

Strengthening Gender Inclusive Conflict Prevention and Human Security in the Pacific

"We as women are the source of peace. The source of learning and knowledge and we can communicate to many levels. Information is linked to accountability and as a network committed to prevention, we can bring information to communities and also communicate human security and conflict prevention indicators to governments and inter-governmental organisations"

As a network committed to progressing commitments for gender inclusive conflict prevention and human security, the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) Pacific network and partners from Fiji and Bougainville, we celebrate the knowledge and strength of the leaders of our network and the role we all play in empowering young women in our network.

Since 2011, GPPAC has been a strong advocate for increasing cooperation between civil society organisations (CSOs) and regional intergovernmental organizations (RIGOs) to foster greater understanding of the interdependence and mutually reinforcing relationship between peace, security and development. GPPAC believes in working with actors such as the UN, RIGOs and governments in the conflict prevention and

peacebuilding field, as well as CSOs and non-state actors. A key focus of GPPAC's policy and advocacy program is increasing and strengthening the relationship between RIGOs and CSOs.

In the Pacific Islands region, femLINKpacific as the Pacific Regional Secretariat for GPPAC, works in collaboration with WACC Pacific, across the twenty-two Pacific Island countries and territories linking peacebuilders in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. GPPAC Pacific's network members have actively contributed to the development and adoption of the Conflict Prevention Framework, Human Security Framework and the Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2012).

http://www.gppac.net/news/-/asset_publisher/fHv91YcOz0Cl/content/policy-brief-regional-organizations-and-peacebuilding-the-role-of-civil-society

Fiji: FemLINKPACIFIC, Transcend Oceania, Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding Papua New Guinea: Peace Foundation Melanesia & Nazareth Centre, Solomon Islands: Vois Blong Mere, Tonga: Talitha Project, Vanuatu: Young Women for Change

“At the start, our work was to create spaces with women. We are learning together what peace and conflict means for us as women, as well as for the communities. Since the early days, the nature of conflict has changed, the nature of peace has changed but the need for spaces is still there so we will continue the work” - Adi Vasulevu, femLINKpacific and Transcend Oceania.

GPPAC Pacific works to foster collaboration on gender, preventive action and human security in peace and security forums in the Pacific region. As a network of diverse Pacific peacebuilders, activists and practitioners, we will work together to develop a gender inclusive regional early warning and early response (EWER) framework with human security and protection indicators to prevent the resurgence of conflicts by enhancing conflict analysis and communication systems and contribute to a resilient and inclusive regional peacebuilding architecture. This emphasis on gender inclusive conflict prevention continues GPACC Pacific’s ongoing work on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security) and subsequent resolutions.

“Conflict experienced in Bougainville hit women and children the hardest. But they weren’t at the peace table. We need to ensure that women participate because it is their participation that will prevent the resurgence of violence” - Agnes Titus, Nazareth Centre, Bougainville

PARTICIPATION FOR PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS

Women’s networks have an important role to also disseminate information to the wider community including men and other civil society groups and our strength is that this enables us in our policy engagement with local and national governance structures as well as inter-governmental processes.

As a network which contributed to the formulation and adoption of the Pacific Regional Action Plan (RAP WPS 2012-2015) on Women, Peace and Security we are accountable to the unfinished business of implementation – national and regional level in line with the three priority areas of the RAP-WPS 2012 – 2015:

- i) gender mainstreaming and women’s leadership in conflict prevention and management, political decision-making and peacebuilding and peacekeeping;
- ii) gender mainstreaming and women’s participation in security sector oversight and accountability and;
- iii) protection of women’s human rights in transitional and post-conflict contexts

“The resourcing of the National Action Plan is very important. At the national level now, everyone must be watching our development processes like the National Budget to make sure that it supports the implementation of the NAP. We are doing the work on the ground – creating the spaces including through peace vigils. But we also need space as civil society to be heard including by regional intergovernmental organisations. They are responsible for the policies that our governments agree to and adopt in our countries” - Josephine Teakeni, Vois Blong Mere Solomons

As we also work together via the Women, Peace and Security, and the Humanitarian Agenda: Participation, Preparedness and Protection project to work for climate justice and environment justice not just in national commitments but reaching women in communities across our island communities. We recognise the potential of partnerships such as the Shifting the Power coalition.

The ongoing impact of climate change in the Pacific region has caused Pacific member states to be consistent in stressing to the international community the importance of environmental security, including through the annual UN Security Council (UNSC) open debate on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (Women, Peace and Security). This has led to a call among many states to ensure there is a connection made between climate change, peace support and peacebuilding for human security, development and human rights. In response, the Global Study on UNSCR1325 (2015) and the drafting of UNSCR2242 (2015) for the first time committed the UN Security Council to address human security priorities including climate change.

A COMMITMENT TO YOUNG WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

UNSCR2250, on youth peacebuilders, affirms “the important role youth can play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and as a key aspect of the sustainability, inclusiveness and success of peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts” and recognises “that youth should actively be engaged in shaping lasting peace and contributing to justice and reconciliation, and that a large youth population presents a unique demographic dividend that can contribute to lasting peace and economic prosperity if inclusive policies are in place.”

But an integral step is to address the human security barriers that inhibit young women's capacity to participate including poor access to education, rising cost of living, un/underemployment, and basic health services including reproductive and sexual health.

The GPPAC Pacific network is committed to continuing to be a space for inter-generational and cross-regional learning to progress a Human Security Agenda so that conflict prevention programmes, and Security Sector Governance is inclusive of young women.

Young women will be engaged and empowered through our grassroots community networks including via a range of appropriate and accessible Media and ICT platforms.

“We must prepare young women and equip them with skills, knowledge and confidence. Young women can speak – they have a brain and a mouth! We must prepare them for life. It's not just about empowering them – we must help them so they can impact their society. So, we need to work with their families and the leaders around them as well. We talk to them around the kava bowl and talanoa, bringing the real-life examples so that they understand the issues” - Vanessa Heleta, Talitha Project and Chairperson of the GPPAC Pacific Regional Steering Group (RSG).

NETWORK STRENGTHENING TO ENHANCE PACIFIC PEACEBUILDING PRACTICE

While we affirm the diversity of political, environment and social issues that are challenging our region including political issues, we recognise the possibilities of our network to link country level priorities through a range of peacebuilding strategies to strengthen our engagement to use political commitments to progress our common agenda not just in regional levels but more importantly at community level including reaching faith and traditional leaders:

“There are a lot of important networks so we bring them together and empower our communities to collect data and then analyse and present it to the different agencies so that they may be held accountable so that governments may also be held accountable. For us, as PCP, a platform like this is quite important in our own community peacebuilding work. (It is providing) the access and the different avenues to speak with the different communities: - Florence Swamy, Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding

That is why as a Peacebuilding network we will work together to document and share information which is often not included in media coverage and policy reports from governments.

In doing so we are committed to continue to strengthen our women-led community media network to amplify more women’s voices including via our community radio network.

Peace education strategies will support inter-generational learning with young women and our children, in each of our national and local contexts so that they can be empowered to establish their own peace networks.

Capacity building through peace education requires investment in our work as network members as well as the activities we undertake through our organisation and link communities to regional and global commitments made on their behalf as a means of building peaceful communities.

COLLABORATION WITH REGIONAL INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (RIGOS)

The Biketawa Declaration (2000) clearly states that the “Forum (Pacific Islands Forum) must constructively address difficult and sensitive issues including underlying causes of tensions and conflict (ethnic tensions, socio-economic disparities, lack of good governance, land disputes and erosion of cultural values).” This commitment is extended in the Pacific Islands Forum’s Principles of Security Sector Governance (2012) where there is a promise to “always seek to prevent threats to wellbeing, counter emerging tensions, and quickly resolve outbreaks of violent conflict through: addressing root causes; appropriate justice responses; conflict sensitive policy and development; cooperation; and, early warning and response mechanisms.”

In working towards their objective of addressing areas of preventative action and human security, RIGOs have identified that working with CSOs is a necessary part of the process.

There is also recognition within other international forums that the inclusion and contributions of CSOs is necessary in the implementation of the preventative action, human security, and peace agenda. UNSCR2242 for instance recognises “important contribution of civil society, including women’s organisations, during the last fifteen years in the implementation of resolution 1325.” This “meaningful participation of civil society organisations at international and regional peace and security meetings, as appropriate, including donor conferences” should continue with the intention, “to help ensure gender considerations are integrated in the development, prioritisation, coordination, and implementation of policies and programs, and encourages the hosts of such meetings to give due consideration to facilitating a cross representation of civil society participants.”

The Pacific Islands Forum’s Principles of SSG clearly emphasises a need for collaboration and inclusivity. To address the threats to human security, the forum has identified it must work across society including with CSOs and its mechanisms should be “inclusive through gender equality, participation of youth, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups, and

consideration of traditional culture and governance structures.”

Subsequently between 2008 – 2011 GPPAC Pacific network members participated in the PIFS regional Track II dialogue processes on conflict, peace & security issues between officials and civil society organisations.

We note with concern that the Track II dialogue process has not been active for several years which limits the potential for engagement.

We look forward to progressing the partnership with the Pacific Community to progress the commitments to gender equality, building on the legacy of Pacific feminists who contributed to the development and adoption of the Pacific Platform for Action and look forward to progressing commitments in the Beijing Platform for Action to women, media and ICTS as well as the Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security via the Revised Pacific Platform for Action.

We also look forward to a strengthened engagement with the CROP Gender Working Group to support women-led civil society and feminist networks to be engaged in developing papers and policy briefs for government officials.

<http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/Human%20Security%20Framework%20for%20the%20Pacific%2020120712.pdf>
http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2242.pdf
http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2242.pdf
<http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/Human%20Security%20Framework%20for%20the%20Pacific%2020120712.pdf>

PROGRESSING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

There is now an opportunity, together with the Sustainable Development Goals (in particular with Goals 5 and 16) and UNSCR2242 to amplify women's call for a shift from reaction to prevention and for our governments to put women's human security first in response.

"We need to have everyone saying that achieving gender equality is their business" - Anne Pakoa of Vanuatu Young Women for Change

GPPAC Pacific is committed to be a network that will contribute to the achievement of SDG 16 linked to our network's collective efforts to enhance the availability of evidence based policy advocacy strategies at regional and national level and inter-governmental foras which will demonstrate how a network of Pacific Peacebuilders is contributing to (i) addressing the reduction of violence (ii) responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels and (iii) supporting public access to information - all targets of SDG 16.

RECOMMENDATIONS: A SHIFT FROM REACTION TO PREVENTION

"It's been ten years since we've been working together as part of our first '1325' network that started in late 2006 and formalised in 2007. It's been a decade of dedicated peacebuilding practice in the Pacific and progressing 1325 from the mat to the policy table" - Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, Executive Producer-Director of femLINKpacific; Chair - GPPAC Board

As the GPPAC Pacific network we will build on collective gains and lessons learnt since we began organising together as the "1325" network . In line with our recommendations to the Global Study on UNSCR1325 (2015), reaffirmed by the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG16, 2016) ,we continue to convene successive local, national and regional activities to progress and advance our network's collective efforts to realise Gender Inclusive Conflict Prevention and Human Security in our region. We will continue to undertake activities with a focus on enhancing women and young women's participation in decision making and amplify women's voices in regional inter-governmental processes and media networks, including community media.

femLINKpacific is the regional secretariat of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)
2008- http://www.femlinkpacific.org.fj/images/PDF/Policy/PolicyForPeace_2008.pdf;
2009 - http://www.femlinkpacific.org.fj/images/PDF/Policy/PolicyForPeace_2009.pdf;
2011 - http://www2.kobe-u.ac.jp/~alexroni/TR2014%20readings/2014_9/Pacific%20Peacewomen_Perspectives%20on%20Peace%20and%20Security%20Web%20version%202013.pdf;
2012/1 - http://www.femlinkpacific.org.fj/images/PDF/Policy/PolicyForPeace_2012_1.pdf;
2012/2 - http://www.femlinkpacific.org.fj/images/PDF/Policy/PolicyForPeace_2012_2.pdf;
2013 - http://www.femlinkpacific.org.fj/images/PDF/Policy/PolicyForPeace_2013.pdf;
2014 - http://www.femlinkpacific.org.fj/images/PDF/Policy/PolicyForPeace_2014.pdf;
2015 - http://www.femlinkpacific.org.fj/images/PDF/Policy/PolicyForPeace_2015.pdf;
2016 - http://www.femlinkpacific.org.fj/images/PDF/Policy/PolicyForPeace_2016.pdf
<http://www.femlinkpacific.org.fj/index.php/en/news-and-events/223-regional-cso-forum-outcomes-statement>

RESOURCING CONFLICT PREVENTION AND GENDER INCLUSIVE PEACEBUILDING:

- We welcome the resourcing of the peacebuilding networks of GPPAC Pacific, but there is a need to sustain resourcing particularly to support and sustain civil society networks as we work to building peaceful societies. Investing in women's leadership in civil society is an important investment in participation including supporting the inter-generational work of our network
- We look forward to working with the Non State Actors programme of the Pacific Islands Forum to need build on our network's capacity in areas such as early warning, track II diplomacy, policy analysis, advocacy and media outreach

PEACE AND SECURITY MUST BE ON THE PACIFIC FORUM LEADERS AGENDA AT ALL TIMES:

We call on RIGOs, government officials and the United Nations to develop a regional mechanism which will increase Regional Cooperation and engagement between RIGOs and CSOs working on conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

This mechanism will:

- a. Build and expand on the Biketawa Declaration in line with regional commitments

to gender equality including the Pacific Leaders Declaration on Gender Equality (2012) and Revised Pacific Platform for Action (2005-2015)

- b. Promote the application of UNSCR1325, CEDAW and other human rights treaty obligations in National Security Policies and practice, and ensure they are in line with the recommendations of the 2015 Forum Regional Security Committee in particular to "support expanding the scope of the women, peace and security agenda in the region to reflect key gender inequality and security priorities in the context of sustainable development (in line with the Leaders Gender Equality Declaration)."
- c. Enable a twice-yearly dialogue between regional officials and Pacific Governments with Pacific Peacebuilders on the nexus of peace, human security, and development with a particular focus on Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals
- d. Include a strong information communication strategy that builds on demonstrated community media practice
- e. Enable greater accountability and engagement by our governments with peacebuilding networks to progress the goals of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security) and related resolutions
- f. Undertake the review of the Treaty of the Rarotonga in line with the adoption of the UN Nuclear Ban Treaty

<http://wps.unwomen.org/index.html>

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg16>

<http://www.femlinkpacific.org.fj/index.php/en/actions/policy-documents/450-strengthening-gender-inclusive-conflict-prevention-architecture-in-the-pacific-region-including-through-media-and-communications-strategies-policy-brief>; <http://www.femlinkpacific.org.fj/index.php/en/actions/policy-documents/459-young-women-key-to-gender-inclusive-conflict-prevention-and-human-security>

A femLINKpacific policy initiative made possible with the assistance of:



Strengthening Non-State Actors (NSAs) Engagement in Regional Policy Development and Implementation Programme

