

Search...



(<https://www.facebook.com/femlinkpacific>)



(<https://twitter.com/femlinkpacific>)



(<https://www.youtube.com/user/femlinkpac>)



(<https://soundcloud.com/femlinkpacific>)

# Here Are The Women (2017): Vikatoria Tuivanualevu (/index.php/en/actions/here-are-the-women/567-here-are-the-women-2017-vikatoria-tuivanualevu)



by *Sulueti Waqa*



“For us women, we look forward to having women appointed in to leadership role not only nationally but (to) start at the community level,” shared Vikatoria Tuivanualevu, President of the Naweni Women’s Group. “We would like to be included as women in all decision making levels and even in all departments or ministry in government”

Tuivanualevu joined the Savusavu network last year, representing the rural women of their community as well as through her extended networks of the Soqosoqo Vakamarama Taukei for the Cakaudrove province.

From Naweni Village, she has seen the full brunt of Tropical Cyclone Winston, sharing her experiences this past February of the Category 5 storm and developments since then with Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, Executive Producer-Director of femLINKpacific.

“You woke up that morning and it was cool and the breeze was cool and the sun rising like that we can’t even imagine that there

will be a hurricane,” she said. “We saw everything moving.”

“The waves (were) coming... (we couldn't) see anyone (or) anything there because the village was dark. We (had) so many things damaged in our home.”

Today, many families still live in tents or with family members as they struggle to rebuild more than a year later. While the shortage of building material and affordable labour continue, so too barriers to access to information – a gap femLINKpacific continually seeks to address.

“I am really grateful for the Women's Weather Watch because I am informed of the weather and the changes in weather patterns and things on climate change,” Tuivanualevu underscored. “For me, at home, when they inform us... we are ready to move because I always keep beddings and food ready and stored away all the time.”

While she feels more empowered to support her family and community, Tuivanualevu wants to see greater investment in women as leaders and first responders.

“We women have an important contribution during natural disaster,” she explained. “We bear the burden of the disaster either it be hurricane, tidal waves or even flooding.”

“We prepare the (everything) for the family to move them to evacuation centres. We always be prepared to move especially those of us who live close to the sea. My advice to the women is to move forward. We have to change our mindset as we are going through changes (with the climate).”

In the meantime, Tuivanualevu stresses the need for good governance and accountability throughout all decision making structures and bodies.

“As women, we would like the leaders to be honest and dedicated to the work that they do... to always think of the citizen especially those in rural communities and listen to their concern and issues,” she said. “We hope that our leaders would visit us in our community and see and hear from us and experience the issues that we go through every day.”