

**Stocktake of the Gender Mainstreaming Capacity  
of  
Pacific Island Governments  
TUVALU**

**Secretariat of the Pacific Community**

**Noumea, New Caledonia**

**2013**

# Contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Objectives and methodology</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Country Overview</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>a. Facts and figures</i>	6
<i>b. Key gender issues</i>	8
<b>4. Summary of Findings</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>a. National women's machinery</i>	11
1. Structure	11
2. Assessment	16
3. Analysis of supports and constraints for gender mainstreaming supported by NWM	17
<i>b. Enabling environment</i>	18
1. Legal and policy framework	18
2. Technical capacity	22
3. Adequacy of financing for gender equality	23
4. Accountability mechanisms	24
5. Perceived political will	25
6. Organisational culture	26
7. Analysis of the supports and constraints for gender mainstreaming across all of government	27
<b>5. Preliminary findings and recommendations on strategic approaches for gender mainstreaming</b>	<b>29</b>
<i>a. Building on existing government mechanisms</i>	29
<i>b. Capacity development for human rights-based approach as basis for gender mainstreaming</i>	30
<i>c. Engaging men and boys to support gender equality</i>	30
<i>d. Gender statistics to support knowledge development on gender issues</i>	31
<i>e. Strengthen the advocacy role of women's NGOs</i>	32
<i>Annex 1: Ministries/departments and organisations consulted</i>	34
<i>Annex 2: An overview of women in local government in Tuvalu</i>	35
<i>Annex 3: References</i>	37

# Acknowledgements

Many people contributed to the oversight, research and writing of this report.

We wish to particularly acknowledge the Government of Tuvalu for its interest in taking part in the stocktake, and for the open and constructive participation of so many of its people in the planning, research and validation of the exercise. The openness of a government to institutional review and analysis, and its willingness to implement change based on that analysis, are critical first steps in improved governance and more effective sustainable development. This in turn benefits the country and its citizens. Similarly, we wish to acknowledge the members of civil society based in Tuvalu who participated in interviews and focus groups. Their insights have added depth and important context to this exercise.

The project manager for the stocktake and editor of this report was Brigitte Leduc, SPC Gender Equality Adviser. Gayle Nelson of Nagada Consultants designed the stocktake methodology and led the consultants. Ana Laqeretabua of SALT Inc. was the lead author of this report, undertook the desk review and co-led the consultation process. SPC Gender Equality Officer Joanne Lee Kunatuba managed the logistics of the overall process. The primary government focal points were Asita Molotii, Director of Women, Lupe Tavita, Information and Research officer (Department of Women's Affairs) and Tusipese Morikao, Budget and Planning Officer (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development).

The stocktake of gender mainstreaming capacity of Pacific island countries is an activity under the Progressing Gender Equality in Pacific Island Countries (PGEP) initiative. PGEP is funded by the Government of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade under the programme, Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development. SPC and Pacific Island governments are working together to implement the project over a five year period.

Our sincere thanks go to all of these people and agencies.

*Secretariat of the Pacific Community*

## Abbreviations and acronyms

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
DWA	Department of Women's Affairs
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NCC	National Coordinating Committee
NWM	National women's machinery
NWP	National women's policy
RRRT	Regional Rights Resource Team
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
TANGO	Tuvalu Association of Non Governmental Organisations
TDHS	Tuvalu Demographic Health Survey
TNCW	Tuvalu National Council of Women

# 1. INTRODUCTION

It is now widely recognised that development and governance processes will not be effective or sustainable until women and men participate in and benefit from such processes on a basis of both formal and substantive equality. Despite this, women continue to be significantly under-represented in governance and development processes and experience discrimination and diminished opportunity in virtually all development sectors. Contrary to a wide range of commitments that Pacific Island governments have made to achieving equality between men and women, women's needs, issues, perspectives and contributions continue in many cases to be on the periphery of development and governance dialogue.

'Mainstreaming' a gender perspective across all multi-sectoral development and governance work was universally recognised in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China as a critical strategy for achieving government commitments to gender equality and sustainable development. The Beijing Platform for Action (BPA), adopted at the conference, states that:

'Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively' (para 202).

Gender mainstreaming was also recognised in BPA as key to addressing the enjoyment of human rights (para 229). The overarching objective of gender mainstreaming should thus be to ensure that all multi-sectoral development processes – which might otherwise be acting, advertently or inadvertently, to perpetuate gender stereotypes and inequalities – are instead actively contributing to the realisation of gender equality in all spheres of life.

..

## **Definition of gender mainstreaming**

*...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, 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 programmes 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.*

*UN Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (2001)<sup>1</sup>*

The committee tasked with monitoring implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) – the principal international human rights treaty, which defines and firmly embeds equality of women and men as a core element of the international legal order and which has been ratified by 97 per cent of UN member countries – has explicitly called on states parties to adopt a policy of gender mainstreaming as a strategy for achieving gender equality. For all Pacific Island countries and territories that have

---

<sup>1</sup> UN Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. 2001. Gender mainstreaming: strategy for promoting gender equality. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/factsheet1.pdf>

undergone an examination before the CEDAW Committee, the committee has either commended existing efforts at gender mainstreaming (where such efforts were actively in place) or, more commonly, urged the state party to develop or strengthen its gender mainstreaming policies and capacity where they were absent or insufficient (UNCEDAW 2007<sup>2</sup>). Linked with this are the committee's recommendations to strengthen government machinery for gender equality (national women's machinery, NWM) with adequate human, financial and technical resources and the authority and decision-making powers that are necessary for them to coordinate and work effectively for the promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

## 2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

While gender mainstreaming gained significant momentum in the Pacific region in the lead up to and in the early years following the Beijing Conference, perceptions are that the momentum was not maintained and that national governments do not have the necessary capacity to systematically integrate gender perspectives, including the provisions of CEDAW, into multi-sectoral development processes as part of their strategy to achieve national, regional and international commitments to gender equality.

This stocktake was designed to determine the extent to which capacity for effective gender mainstreaming exists in national governments, and to identify potential areas of strategic intervention to strengthen such capacity. It is an initiative of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) in collaboration with national governments and is being carried out in phases throughout the Pacific region in response to a call from Pacific Island ministries responsible for gender equality and the advancement of women for support to strengthen the institutional capacity of governments to meet their stated commitments to gender equality. The first phase of the stocktake, initiated in 2008 and covering Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and Tonga, was conducted with support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the UN Development Fund for Women (now known as UN Women). The second phase commenced in June 2013 and covers Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Tuvalu, Samoa. Palau and Vanuatu undertook their own independent stocktakes. The underlying premise of the stocktake is that national women's machineries (NWMs) are key catalysts for the mainstreaming of gender and women's human rights but they are not the sole agencies responsible for achieving it. To be effective, NWMs need both strong internal capacity and a wider government structure that is supportive of gender equality and mainstreaming. That wider structure must include a strong legal and policy framework supportive of gender equality and mainstreaming, genuine government commitment, a supportive organisational culture, clear accountability mechanisms, strong technical capacity and adequate resources – in short, an enabling environment. SPC's initiative is thus designed firstly to take stock of that enabling environment and secondly to collaborate with national governments and other development partners in the design and implementation of concrete, evidence-based strategies for enhancing it.

The stocktake is not an evaluation of the work of government in addressing gender inequality or specific efforts at mainstreaming; rather it simply analyses the degree to which there is an enabling environment for such mainstreaming to take place.

---

<sup>2</sup> UN CEDAW (UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women). 2007. Concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: Cook Islands. <http://www.refworld.org/docid/46d280fb0.html> [accessed 10 September 2013]

The stocktake process involved desk research combined with in-country structured interviews and focus groups. The in-country research was undertaken from 2 to 11 July 2013. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 ministries/departments, with courtesy calls made to five permanent secretaries. Those interviewed included a representative range of both central and line ministries. Informants were senior government officials including secretaries to government, permanent secretaries, assistant secretaries and heads of offices with direct responsibility for policy development and programme implementation in their respective departments. The main interviewees at the senior government level in the 15 ministries/departments included 7 men and 8 women. In addition, interviews were conducted with civil society representatives. Annex 1 contains a list of the ministries/departments and organisations consulted.

### **Enabling environment requirements for gender mainstreaming**

- 1. Legal and policy framework:** The extent to which gender equality and mainstreaming commitments are in place by virtue of ratification of relevant international human rights treaties, existence of constitutional and legislative provisions, and existence of government policy mandates
- 2. Political will:** Demonstrated political will means that action is taken on stated gender equality commitments and action is formalised within systems and mechanisms to ensure mainstreaming is sustainable
- 3. Organisational culture:** The extent to which the attitudes of staff and institutional systems, policies and structures support or marginalise gender equality as an issue
- 4. Accountability and responsibility:** The ways in which action on commitments to gender mainstreaming can be traced and monitored within organisations, and the mechanisms through which individuals at different levels demonstrate gender equality-related results
- 5. Technical capacity:** The extent of skills and experience that organisations can draw on to support gender and human rights mainstreaming initiatives across and within their operations and programmes
- 6. Adequate resources:** The allocation and application of human and financial resources in relation to the scope of the task of mainstreaming

### 3. COUNTRY OVERVIEW

#### a. Facts and figures

<b>Tuvalu</b>	
<b>Population</b>	<b>11, 200</b>
<b>Urban/rural %</b>	42.3%/57.7%
<b>Land area</b>	26 sq km (10 sq miles)
<b>EEZ</b>	
<b>Geography</b>	<b>9 reef atoll islands</b>
<b>Status</b>	<b>Self-governing</b>
<b>Economy</b>	Agriculture (copra), fishing industries  Exports: Copra, handicrafts
<b>Main languages</b>	Tuvaluan, English
<b>Life expectancy</b>	M/F: 62 years/65 years (UN)
<b>Labour Force Participation</b>	According to the 2002 census, of the 5,950 Tuvaluans aged 15 and over, 58% were economically active and part of the labour force. A larger proportion of males (70%) than females (48%) were economically active and males made up 57% of the labour force. By sector, employment was concentrated in the public sector (39%), and the semi-public sector or public corporations (30%). The private sector accounted for 28% of employees and non-profit organisations accounted for 3%.
<b>Human Development Index</b>	ranking N/A
<b>Gender Development Index</b>	value N/A
<b>Gender Empowerment Measure</b>	<b>value N/A</b>

Source: SPC, UNFPA, UNDP



## **b. Key gender issues**

### **Violence against women**

Violence against women in Tuvalu is an issue that often remains unreported. It constitutes an alarming threat to the rights and dignity of women. The 2007 Tuvalu Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS) reported that 4 in 10 women have been subjected to some type of physical violence, with their current husbands or partners being the main perpetrators (84.6%). In particular, wives whose husbands drink alcohol excessively are far more likely (72%) to experience physical, emotional, or sexual violence than those whose partners do not drink (27%). It is estimated that around half of all reported acts of physical violence were reported by women aged 25–29.

The demographic and health survey also shows that rates of domestic violence against women are not linked to place of residence (Funafuti or outer islands), employment status, marital status, educational level or the woman's number of children. According to the findings of the survey, women in Tuvalu were brought up to accept, tolerate, and even rationalise domestic violence and to remain silent about such experiences. According to the survey, 40% of women reported having experienced some type of physical or sexual violence in their life, 25.4% reported having been subjected to sexual violence, and 11.9% reported having been exposed to both forms of violence. The survey results indicate that almost all violence is committed by a person the woman knows. For the large majority of women who experienced violence (84.6%), it was committed by current husband or partner, while for 9.4% the violence was committed by a former husband or partner, and for 8.9% it was committed by a sister or brother. In 4.4% of reports, the violence was committed by the woman's father or stepfather, in 4.4% by another relative, in 2.6% by the woman's mother, and in 0.5% of reports the violence was committed by the police.

The culture of silence associated with domestic violence is evident in the number of cases recorded by the Office of the People's Lawyer, with only five domestic violence cases recorded in 2011 and only eight new domestic violence cases by August 2012.

### **Women in wage employment**

As in other Pacific countries, the traditional and stereotypical perception in Tuvalu is that women are solely responsible for domestic duties. The 2007 TDHS highlights the significant gender disparity in the employment participation rates of men and women in Tuvalu, with more women (49%) than men (15%) reporting not being employed in the 12 months preceding the survey. Women are also more likely to be in the lowest wealth quintile and have limited (secondary or primary) education.

Official figures from the population census and household surveys indicate that there was an increase in the number of women in wage employment from 1991 to 2004, but that this figure declined in 2007. The decline has been attributed to the growing number of males in employment from 2006 to 2008 due to the number of large construction-related projects and the compulsory seamen's Tuvalu National Provident Fund contributions starting in 2008, which reflected the higher number of men in wage employment. Over 60% of working women surveyed for the TDHS reported that their earnings were less than those of their husband and partner while 24% reported

that their earnings were more than those of husbands or partners. Few women (5%) had the same earnings as their husbands or partners.

### **Women in parliament**

Women in Tuvalu encounter many barriers to equal participation in parliament, with only one woman parliamentarian from 1986 to 1993 and no women parliamentarians from 1993 until 2011. In 2011, Tuvalu witnessed the election of its only female parliamentarian in the last 18 years through a by-election. Tuvalu's lone female parliamentarian was subsequently appointed Minister of Home Affairs, a portfolio she has held since her election victory. Thus, at present (2013) there is one female parliamentarian within the political arena in Tuvalu. While the laws provide equal opportunities for men and women, the Tuvalu CEDAW Report, 2012, highlights the cultural barriers women need to overcome when contesting elections. Such barriers include the traditional and stereotypical perceptions of women's roles as home makers, care givers and nurturers of the family; financial constraints linked to the cost of running a campaign; and the nature of voting, which tends to be linked to relational and family lines rather than based on the merits of candidates. The situation is exacerbated by the absence of political parties, which could be a tool for affirmative action through allocation of safe seats to women.

### **Women in decision-making in government**

There are 41 senior positions within the public service of Tuvalu, which includes permanent secretaries, senior assistant secretaries, assistant secretaries and directors, and men dominate the senior positions within the government. From 2009 to the present, women have occupied 22% of senior positions. Two permanent secretaries, two senior assistant secretaries, three assistant secretaries and three directors have been women.

### **Women in local government**

At the local government level in Tuvalu, decisions are made by the *Falekaupule* (island decision-making entity) with the Government Department of Rural Development and the *Kaupule* (the executive arm of the *Falekaupule*) as primary advisors. Development plans for each island community are prepared and implemented by the *Kaupule* upon final approval by the *Falekaupule*. Depending on the setting and regulations of each *Falekaupule*, women are generally not allowed to be present during decision-making meetings. The understanding has been that women are being represented by their household head, which is usually a man. The absence of women's voices at the local government level has resulted in i) a lack of understanding and interest about issues of women's development in island communities and ii) women themselves being unaware of what development issues are being decided on at the local level. A woman *matai* (chief) may participate in the decision-making process but is not eligible to cast a vote. Although the *Falekaupule Act 1997* paves the way for the inclusion of women in the traditional decision-making process, with women slowly taking advantage of the opportunity, it does not replace the existing traditional structures for decision-making in each island, which still exclude women. The government has drafted laws to amend the *Falekaupule Act* to allow women to debate and finalise annual budgets for the *Falekaupule*. Annex 2 provides further information on women in local government.

## Women's health

The Government of Tuvalu provides free medical treatment to everyone in Tuvalu, including in the outer islands. Pregnant women from outer islands are referred to the capital if there are complications with the health of the mother or foetus, while it is compulsory for women preparing for their first delivery to be on Funafuti a month before the due date. Serious cases are admitted to the main hospital on Funafuti and the government has a policy regarding sending patients for treatment overseas where there is a need for further treatment outside Funafuti.

According to the Tuvalu MDG Progressive Report 2010/2011, Tuvalu is in alignment with the MDG target relating to HIV/AIDS. Of the 11 confirmed cases of HIV, 8 are men, while the remaining cases are a mother and her child, and a student who contracted HIV while studying overseas. Tuvalu has also recorded an increase in gonorrhoea, with a prevalence rate of 3.8% in 2010 compared to 0.9% in 2006. There was also an increase in syphilis from a rate of 1.7% in 2006 to 3.7% in 2010. Chlamydia rates have remained consistently around 17%.

Tuvalu MDG Progressive Report 2010/2011 lists outer island access to preventive services to address HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) as a challenge. There are plans to expand education programmes to the outer islands and to include specific new protocols for people in the outer islands.

TDHS 2007 results revealed that women are more susceptible to STI infection. For example, 48.9% of young men between the ages of 15 and 24 reported using condoms during sexual intercourse while none of the young women surveyed reported using condoms. The results also indicate that youth in the outer islands are more vulnerable to STIs due to the lack of access to condoms there. In 2013 a draft HIV Policy Bill addressing all issues associated with HIV/AIDS went through nationwide consultation. The bill seeks to reduce vulnerability and establish norms and standards on HIV/AIDS issues.

Women in Tuvalu are exposed to awareness programmes in the area of sexual and reproductive health and family planning programmes through the work conducted by the Tuvalu Family Health Association (TUFHA) and the Ministry of Health that address issues of teenage pregnancy, unsafe abortions and others. Abortion is still an offence in the penal code and is a sensitive issue in Tuvalu. TUFHA also notes that the issue of teenage pregnancy relates in part to the issue of teenage marriage and reports that teenagers as young as 13 years old may be married. The stocktake interviews emphasised high levels of discrimination and stigma against girls who become pregnant out of wedlock, and the fact that there are no support services available in country for pregnant teens. Consequently it seems that pregnant girls have only two options: either seek an unsafe and illegal abortion or marry. The education department is keen to explore how the issue of teen pregnancy can be addressed and to ensure that girls who become pregnant before finishing school have the opportunity to complete their education. According to the TDHS, an estimated 8% of women aged 15–19 had begun childbearing at the time of the survey.

Awareness programmes include information on STIs, condom distribution, counselling, etc. However, there is still some resistance to the distribution of information, education and counselling materials on STIs as well as making condoms available at certain places. The Department of Health has also conducted various awareness programmes for youths, to deal with the issue of teenage pregnancies.

## Education

Although overall gender parity has improved at all levels of education in Tuvalu, gender disparity still exists by field of study. That is, men are still dominant in the fields of engineering, construction and information technology. However there are signs of change, with average data from a number of new pre-service scholarships between 2003–2005 and 2007–2009 indicating that female to male ratios for business and finance, law, management and administration have all improved. For the same period, women are still dominating in the field of health (in particular nursing) and education service.

The TDHS indicates that urban (Funafuti) women are more educated than rural (outer island) women. About 18.4% of Funafuti women in the 15–49 age group have completed the four years of secondary school compared with only 8.7% of women from the outer islands.

## 4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This section describes the history and current organisation of the national government department responsible for the promotion of gender equality, as well as any other major government and non-government machinery that is or can be used to promote equality and mainstreaming.

### a. National women's machinery

#### 1. Structure

In 1999, the Government of Tuvalu established its commitment to gender equality through the formation of the Department of Women's Affairs within the Ministry of Health, Women and Community Affairs. A Director was subsequently appointed accountable to the Permanent Secretary for a range of gender and development responsibilities, including formulating and implementing policy and managing the department. Three other staff assisted the Director: a Project Officer, an Information and Research Development Officer and a clerk. At the time of its establishment, government funds were solicited for salaries and benefits, stationery and travel, and donor funds were solicited to support activities such as workshops, training for women, support for income-generating projects, women businesses and training attachments. However, in the fourth quarter of 2013, after the stocktake process, the Government of Tuvalu changed the name of Department of Women's Affairs to the Gender Affairs Department (GAD). Staffing within the new department has remained the same.

#### National Women's Policy and DWA Corporate Plan 1999

The first National Women's Policy (NWP) was developed through a consultation process and was approved in mid-1999. It set out a vision for Tuvalu's women and the mission for the Department of Women's Affairs (DWA). The policy focused on **building institutional capacity** throughout government for a more gender sensitive mode of development at the level of the national government. It highlighted eight critical areas of concern for the medium term:

- economic empowerment of women;
- women's health;
- education and training;
- women's participation in decision-making;
- women's role in the environment;
- traditions and culture;
- women and the media; and
- protection afforded by the law to women (women and the law).

A corporate plan was subsequently developed to translate the broad intentions of the policy into specific activities. The 1999–2002 Corporate Plan recommended a new structure with a small number of new positions. It recommended the creation of the positions of Research Officer, Administrative Officer, and Community Worker for the department. The Government of Tuvalu also ratified CEDAW in 1999, declaring its intention to comply with the requirements of CEDAW.

### **Revised National Women's Policy, 2005 and the Tuvalu National Gender Policy, 2014**

The mission of the Department of Women's Affairs is 'to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment at all levels of society in Tuvalu by providing advice on government policy and best practice in all sectors.'

The revision of the first NWP took place in 2005 and was informed by a national women's forum that was held in 2004 and the government's National Strategic Framework, the Te Kakeega II 2005–2015, which included as one of its key policy objectives, 'To promote gender equity and to expand the role of women in development' and identified the following key issues for women:

- burden of traditional chores;
- lack of proper marketplaces to sell products including handicrafts;
- need to improve representation of women in community decision-making; and
- need to revise laws governing the distribution of lands and unfair custodial rights.

The government also identified the need to:

- integrate the role of women and the issue of gender and development in implementing Te Kakeega II (TK II) strategies; and
- provide women with small business and entrepreneurial training and access to appropriate credit facilities.

Other documents that were taken into account in the review of the policy included the draft MDG Report for Tuvalu, the Social Data report, 2005 and the Social Policy. Information was extracted from reports of various government departments responsible for international conventions and commitments like BPA, CEDAW, MDGs and the Revised Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality. By the time the review took place, DWA was positioned under the Ministry of Home Affairs and Rural Development, alongside several other divisions including; the Community Affairs and the Rural and Urban Development, Culture, Waste Management, Immigration and Passport, Police, Prison and Fire Services, Security and Defence, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) including the Tuvalu National Council of Women. The numerous consultation and discussions, agreed that the revised NWP would prioritise the following areas of concern:

1. Institutional strengthening and capacity building
2. Women and health and HIV/AIDS
3. Education and training of women
4. Women and economic empowerment
5. Women and natural resources
6. Women in decision-making
7. Women and the law
8. Women and culture
9. Women and the media, communication and ICT (information and communication technology)

The revised policy aimed to provide the direction for progress and development to improve the status of women in Tuvalu over a period of 10 years.

Recognising the benefits of the National Women's Policy and taking note of the continued gender inequalities in some areas of society, the policy was reviewed through wide national consultations and a new Tuvalu National Gender Policy developed in 2013. The Policy which was endorsed in the first quarter of 2014 focusses on four key policy measures: Institutional strengthening and capacity building, Women's economic empowerment, Women in decision-making and Ending violence against women. The Policy outlines the specific areas that the Government will focus on within the next five years and provides the basis for multi-sectoral engagement and partnerships towards the overarching goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

### **Institutional mechanisms**

The government reactivated the National Coordinating Committee on Women (NCC) in 2005, with the committee chaired by the Secretary for Home Affairs and Rural Development and members drawn from other government departments, NGOs and civil society. NCC provided the monitoring mechanism to ensure the implementation of the revised NWP.

### **Secretariat**

The NCC Secretariat was made up of the Director for Women, the Director for Economic Planning and Budget, the Coordinator of the National Council of Women and a Crown Counsel from the Attorney General's office. The Secretariat was set up to assist NCC in mainstreaming women's and gender issues, capacity building, institutional strengthening, institutional memory and knowledge-based networking. The Secretariat provided advice to NCC and followed up and monitored issues emanating from the committee.

### **Department of Women's Affairs Corporate Plan 2007–2009**

The revised NWP provided the mandate to develop a corporate plan for DWA to enable the department and its stakeholders to achieve agreed upon objectives effectively and to assess performance over three years. The plan also articulated strategies to realise those objectives with a focus on the following key result areas:

- Provide high-quality policy advice
- Gender mainstreaming
- Empowerment of women
- Effective and professional organisation
- Meeting international and regional commitments on women and gender

The plan envisaged that DWA would focus on policy issues and lead the implementation of Tuvalu's commitments to international and regional conventions and instruments related to women and gender. It proposed restructuring the department to ensure that functional responsibilities are compatible with the changing needs and focus and that DWA would focus on policy analysis and monitoring, sex-disaggregated data collation and updates, gender training, research and communications.

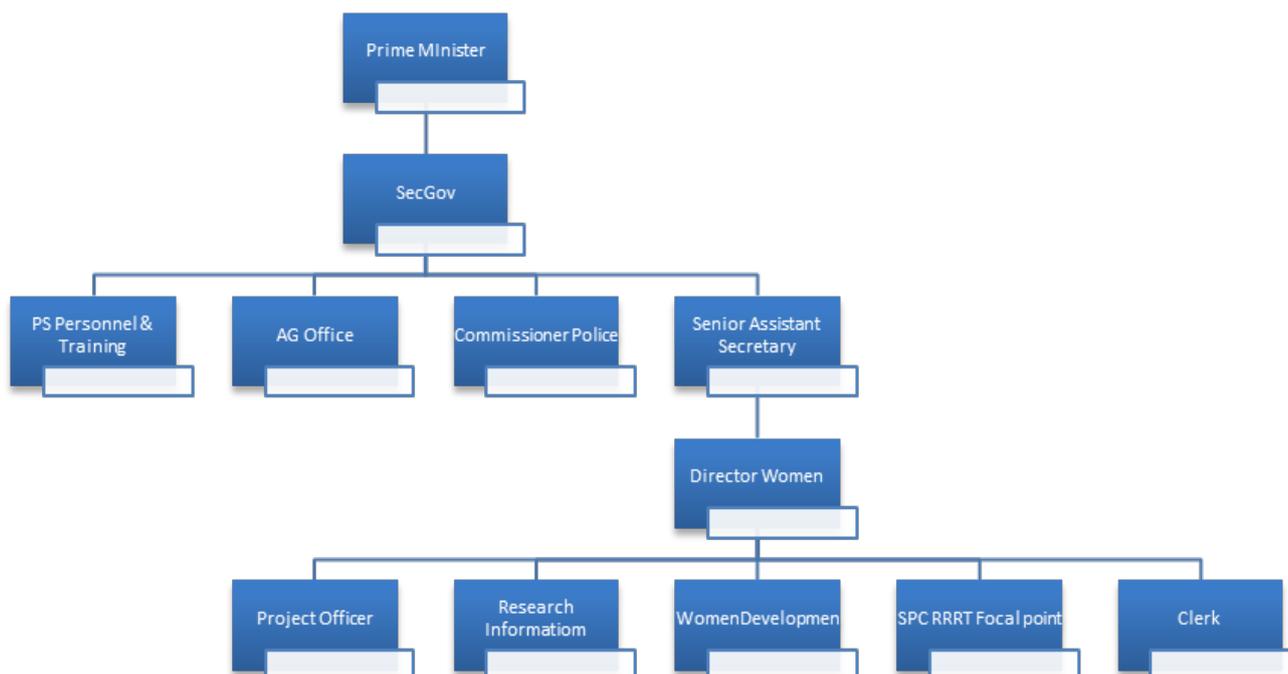
The proposed structural plan included changing the position of Project Monitoring Officer to Policy and Gender Analyst, creating a Statistician position to be responsible for statistics and a database and to be the focal point for the Statistics Office, and maintaining the positions of Research and Information Officer, Women's Development Officer and a clerical officer.

### **Current status of NWM (2013)**

DWA currently sits under the portfolio of the Office of the Prime Minister, reflecting the government's greater recognition of the importance of addressing issues affecting women in Tuvalu (Figure 2). The department features predominantly in the mid-term review of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development Plan 2005–2015 dialogues in 2011, which contributed to the move to the Office of the Prime Minister. The mid-term review of TK II identified the need to focus on the following three main areas under the strategic area of 'promoting gender equity and expanding the role of women in development':

- Gender mainstreaming into all sectors of TK II
- The review of land laws to allow women to have custodial right to land
- Increased participation of women in business

A corporate plan provides the development focus and priorities of DWA until 2015. It articulates the aspirations, needs and concerns of women from every section and in every walk of life in society with a view towards improving their lives and their families. The plan is mindful of the multiple constraints in the implementation stage and therefore relies heavily on partnership with members of NCC for continuous collaborative efforts.



**Figure 2. Structure of Tuvalu's NWM**

Prior to moving under the Office of the Prime Minister, DWA was positioned under the Ministry of Home Affairs alongside the Department of Home Affairs and Rural Development. Through this arrangement, DWA worked closely with the women's groups in the outer islands and had a strong focus on women's development projects, such as home gardens and handicrafts. The move to its current location has positioned DWA to focus attention on mainstreaming gender considerations across all of government. While attention will still be given to women's development projects, a stronger focus will be given to addressing strategic interventions at a macro level in support of equal choices and opportunities. This is expected to result in a more enabling environment that considers the differing impacts of policies and development projects on women and men and ensures women's equal participation at all levels of the nation's development. The development of DWA has been supported in large part by the 2004–2006 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Gender Support Facility, which provided AUD 200,000 to facilitate training, advocacy and activities at the community level.

### **Tuvalu National Council of Women**

The Tuvalu National Council of Women (TNCW) is an NGO. It was set up in the late 1970s to direct and manage women's affairs and women's issues. The council consists of 16 women, with each island community represented by two women. The council is the formal link between government and civil society organisations working to promote gender equality. It has a constitution and is registered as a charity under Tuvalu law. The TNCW secretariat consists of the Coordinator and two staff members. TNCW has implemented a number of successful projects over the years. These include the Women's Handicraft Centre (a nationwide handicraft marketing system), numerous small income-generation projects supporting individual and community

enterprises and training of women in a wide range of activities (family planning, home-making and business). NCW has also conducted a legal literacy project with the assistance of the SPC Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT).

Over the past four years, the Government of Tuvalu, through DWA, has sustained its annual grant to the National Council of Women, though the grant dropped from AUD 10,000 to AUD 5000 in 2011 and 2012. This reduction in support was experienced by all NGOs receiving government grants and has been attributed to the impact of the global financial crisis. DWA continues to work with the National Council of Women to reinforce its links with other ministries and departments in an effort to strengthen the empowerment of women throughout government in order for government to become fully gender responsive. Given its strong links with the outer islands, NCW is considered an important partner for government ministries when conducting consultations with people in the outer islands.

### **Other mechanisms to promote gender equality**

Other NGOs are also instrumental in driving the work on gender equality and women's empowerment in Tuvalu. The Tuvalu National Council of NGOs (TANGO) is an umbrella organisation that covers the full range of development issues with membership including a number of women's organisations. TANGO's policies are gender responsive and the organisation is committed to ensuring that projects pay specific attention to different impacts on women and men, involve women in the consultation process and give specific attention to the collection of sex-disaggregated data. This is mainly done through the mentoring of project officers by the Director, who is a strong advocate of gender equality in Tuvalu. In the area of women in business, the stocktake identified the key leading role played by successful women entrepreneurs who were viewed as role models and were leading the way in establishing a recognised space for women who wanted to enter into business in Tuvalu.

## **2. Assessment**

Since the establishment of DWA in 1999, some progress has been made in the work of the national women's machinery, while setbacks have also been experienced.

### **Progress**

- Establishment of a separate department that is now strategically positioned under the Office of the Prime Minister.
- Establishment of a National Coordinating Committee made up of high-level sector representatives to monitor progress regarding commitments to gender equality.
- Development of National Women's Policy and subsequent corporate plans.
- Reflection of commitments to gender equality in TK II – the government's overarching strategic development plan.

## **Setbacks**

- DWA still has the same five positions that were created when it was established in 1999. No major changes have been made despite recommendations to do so in subsequent corporate plans and reviews.
- Lack of resources means the implementation of commitments in the corporate plan and NWP have been slow. Since the department was established, the government has only been able to cover the cost of salaries and stationery, with project funds to be raised by the department.
- At the time of the stocktake, there were no donor-funded projects managed by the department.
- Plans and policies exist only in writing, with a disconnect between the day-to-day work of NWM and what is planned on paper.
- Good practices put in place by the department have not been sustained (e.g. DWA had a quarterly newsletter covering the work of the department but this lapsed following a change in staff).
- Resources that used to be available to the department are no longer available. DWA previously had its own vehicle, whereas it now shares a single ministry vehicle with other departments.
- No specific mechanisms are in place to advance and monitor gender mainstreaming in government. In 1999 the National Women's Policy prioritised building institutional capacity across government, but this has not been sustained.
- There has been a reduction in government support to TNCW. This has dropped from AUD 10,000 in 2009 and 2010 to AUD 5000 in 2011. This cut has been attributed to the impact of the global financial crisis and has impacted all government grants to NGOs.

The stocktake identified relatively good awareness of the concepts of gender, gender equality and gender mainstreaming across Government but underdeveloped gender mainstreaming in practice.

### **3. Analysis of supports and constraints for gender mainstreaming supported by NWM**

#### **Strategic factors supporting gender mainstreaming**

There are a number of strategic factors in place that support gender mainstreaming in the government of Tuvalu. These include the following.

- DWA is strategically positioned under the Office of the Prime Minister to facilitate gender mainstreaming across all of government.
- Government's overall commitments to gender equality are clearly outlined in the Strategic Development Plan (TK II).
- The Director of Women has strong technical qualifications in gender.
- DWA has a good working relationship with partners and stakeholders and has been able to demonstrate creativity in using these partnerships to contribute to raising awareness on

gender equality. As an example, the first mock parliament session for women was held in June 2013, supported by funds from TANGO and the Ministry of Health.

- DWA is also working with the Ministry of Health to conduct gender awareness sessions linked to health issues and the delivery of health services.
- A current initiative is working to integrate gender issues into the school curriculum.

## **Obstacles to gender mainstreaming**

While progress is being made and supports for gender mainstreaming exist, there are also some specific constraints that need to be removed to ensure an effective and enabling environment for integrating men's and women's needs equally into the development process. These include the following.

- The work of the department is seriously impacted by the lack of resources and the lack of technical capacity. While the Director has demonstrated capacity to lead and to identify strategic opportunities for collaboration and partnership to advance the gender agenda, there is limited capacity within the department to do gender analysis, gender responsive planning, advocacy and interventions in other arms of government, gender responsive budgeting, programme and project evaluation and financial management.
- There are significant gaps in monitoring and evaluating the work of DWA since 1999, which are exacerbated by the absence of a system of information management.<sup>3</sup>
- While significant investment in conducting gender awareness and gender training was made after 2003, this has not been sustained after the UNDP Gender Support Facility Funding ended in 2006. The stocktake identified the need to continue to conduct gender awareness and analysis training to strengthen capacity across all line and central ministries.

## **b. Enabling environment**

### **1. Legal and policy framework**

A number of laws still discriminate against women in Tuvalu (e.g., laws relating to inheritance of land, adoption of children, marriage, custody of children, or domestic violence). Through the ratification of international human rights instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) the government is obligated by international law to review all laws that discriminate against women. This includes the demand to change policies and practices that perpetuate discrimination against and marginalise women, so as to bring them into line with international human rights standards. The government has received assistance from development partners such as SPC RRRT for the review of various pieces of legislation but has had to prioritise which legislation will be revised due to limited resources.

---

<sup>3</sup> An example of this was the inability of the DWA staff to locate a copy of the current corporate plan, with the only copy existing on a hard drive that was no longer accessible. It was therefore difficult to ascertain during the stocktake process if such a plan existed or if the department was guided by the 2007–2009 corporate plan. Reference to the corporate plan in this document has been drawn from government's 2012 CEDAW Report.

At the international level, Tuvalu ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 22 September 1995 and the CEDAW on 6 October 1999. The country is not party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) or the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

Tuvalu has been asked by other international bodies, including the Legal Literacy Project (Tuvalu National Council of Women) to consider ratifying ICCPR and ICESCR, and acceding to the other core human rights treaties, as well as putting into effect the necessary domestic legislation. The country signed and ratified the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1994 and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Both treaties provide scope for mainstreaming gender due to their relevance and application across sectors.

There are some inconsistencies between Tuvalu's international obligations under the treaties that it has signed and ratified and the Constitution and current domestic legislation. There needs to be rationalisation of international norms and standards in the context of custom law, as well as wide consultation, to ensure acceptance of specific changes. The Tuvalu High Court has indicated that where there are inconsistencies between the two, the domestic law will apply until Tuvalu's international obligations are reflected in the domestic laws through the appropriate parliamentary process.

Tuvalu has also acceded to regional and international conventions guaranteeing women's rights and human rights. Tuvalu is party to the following agreements:

- Pacific Platform for Action 1993
- Jakarta Declaration for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific 1994
- Beijing Platform for Action 1995
- Ratified CEDAW without any reservation 1999
- Participated in the Beijing +5 processes 2000
- Endorsed the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015 (7th Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting, Nadi, Fiji) 2004
- Endorsed the Revised Pacific Platform of Action after the Third Pacific Women's Ministers Meeting and the 9th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women 2004
- Commitment to Beijing +10 2005
- The Pacific Plan 2005
- The government has also ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and endorsed the MDGs. Tuvalu submitted its report on the implementation of the MDGs to the United Nations General Assembly in 2005, with a subsequent progress report prepared for 2010/2011.

### **Temporary special measures**

The current constitution does not include provisions for affirmative action or temporary special measures to accelerate equality between men and women or equality between any other groups (for example disabled/able bodied people, youth/adults or general population/older persons). A

number of stocktake informants noted that there is confusion about temporary special measures. They are sometimes believed to be a mechanism that discriminates against men.

On 10–12 May 2010, DWA, in partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and UNDP Pacific Centre, conducted a national consultation on ‘Women in Decision-Making’. The consultation was an opportunity for people to learn more about temporary special measures. Most of the discussion focused on the political participation of women. Participants identified a list of actions needed to progress this issue. The list included awareness raising sessions in Funafuti and the outer islands, capacity building initiatives in the area of campaigning, public speaking and leadership, mock parliament sessions, the inclusion of temporary special measures in the induction programme for members of parliament as well as a database of profiles of women decision-makers. The issue of temporary special measures is controversial in Tuvalu and it is clear that more awareness-raising is needed.

An information paper has been prepared on temporary special measures. It states the need for such measures to support balanced decision-making in the interests of both men and women and the need for women’s voices to be heard in parliament. The paper was presented to Cabinet and was fully supported with the understanding that a nationwide consultation on the temporary special measures is needed before it can be tabled before parliament. Currently there are no funds available to facilitate this consultation.

### **Review of the Falekaupule Act 1997**

Cabinet has endorsed the drafting of proposed amendments to the Falekaupule Act to ensure that women and men 18 years and above are eligible to vote in Falekaupule assemblies and in authorising Falekaupule annual budgets. This is an approach to the progressive realisation of women’s participation in decision-making in the traditional meeting place, usually reserved to men only.

### **Family Protection and Domestic Violence Bill**

In 2010 and 2011, the Ministry of Home Affairs, with the assistance of SPC/RRRT, conducted national consultations on the elimination of violence against women. A result of these consultations was a call for the enactment of a dedicated law for the elimination of violence against women. In 2011, a draft domestic violence bill was prepared with the assistance of SPC/RRRT. Cabinet has mandated consultations on the bill be carried out on all the islands of Tuvalu before it is presented to parliament. The outer island consultations were underway in July 2013 at the time of the stocktake mission. It is expected that consultations with all the outer island communities will be completed by the end of 2013. The bill is expected to go before parliament in 2014.

### **The Native Lands Act and the Tuvalu Lands Code**

There has been no legislative review of the Native Lands Act or the Tuvalu Lands Code in relation to CEDAW. DWA, TNCW, and SPC/RRRT have done various consultations on the issue of land rights of men and women, and have found that changing laws regarding the inheritance of lands is

a highly sensitive and polarising issue. There are different perspectives in Tuvalu about whether legislative review of the Native Lands Act should be prioritised as a gender mainstreaming issue.

## **The Marriage Act**

DWA, TNCW and SPC/RRRT have conducted various community programmes through which women have voiced their concern about the discriminatory provisions in the Marriage Act. Because the Marriage Act is part of family law, SPC/RRRT, with assistance from UNDP, Commonwealth Local Government Forum, the New Zealand Aid Programme and Ministry of Home Affairs, conducted consultations on the elimination of violence against women in 2010 and 2011. One of the recommendations from those consultations was to amend the discriminatory provisions in the Marriage Act. Because available resources are limited, it was agreed that Tuvalu would focus first on legislative reform in the area of domestic violence before reviewing other family-related legislation.

## **National Strategic Development Plan 2005–2015: Te Kakeega II**

Women and gender issues are part of Tuvalu's national strategic plan for sustainable development, the Te Kakeega II (TK II). Under TK II, Strategic Area Goal 3 on Social Development states that there is a need 'to promote gender equity and to expand the role of women in development'. Actions that have been undertaken as to promote this goal include the following.

- Women's participation in all facets of developments is considered vital. In partnership with the Department of Business and Trade, several business training workshops for women were conducted in the past several years.
- Since 2008, RRRT (under UNDP and later SPC) have continued to conduct community paralegal training, first with TNCW and later with the Ministry of Home Affairs. The legal literacy programmes cover issues such as CEDAW, gender equality, domestic violence, the Leadership Code, family law, and HIV and the law. Some community paralegals have used the knowledge to help victims of domestic violence and provide first-hand legal advice on matters regarding land and family issues.
- DWA, TNCW, and SPC/RRRT have conducted various community awareness sessions on CEDAW, especially on International Women's Day, and continue to work with key stakeholders on gender awareness. DWA has collaborated with the Department of Health, for instance, on health and reproductive and sexual rights training and family health issues in relation to domestic violence.
- Tuvalu Red Cross Society (TRC) also has a project called 'Community Safety and Resilience Project' focusing outer islands. The project involves international humanitarian law and works in partnership with national stakeholders in promoting the elimination of violence against women. TRC plans to maintain support throughout the campaign on elimination of violence against women. The Ministry of Home Affairs has oversight of all NGOs in Tuvalu, with a number of NGOs receiving regular government grants.

## **Legal complaints mechanism**

The Tuvalu Government provides legal assistance to the people through the Office of the People's Lawyer (Legal Aid). Since 2011, a female lawyer has been posted in that office, which has resulted in an increase in the number of women accessing the services as women have felt more comfortable about asking for assistance. However, there is still a lack of data on the complaints filed by women and the outcome of such complaints.

## **Awareness of legal policy frameworks**

Of the 15 government ministries/departments consulted for the stocktake, all indicated that they were aware of CEDAW and the fact that it is an instrument that can support gender mainstreaming. Almost all of these ministries/departments were involved in the government's 2012 report to the CEDAW Committee. There also is widespread awareness of the government's commitments to gender equality through the Te Kakeega II 2005–2015 and the draft Family Protection and Domestic Violence Bill drafted in 2009.

While some stocktake informants were able to articulate specific measures used by their ministries to promote women's participation and equality, there was little indication that this was done in a planned way or in response to any specific gender-related initiatives. Other ministries were aware of the government's commitments and the legal and policy frameworks but were unable to identify how these commitments were reflected in the work of their respective ministries or departments.

## **2. Technical capacity**

Gender perspectives and women's human rights cannot be properly mainstreamed without a pool of technically qualified experts whose skills and experience line and central ministries can systematically draw upon. While gender awareness and training of trainers has been ongoing since the establishment of DWA in 1999 with regular legal literacy programmes conducted by RRRT, the constant turnover as staff move to overseas posts or regional positions or leave to pursue further studies, means that this capacity is not sustained and most ministries still do not have the necessary technical qualifications or capacity to properly understand gender equality issues and mainstream gender perspectives into their work. There is a major need for ongoing specialised staffing or sustained training for existing staff to increase their technical skills.

Of the 15 ministries/departments consulted, 13 indicated medium to high levels of technical capacity to mainstream gender, with all ministries/departments indicating exposure to gender awareness training conducted by DWA and also involvement in the government's NCC, which was instrumental in compiling the government's 2012 CEDAW report. While government officials from various sectors have been exposed to training and awareness sessions, the training has been in the form of short workshops or sessions within meetings on sector issues. There is a need for more regular substantive training and individual mentoring.

Over the years the legal literacy work conducted by RRRT has led to increased awareness and understanding of the discriminatory aspects of the law. This has contributed to increased advocacy from DWA and other key stakeholders, such as TNCW, for amendments to the legislation.

The Cabinet has tasked the Attorney General's office to lead the process of community consultations on the draft Family Protection and Domestic Violence Bill. This has increased awareness and understanding within the Attorney General's office of the need for legislation on domestic violence. It has also increased understanding of how to approach the discussions of gender power relations at a community level.

The Department of Environment has been exposed to gender awareness and gender analysis through a UNDP-supported project titled 'Increasing Resilience of Coastal Areas and Community Settlements to Climate Change in Tuvalu'. Through the project special attention was given to women's participation at all levels of implementation, recognising the different roles and responsibilities of women and men at the community level and the importance of women's contribution to community development.

However, technical capacity for gender mainstreaming across government is still limited. While there has been some exposure to gender awareness and gender mainstreaming, the need for this to be approached systematically and consistently was evident during the stocktake. In a number of interviews, government officials understood gender mainstreaming as being about equal numbers of male and female staff within the ministry/department. Informants were not able to articulate the different impacts of their programming on women and men and boys and girls. There appeared to be a misconception that as long as women were involved in programme delivery, this was sufficient to address gender considerations. The introduction of systematic, strategic training on gender analysis across all of government would address the different levels of understanding and ensure that the knowledge and understanding is maintained within government.

### **3. Adequacy of financing for gender equality**

The lack of financing for gender equality in Tuvalu has impacted the delivery of the government's commitments to gender equality as articulated in the Te Kakeega II and also in the implementation of DWA's corporate plans. There is no allocation of the national budget for the implementation of the country's human rights commitments. However for each financial year, the government allocates a certain amount of financial assistance (depending on total government revenue) to TNCW, which is identified by government as assisting in the implementation of human rights-related matters, particularly women's rights and gender issues. Since the establishment of DWA in 1999, the government has covered the costs of salaries for the four positions allocated to the department and stationery costs. This has not changed since 1999.

A review of the budget allocations during the last three years reflects some fluctuation in the government's recurring expenditure to DWA, mainly to cover salary costs and a small grant to TNCW (it dropped in 2012 and increased slightly in 2013). As mentioned above, resources to support programming in gender mainstreaming and women's human rights come from external budgetary assistance, which appears to have dropped significantly since 2008.

The government grant to TNCW remained at AUD 10,000 per annum in 2009 and 2010 but dropped to AUD 5000 in 2011.

Over the years DWA has sought financial assistance from overseas donors to assist in the promotion and implementation of human rights commitments, particularly in areas of women's political participation, violence against women, women's economic empowerment and women's

health etc. While the assistance received has contributed to progress made in gender equality and women’s empowerment, DWA is often required to align its priorities to donor priorities in order to access these funds. A number of stocktake informants expressed the view that the lack of funding for gender commitments is linked to a lack of understanding about the connections between gender equality and improved development results.

**Table 2. Government budget allocation to DWA**

Year	Recurrent budget amount	Notes on external budget
2011	AUD 63,440	Annual proposals are made for external budget support. In the past 3 years less than AUD 10,000 has been secured – excluding direct technical assistance.
2012	AUD 59,946	
2013	AUD 72,490	

#### 4. Accountability mechanisms

Accountability mechanisms ensure that action on commitments to gender mainstreaming can be traced and monitored within organisations, and that individuals are held to account for gender equality-related results in their area of work. According to the DWA Corporate Plan 2007–2009, the National Coordinating Committee (NCC) is the principal mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the corporate plan and the government’s commitments in the TK II. The corporate plan reflected an investment plan and budget for the implementation of the following five key result areas:

1. Quality policy advice
2. Gender mainstreaming
3. Empowerment of women
4. Effective and professional organisation
5. Meet regional and international commitments.

DWA is expected to submit quarterly reports to NCC on progress made on key results. Performance indicators include gender responsive budgeting to be in place by 2008, training of civil servants in gender policy analysis, and putting in place a gender equal employment opportunities policy by 2008. While these indicators existed on paper, there were no clear reporting mechanisms evident at the time of the stocktake. There is limited reporting in place except for regular department head meetings that are held every week and chaired by the Assistant Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister. These weekly meetings serve as an opportunity to update the various other heads of departments of the developments in DWA, but there is no formal monitoring or evaluation procedures to report and track progress.

One constraint comes from the fact that NCC, which was a monitoring mechanism for all DWA work, has shifted its focus to CEDAW coordination and was given responsibility for the coordination and development of the Tuvalu Government’s 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> reports to the CEDAW Committee submitted in 2012. In addition, DWA has been moved to sit under the Office of the Prime Minister and has new departmental reporting relationships.

None of the ministries/departments consulted report any responsibility for gender mainstreaming within job descriptions except for the role of the Director for Women. The Ministry of Personnel and Training indicated that at Permanent Secretary level performance monitoring is done by the Secretary to Government but this is not replicated at lower levels – at those levels there is no structure for performance monitoring.

The Planning Department has a research section that conducts research and does cost benefit analysis of certain projects, with the results used as a mechanism to reflect and monitor the impact of assistance to a specific community, but this is not done for all projects and does not consider the different impacts of the interventions on men and women, girls and boys.

Overall, there are limited accountability mechanisms in place to monitor the advancement of gender equality and no performance management systems in relation to gender mainstreaming. DWA also lacks information management systems to keep track of reports, information on past and present projects, and other documentation that could form a basis for monitoring and evaluation. While DWA has discussed a current corporate plan to guide the work of the department, a copy of the document is not available in the department. Terms of reference and job descriptions of staff were also unavailable. This was attributed to the recent changes in personnel; storage of old files with minimal cataloguing, and problems with the previous computer system. DWA's computers have been replaced but it seems that electronic files were not saved or transferred to the new system.

## **5. Perceived political will**

Fourteen out of the fifteen government ministries/departments consulted indicated that there was medium to high political will within government to advance gender mainstreaming. Only one ministry said that political will for gender mainstreaming was low. At least seven of the ministries/departments were able to articulate the way that political commitment was evident within their departments, including the following examples.

- For the Attorney General's office, this commitment was evident in the commitments to the draft Family Protection and Domestic Violence Bill, 2012 and also to the review of the Falekaupule Act and other legislation that is discriminatory against women.
- Respondents from the Ministry of Health indicated that the political will is evident in the holistic approach the ministry took towards implementing its programmes and activities, always ensuring that the community is well represented, and also from the fact that a number of health interventions specifically target women's health. The ministry was trying to advocate for greater involvement by men given the current emphasis on women-specific health issues and the fact that men have lower levels of seeking health care and thus delay getting medical attention until problems become exacerbated.
- The Department of Environment identified the commitment to look for gender balance when coordinating workshops and awareness sessions and to document the perspectives of women in their projects as illustrating the political will to carry out gender mainstreaming. They also identified the commitment to undertake separate consultations with women's groups and men's groups in the outer islands to encourage women to speak in restrictive cultural settings as a reflection of this will.

- The Ministry for Home Affairs, with responsibility for looking after the Department of Rural Development, highlighted the ongoing work to include women in decision-making as reflective of high political will. While the women in the outer islands had limited involvement in decision-making due to cultural traditions, the department was trying to address areas where there is discrimination and include women in decision-making. Evidence of this was the review of the Falekaupule Act to ensure women's participation in decision-making on the budget or expenditure of the Falekaupule (local government authority).
- The Department of Agriculture identified the ongoing collaborative efforts with DWA as a reflection of the high level of political commitment towards gender equality. The department has been instrumental in providing assistance with mangrove and home garden programmes. The department has also shown a commitment to achieve gender balance in staffing, and has nearly equal numbers of men and women. Specific effort has also gone into making sure that female staff members are given opportunities for professional development in agricultural issues.
- The Ministry of Education reflected on the fact that there is no gender discrimination in the Education Act or curriculum, with boys and girls having equal opportunity to attend all levels of school. Respondents also pointed out that the education sector provides employment to many women, with a very high percentage of female teachers and senior officials.
- The Tuvalu Media Department highlighted the air time given to discussions on women's issues as reflecting a high level of commitment. Respondents also noted that their participation on the CEDAW Committee is a reflection of commitment to gender equality.

## **6. Organisational culture**

Organisational culture refers to the extent to which the attitudes of staff and institutional systems and structures support or marginalise gender equality as an issue across sectors. A supportive organisational culture encourages consideration of gender as a development issue during policy dialogues, establishes good lines of communication with the national women's machinery, promotes collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data, has organisational systems in place to guide and inform staff on integrating gender within their technical area, strives for gender balance at all levels of the organisation's staffing, and has gender-sensitive human resource management policies in place.

Respondents from 13 of the ministries/departments consulted believe that the amount of attention paid to gender equality and gender mainstreaming as a development issue within their various sectors is either medium or high. This was attributed to involvement with NCC and ongoing discussions with DWA, collaborative efforts on International Women's Day, joint visits to the outer islands for consultations and attendance at training sessions conducted by DWA. While the perceptions of a supportive organisational culture are generally high, there appears to be a lack of evidence to support these perceptions. None of the ministries/departments were able to identify organisational systems that guide and inform staff on how to integrate gender as a consideration in their work or how to include gender as a development issue in policy dialogues. Very few ministries/departments spoke of the presence of gender sensitive human resource management policies.

While there has been ongoing work on gender mainstreaming in Tuvalu since 1999, institutionalisation of commitments across government is not evident. Most departments still felt that DWA was the agency solely responsible for mainstreaming commitments to gender equality. This is despite the fact that gender equality is a cross-cutting commitment in the government's overall National Strategic Development Plan.

At least six of the ministries/departments consulted confirmed that gender inequality had been raised as a development issue in discussions with development partners and donors. NCC, which reflected representation from 14 government departments, served as the cross-sectoral mechanism for monitoring government's broad commitments to gender equality, but this was not monitored or captured systematically by its secretariat (DWA). It is evident that various sectoral discussions on gender inequality are taking place, within the Police Department, the Statistics Office, the Government Business Centre, the Department of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education, but the institutional systems and structures to support these discussions and monitor outcomes is lacking.

## **7. Analysis of the supports and constraints for gender mainstreaming across all of government**

Gender mainstreaming in Tuvalu is both supported and constrained by the small size of the country and the size of the government machinery. The smallness and close proximity in which the whole of government operates (key ministries within the one building) provides a significant advantage when trying to ensure maximum participation and engagement in awareness raising efforts or in meetings to discuss the cross-sectoral aspects of gender equality. The progress of work had been hindered somewhat in past years due to differences in the agendas of the government and some NGOs, but there is now a strong focus on progressing the work on gender equality. Recently, government and NGOs collaborated to successfully organise a preliminary mock parliament session for women leaders from Funafuti in June 2013 discussing the issue of HIV/AIDS. A follow-up session was scheduled for 9–11 October 2013, and additional sessions were planned in 2014 with the inclusion of youth representatives.

Traditional Tuvaluan customs and unequal gender roles constrain progress in gender mainstreaming.<sup>4</sup> While discriminatory practices are less visible in Funafuti, they still exist on the outer islands despite some legal reforms. The tension between discriminatory customs and national commitments to equality indicate a need for consistent awareness raising across government on gender equality and women's empowerment. The NGO community described government commitment to gender equality as weak – noting that while there is some support there are still major barriers to women's equal participation in decision-making and the formal economy. NGOs noted that many women are intimidated by government processes and that this inhibits them from running for office, sitting on corporate boards or engaging in business. The NGOs noted that more effort is needed to empower women and build their confidence through gender awareness initiatives and overall gender mainstreaming across government and civil society. Generational change in gender roles is becoming more evident but there are still key barriers related to intimate partner violence, the customs of land inheritance, and women's right to participate in clan decision-making.

---

<sup>4</sup> In traditional Tuvaluan society women have lower levels of access to and control of political, economic and social resources.

A key supportive factor for gender mainstreaming is the openness to gender mainstreaming exhibited by the different sectors of government during the stocktake. There appears to be widespread awareness of the work that has been done by DWA since 1999 and recognition within different levels of government that gender equality and women's empowerment are linked to good development results. However, this is not being reflected in the government's work. There is very limited gender analysis, gathering of sex-disaggregated data, or consideration of gender issues in policy discussions. Many departments still depend on DWA to take the lead role in integrating gender into sectoral work. This is not feasible as DWA is also limited in its own technical capacity and is not able to provide the level of analysis that is needed.

The stocktake did identify positive developments taking place within different sectors that can be replicated and used to support gender mainstreaming. Following are two examples of creative approaches taken by two government departments.

#### **Department of Culture on women's participation in local government**

To address low levels of women's involvement in local government decision-making processes in the outer islands of Tuvalu, the Department of Culture uses a gender awareness raising technique to clarify the history of Tuvaluan customs and illustrate why changes are needed in gender roles and responsibilities. Using a story telling format, department staff refer to earlier periods of Tuvalu history when the local government or Falekaupule had to make decisions about the security of the islands and the people and how they could be protected from invaders. These were considered issues of war and the responsibility of men and the male leaders of the islands – who saw their role as protecting the women and children. The Department of Culture explains that in more modern times and with the changes in the types of concerns experienced by those living in the outer islands, the Falekaupule now makes decisions that need the input of both men and women as each group has distinct skills, different needs and different knowledge. Consequently, both men and women have significant contributions to make to the development of the island.

#### **Government Business Centre on women in business**

Discussions with the Government Business Centre highlighted the growth in the numbers of women entrepreneurs seeking support from the centre in developing business plans and dealing with the challenges of setting up businesses. While the centre did not target assistance specifically towards women, they receive a lot of requests from women and have been able to conduct specific training for DWA. The centre maintains a record of those they provide assistance to but this information is not disaggregated by sex. Women tend to be more involved in handicrafts, retailing and food businesses, but they are also diversifying to money lending businesses, hiring of bicycles and other small businesses. If the centre begins to track the types of businesses women are involved in and monitor their progress and success, they could compile lessons learned, helping women's economic empowerment.

## **5. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON STRATEGIC APPROACHES FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING**

### **a. Building on existing government mechanisms**

#### **Key findings**

There are many factors supportive of a better systematization of gender mainstreaming across the government of Tuvalu given the current commitments in the National Strategic Development Plan, the TK II; the established National Coordinating Committee on Women/National CEDAW Committee, which has the potential to serve as a monitoring mechanism; and the strategic position of DWA under the Office of the Prime Minister. 14 years of ongoing awareness raising effort on gender issues to build on and the support of various government sectors. However, the stocktake assessment has identified limited capacity within DWA to conduct training or provide technical support for gender analysis, gender-responsive planning, advocacy, gender-responsive budgeting and programme and project evaluation. To effectively mainstream gender, this capacity needs to be strengthened significantly. DWA currently has one suitably qualified person, which is not adequate given the mobility of public service staff to undertake in-service training, provide management direction within the department and across the government and represent Tuvalu on regional and international platforms.

#### **Recommendations**

- Undertake internal institutional strengthening within DWA to capitalise on existing government mechanisms and:
  - a. Provide cross-sectoral gender analysis support; and
  - b. Successfully monitor the commitments to gender mainstreaming within the different sectors.
- Improve technical capacity within DWA through additional technical support or staff training in priority areas of planning, business development, agriculture, education, statistics, and legislative compliance.

## **b. Capacity development for human rights-based approach as basis for gender mainstreaming**

### **Key findings**

The human rights-based approach to programming has been introduced in Tuvalu through the ongoing work of SPC/RRRT. Since 2008, RRRT has continued to conduct Community Paralegal Training sessions, first with TNCW and later with the Ministry of Home Affairs. These legal literacy programmes cover CEDAW, gender equality, domestic violence, leadership, family law, and HIV and the law. Community paralegals have used the knowledge to help victims of domestic violence, provide first-hand legal advice on matters regarding land and family issues, and direct people to relevant authorities. RRRT, in collaboration with TNCW, also conducted CEDAW training for law enforcement officers in 2007. The work done in country by RRRT provides a sound basis on which to base discussions on gender and development. Using a human rights framework supports recognition of the role of government as a primary duty bearer to fulfil the rights of citizens of Tuvalu. It can also highlight the alignment of human rights principles with key faith-based principles of love and respect and rationalise work on gender equality in a community and family context.

### **Recommendations**

- Identify individuals who have received community paralegal training and involve them as key advocates for the work on gender equality at the community level.
- Align the work of RRRT focal points in Tuvalu with initiatives being led by DWA and use the gender equality and human rights discussions to reinforce gender mainstreaming initiatives.
- Provide human rights-based gender analysis training to DWA staff and support them to use a gender mainstreaming approach as an entry point to address human rights issues related to discrimination against women.
- As appropriate, work with faith-based NGOs to promote human rights and gender equality in the context of family and spiritual values.

## **c. Engaging men and boys to support gender equality**

### **Key findings**

In the last 14 years, DWA has trained men as gender trainers in an effort to mainstream gender within different sectors, create a group of male leaders (including from faith-based organisations) as advocates for gender equality and encourage broader ownership of the issue. At the time of the stocktake, only one male gender trainer remained in country, with officers posted abroad on diplomatic postings and others migrating, pursuing training and education opportunities elsewhere. The strategy of engaging men and boys is noted as a strategic move by DWA and one that needs to be supported and encouraged. As part of the gender stocktake initiative, a male officer from the Budget and Planning Division was sent to Fiji to attend training on the gender stocktake, and he proved instrumental in assisting the stocktake team during the in-country mission. While some

elements of society and government are still resistant to change, the engagement of male champions who understand the issues of gender equality/inequality, and who are also able to make the links to the development of Tuvalu, is key to supporting gender mainstreaming. DWA noted that while some of the men in strategic positions of leadership did not fully understand the concepts, they were still supportive and that they could be encouraged and supported as male champions.

### **Recommendation**

- Compile a list of strategic male champions and involve them in DWA's work to develop and provide training on gender mainstreaming across sectors.

## **d. Gender statistics to support knowledge development on gender issues**

### **Key findings**

Data are critical to the identification and analysis of gender inequalities. Increased capacity is needed to collect and analyse data and build evidence about priority gender issues. Building baseline data and improving analysis of administrative, survey and census data will support gender responsive monitoring of national development progress across key sectors. Currently, there is heavy dependence on population censuses, household income and expenditure surveys, and demographic and health surveys, which are undertaken every five or ten years. There is also a need to strengthen and harmonise national and outer islands statistical information systems and databases, including development information, focusing on sex-disaggregated data. The Statistics Office in Tuvalu has been involved in SPC's gender statistics initiative and had developed a database using the framework of gender indicators developed by SPC.

The feedback from the Statistics Office highlighted challenges in obtaining relevant sex-disaggregated data from the various government departments. More work is needed to build relationships between DWA, the Statistics Office and the relevant ministries. There needs to be a common understanding of what types of data are needed and how sex-disaggregated data can be systematically collected without over-burdening staff in other departments. An indication of initial collaboration is the fact that the Statistics Office invited the DWA to write the chapter on gender for the current census report (2010) that is being compiled by the department, although time, capacity and workload constraints prevented this from being done without external support.

### **Recommendations**

- Build on SPC's ongoing gender statistics initiative and continue to develop capacity for gender analysis of data in both the Statistics Office and DWA. Potential products could include a minimum set of key gender indicators that could form the basis of user-friendly 'situation of women and men/ and gender equality' statistical reports and improved policy analysis reports.

- Improve capacity of the DWA Project Monitoring Officer to support work on gender statistics analysis.
- Support DWA to develop an efficient information management system to manage the wealth of information on gender from across government.

## **e. Strengthen the advocacy role of women’s NGOs**

### **Key findings**

TNCW is recognised by the government as the umbrella body that represents the voices of women in the outer islands of Tuvalu. It is seen as instrumental when conducting consultations in the outer islands and when seeking the opinions and the support of women. TNCW has been an instrumental partner for work conducted by RRRT, supporting the training of community paralegals and advocating for the integration of gender mainstreaming across government. TNCW is also strategically positioned to support women’s economic empowerment opportunities – particularly for women in the outer islands – and women’s political participation both at local government level and national level. Other key organisations like TANGO are instrumental in holding government accountable regarding its commitments to gender equality and are in a position to drive this demand from a project level. There is a strong need for a more strategic comprehensive approach to the work on women’s economic empowerment or women’s livelihoods.

### **Recommendations**

- Facilitate TNCW collaboration with DWA to identify location of existing community paralegals and encourage their involvement in advocacy for and support of gender mainstreaming.
- Develop a pool of male and female trainers capable of training government and NGO staff on gender and human rights analysis, gender mainstreaming and advocacy.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The stocktake was undertaken to initiate a discussion for adopting strategic measures to effectively and strategically advance gender equality in Tuvalu. The Government of Tuvalu recognises that gender mainstreaming is an approach that needs to be adopted by all government institutions in order to achieve gender equality, improve government’s service delivery and governance mechanisms.

Whilst there is perceived medium to high level political will with supportive approaches to gender mainstreaming in Government, there is recognition that the organisational culture must be strengthened. Similarly, accountability measures need to be explored and adopted to ensure sustainability of gender mainstreaming and that commitment and words are turned into actions and concrete results for women and men in Tuvalu.

There is no doubt that the stocktake exercise has made an impact by assessing the degree to which an enabling environment exists within the Government of Tuvalu to support gender mainstreaming. This is only the first step. With the adoption of the national gender policy and with the support of regional organisations and development partners, the government of Tuvalu has embarked on a journey to advance gender equality in all spheres of national development.

## **Annex 1: Ministries/departments and organisations consulted**

- Department of Lands
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Office of the Prime Minister – Secretary to Government
- Department of Planning and Budget
- Ministry of Finance
- Department of Environment
- Ministry of Education
- Department of Agriculture
- Ministry of Health
- Attorney General’s Office
- Department of Fisheries
- Department of Personnel and Training
- Statistics Department
- Development Bank of Tuvalu
- Tuvalu Media Corporation
- Tuvalu Association of Non Governmental Organisations
- Tuvalu National Council of Women
- Government Business Centre
- Department of Community Affairs

## Annex 2: An overview of women in local government in Tuvalu<sup>5</sup>

Each of the eight islands of Tuvalu is governed by an Assembly of Elders and a Falekaupule Assembly set up in accordance with the traditional local customs and norms, the *Tuu mo Aganuu* of each island. Each island has its own Falekaupule (Traditional Meeting House – island decision-making entity), which is governed by the Falekaupule Act. In the area of authority of each Falekaupule, there is a local government council or Kaupule. The Kaupule performs all the executive functions of the Falekaupule. The role of the Falekaupule, through the Kaupule, is to 'maintain order and good governance and promote development within its own area of authority'. In collaboration with the Department of Rural Development, the Falekaupule, through the Kaupule, prepares and implements development plans in conjunction with the community and other relevant parties, coordinating and monitoring development projects, mobilising the people for development efforts, and ensuring the proper management and use of the natural resources in the Falekaupule area.

Given the patriarchal nature of Tuvalu's society, the status of women in Tuvalu has long been determined by their roles as wives and mothers. Their standing in society depends very much on their behaviour and how they obey and respect the norms of Tuvalu society. The social norms dictate that men are the heads of the household and as such they make decisions for the family. The place of the woman is the home and she is expected to know everything to do with the home environment when she is a grown woman, including the responsibility of bringing up children.

Women have never been present when men are assembled in their meetings or in the Falekaupule. Women have their own meeting houses or their own meetings, and this is known to be mainly to enable the men to deliberate on issues that concern the welfare of everyone in the community. In practice, the role of women is to implement the decisions made by men and hence they cannot hold titles or head their families or participate in the decision-making of the Falekaupule. According to traditional leaders, the exclusion of women from the Falekaupule was not to discriminate against them because they are women or because it was thought that they did not have the faculty to reason like men, but to protect and spare them from any violence, whether verbal or physical, that might arise in the Falekaupule's deliberations.

The absence of women's voices in the Falekaupule meetings has resulted in a lack of understanding by women of very important issues such as the Falekaupule Trust Fund and how the fund provides for women's development in each island community. Even if they know and apply for funds, the decisions on the use of the money rest with the Falekaupule. The Falekaupule Trust Fund was set up to provide a sustaining source of funds for island development purposes only. This special trust fund is managed by a board, which consists of directors representing the eight islands in Tuvalu. The Falekaupule Trust Fund is invested outside Tuvalu and its investment strategy is similar to that of the Tuvalu Trust Fund. Since its inception in 1999, the Falekaupule Trust Fund has grown to a current capital value of AUD 20 million, and close to AUD 2.7 million has been distributed to the eight islands. In a study by Buchan and Cosslet (2003<sup>6</sup>) on the social

---

<sup>5</sup> Extracts from *A Woman's Place is in the House – The House of Parliament – Research to Advance Women's Political Representation in Forum Island Countries*, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Buchan, D., and Cosslet, C. 2003, *Social and Economic Wellbeing Survey*; Tuvalu, Nimmo-Bell & Company Limited, Wellington.

and economic well-being of Tuvaluans, it was revealed that though the level of awareness among women and men had increased since the previous study in 2001, the level of awareness about the fund was significantly greater among men than among women and youths, for whom it remained very low.

With the introduction of the Falekaupule Act in January 1997, anyone 18 years old and above is eligible to participate in the decision-making process of the Falekaupule quarterly assemblies. However, as noted by Sinclair (2001)<sup>7</sup>, participation depends on the traditional culture of each island. Important matters are taken to another assembly of *matai* where only *matai* are allowed to participate and vote. Each island Falekaupule may decide who they would like to be included in their decision-making process. A woman *matai* may participate in the decision-making process but is not be eligible to cast a vote.

Although the Falekaupule Act paves the way for the inclusion of women in the traditional decision-making process, it does not replace the existing traditional structures for decision-making on each island, which still exclude women. Sinclair also stated that as a result projects submitted to the Falekaupule by women for approval are often neglected.

---

<sup>7</sup> Sinclair, R.N. 2001. A baseline study of women's issues in Tuvalu, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Noumea, New Caledonia.

## Annex 3: References

- Government of Tuvalu: 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Periodic report to the United Nations on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW): 2012.
- Government of Tuvalu: Tuvalu Millennium Development Goals Progress Report, 2010/2011.
- Government of Tuvalu, Te Kakeega II: National Strategy for Sustainable Development, 2005–2015.
- Government of Tuvalu: “Plus 5” Review of the 2002 Special Session on Children and World Fit for Children Plan of Action.
- Ministry of Health Women and Community Affairs, 1999: Department of Women Affairs, Corporate Plan.
- Ministry of Home Affairs and Rural Development, Tuvalu, 2005: Revised Tuvalu National Women’s Policy.
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Government of Tuvalu: Tuvalu Demographic and Health Survey, 2007.
- UNCEDAW (UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women). 2007. Concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Tuvalu.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) Gender Assessment of NAPA 1 + Project.
- United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the Pacific Sub region: 2008–2012.
- UNDP Pacific Centre and UNIFEM Pacific Regional Office. 2008. Translating CEDAW into law: CEDAW Legislative compliance in the Cook Islands. UNDP.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), START and PIFS (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat). 2008. Utilising temporary special measures to promote gender balance in Pacific legislatures: A guide to options. Suva, Fiji: UNDP/PIFS.