested in these opportunities and they may also provide opportunities for women from rural and remote areas to gain experience and skills.

Underpinning all this activity is the need to build leadership skills among women and girls. With this in mind initiatives to support GEWD 2016-2020 Priority Policy Outcome 3: Equal participation of women and men at all levels of decision-making, governance and leadership programmes and services will be linked to the enterprise development activity.

5.4 Creating an Enabling Environment through Legislation and Policy changes

Accelerating current legislative developments, is a priority. It is also important that legislative barriers and regulations and ordinances at a local level are reviewed and amended where these are hindering progress. Some legislation, regulations and ordinances have been identified that are hindering progress. The issues will be documented and a plan to address these will be developed.

Advancing current policy improvements, such as the public sector human resource policy improvements, is also important and will also continue.

5.5 Strengthening of the Ministry of Women, Youth Children and Family Affairs

One of the highest priority for MWYCFA is to fill the role with responsibility for the NSEEWG. Alongside this, the key priority is to reactivate the Taskforce for the NSEEWG and charge this group with responsibility for the implementation of the NSEEWG 2020 -2023. The MWYCFA

will also create a coordinating group for savings clubs to facilitate their sustainability and spread, as well as sharing good practice and learning. The MWYCFA will support partners, particularly those reaching remote and rural women, in the implementation of the NSEEWG 2020-2023 and begin to move away from direct implementation at the local level.

The MWYCFA will also link this strategy more closely to its work on GEWD 2016-2020 Priority Policy Outcomes 1: Gender responsive government, 3: Equal participation of women and men at all levels of decision-making, governance and leadership programmes and services, 4: Preventing and responding to violence against women and girls, and 6: Increased access to education and providing a supportive school environment and its work advancing the NYP 2017-2030.

Alongside this work the Ministry will assemble and collect the information needed to undertake the Monitoring and Evaluation of the NSEEWG 2020 – 2023 on a regular basis. Keeping abreast of the reports that shed light on women’s economic empowerment undertaken by other organisations is important to support the NSEEWG 2020-2023. These reports will also be a resource that can be shared with the Taskforce and be taken into account in NSEEWG 2020-2023 progress reports.

The NSEEWG 2020 -2023 will be used as the basis for allocating resources that are targeted for women’s economic empowerment.



6. PLAN OF ACTION

Strategy	Actions and activities	Start date	Partners
1. Gender mainstreaming	Continue gender mainstreaming in central, provincial and local government agencies particularly in resources sector agencies	2020	All central and provincial government agencies, Development partners, HCC SICCI, WRAM, SIWIBA
	Support private sector gender mainstreaming	2021	
	Resume gender-based budgeting work	2021	MoFT, MWYCFA
2. Financial inclusion	Expand and focus support for savings clubs:	2020	MWYCFA, ACOM, Live and Learn, WARA, World Vision, Other savings club facilitators, Strongim Bisnis, Regional WDD Officers
	- document unmet demand for support for saving club establishment	2020	
	- Convene a savings club co-ordinating body to share resources and experience	2021	
	- Link economic empowerment and preventing violence initiatives at the local level		CBSI, NPF, UNCDF, Good Returns,
	Expand financial literacy, and savings:	2020	MEHRD
	- continue initiatives to expand access to banking and saving through youSave including access to new technology	2021	
	- Increase financial literacy education in schools and RTCs		
3. Enterprise Development and Improved Employment Opportunities	Continue to support enterprise in the informal economy	2020	UN Women/ UNDP, M4C, HCC, SIWIBA Regional WDD Officers, Market Vendor Associations, SICCI SICCI, WRAM, MICILI MoFT
	- improve safety for market vendors		
	- improve market infrastructure		
	Continue support for women in the formal economy	2020	SICCI, CBSI, UNCDF,
	Improve access to capital especially microcredit and improve and focus	2021	

	enterprise and financial training for women		Central and provincial government agencies
	Promote equal employment opportunities for women and girls and identify and address barriers	2020	MICLI, WRAM, SICCI
	Identify opportunities for women and girls to be involved in regional seasonal employment schemes	2021	MICLI, WRAM,
	Build leadership skills among women and girls along with enterprise support activities	2020	MWYCFA, SICCI, MICILI
4. Policy and legislative changes	Review legislative barriers and regulations and ordinances at a local level	2020	WRAM, MPS, MWYCFA
	Amend laws that are hindering progress	2021	Other relevant Ministries
	Advance current policy improvements, such as the public sector human resource policy improvements	2020	Regional and local government agencies MPS, WRAM
5. Strengthening MWCYFA	Appoint staff member to coordinate NSEEWG 2020-2023	2020	MWYCFA
	Re-establish NSEEWG 2020-2023 Taskforce	2020	
	Report on progress of whole strategy annually	2020	
	Integrate work on NSEEWG 2020-2023 with work on NYP 2017-2030	2020	

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

Strategic focus area	Actions and activities	Performance measures and data sources	Assumptions and Risks
1. Gender mainstreaming	Gender mainstreaming in central, provincial and local government agencies particularly in resources sector agencies	Annual report % of women employed in key departments and % senior women from 2020 Annual report from central and regional departments on changes of numbers of women and girls in key resource industries from 2020 Report on other government gender initiatives from 2020	That data is available annually for government departments That reports can be provided and are of value
	Private sector gender mainstreaming	Report % of women employed in SICCI member industries – baseline 2019 survey, report frequency to be agreed with SICCI from 2021	
	Gender-based budgeting work	Report on re-establishment progress 2020, Reports on progress annually from 2021	
2. Financial inclusion	Support for savings clubs - document unmet demand for support for saving club establishment - Convene savings club co-ordinating body	Convene Savings Club Coordinating Committee in 2020 to meet 2 times a year Annual report from Savings Club coordinating group from 2020 on: -Numbers and location of savings clubs of women in savings clubs – baseline Strongim Bisnis 2019 report - Numbers of women in savings clubs - Location and nature of unmet demand	That the estimates are consistent and reliable, and the data can be collected That subsequent data is available
	- Link economic empowerment and preventing violence initiatives at the local level	Report on initiatives combining savings clubs and preventing violence from 2021	
	Expand financial literacy, and savings - expand access to banking and saving through youSave	Annual report on extent and geographic reach of banking and youSave including any data or qualitative information on	

	including access to new technology - Increase financial literacy education in schools and RTCs	uptake of new technology from 2020 Report on extent of financial literacy training in RTCs and schools and participation by gender 2021 Annual update on progress from 2022	
3. Enterprise Development and Improved Employment Opportunities	Support enterprise in the informal economy - improve safety for market vendors - improve market infrastructure	Annual report on progress on market improvements from 2020	That data is available and reliable
	Support for women in the formal economy	Annual report on numbers of women led enterprises in formal sector – baseline SICCI report 2019 from 2020	
	Access to capital especially microcredit and improved enterprise and financial training for women	Annual report on demand and uptake of enterprise credit building on findings of micro-credit review from 2021 Annual report on demand for and uptake of enterprise training from 2021	
	Promote equal employment opportunities for women and girls and identify and address barriers.	Report on most recent Household Labour Forces Survey data for women 2020 Annual update on progress from 2021	
	Identify opportunities for women and girls to be involved in regional seasonal employment schemes	Report on numbers and provincial area of women currently involved 2020 Report on potential for improvement 2021 Annually report on numbers and province from 2022	
	Build leadership skills among women and girls along with enterprise support activities	Report on leadership initiatives in conjunction with women's enterprise and employment initiatives from 2021	

4. Policy and legislative changes	<p>Review legislative barriers and regulations and ordinances at a local level</p> <p>Amend laws that are hindering progress</p> <p>Advance current policy improvements, such as the public sector human resource policy improvements</p>	<p>Report on legislation, regulations and ordinances that are hindering progress in 2020</p> <p>Create a plan to advance amendment in 2021</p> <p>Report annually on progress with amendments from 2022 using Parliament and other records and Cabinet minutes</p> <p>Report annually on policy advances from 2020</p>	Officials have access to all documents
5. Strengthening MWCYFA	<p>Appoint staff member to coordinate NSEEWG 2020-2023</p> <p>Re-establish NSEEWG 2020-2023 Task Force</p> <p>Report on progress annually</p> <p>Integrate work on NSEEWG 2020-2023 with work on NYP 2017-2030</p>	<p>Report to first taskforce meeting in 2020 on progress to fill role</p> <p>Appoint Task Force and arrange 2 meetings a year with one meeting prior to ARCC meetings and after savings club co-ordinating committee meetings.</p> <p>Report on MWYCFA performance overall on the strategy and the quality of reporting at other meeting each year from 2021</p> <p>Report annually on activities jointly supporting the aims of the NSEEWG 2020-2023 and the NYP 2017-2030 from 2020</p>	Position filled and Task Force established as soon as possible

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