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Written by **Media Advocacy**

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From the 3rd to the 5th of July, 2017, femLINKpacific – as the GPPAC Pacific Secretariat – convened the annual regional steering group (RSG) meeting with the networks' partners. The three days was a time to reflect, learn and strategise.

Outcome document: <http://www.femlinkpacific.org.fj/index.php/en/actions/policy-documents/572-gppac-pacific-strengthening-gender-inclusive-conflict-prevention-and-human-security-in-the-pacific-2017> (/index.php/en/actions/policy-documents/572-gppac-pacific-strengthening-gender-inclusive-conflict-prevention-and-human-security-in-the-pacific-2017)



Pasifika Peace Talanoa – Strengthening Gender Inclusive Conflict Prevention and Human Security

press release: 4th July (18/2017)

A public outreach programme, Pasifika Peace Talanoa in Suva tomorrow the Pacific network of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) from Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and Bougainville will be present ways forward for civil society, governments and regional inter-governmental organisations to progress peacebuilding initiatives in the lead up to the 2019 Referendum in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, via climate justice for young women in Vanuatu, as well as practical measures to implement the recently launched Solomon Islands National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

“The Talanoa is another platform for us to highlight the efforts underway to progress the commitments made to conflict prevention, human security and gender equality in our region,” says Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, the GPPAC regional representative for the Pacific and the Chair of the GPPAC International Board. “By convening regional network meetings, we are identifying ways that we can collectively contribute to the realisation of a gender-sensitive and responsive peacebuilding architecture whether it is through peace education events, network convenings at local and national level as well as through media initiatives.”

The annual meeting of the GPPAC Pacific network, supported by the Pacific Islands Non-State Actors programme with assistance from the European Union, peacebuilders are meeting to discuss ways to organise at local, national and regional activities to progress and advance the network’s collective efforts to realise Gender Inclusive Conflict Prevention and Human Security in our region.

GPPAC Pacific, according to Bhagwan Rolls, continues to build on the collective gains and lessons learnt since a group of women leaders from Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Bougainville began organising together as the “1325” network in 2007 and is therefore committed to mainstreaming women, peace and security (WPS) commitments in line with the Security Sector Governance Principles endorsed by Pacific Island Forum leaders in 2014, particularly through the adoption of WPS strategies into national security policy and development programmes:

“As Pacific Governments and inter-governmental organisations work to progress the Sustainable Development Goals, it is vital that they recognise and strengthen their collaboration to build on civil society peacebuilding efforts,” she says.

Originally posted here: <https://www.facebook.com/notes/femlinkpacific/pasifika-peace-talanoa-strengthening-gender-inclusive-conflict-prevention-and-hu/10155558166609295/> (<https://www.facebook.com/notes/femlinkpacific/pasifika-peace-talanoa-strengthening-gender-inclusive-conflict-prevention-and-hu/10155558166609295/>)

The Pasifika Peace Talanoa can be listened to here: <https://soundcloud.com/femlinkpacific/femtalk89fm-suva-jul17-pasifika-peace-talanoa> (<https://soundcloud.com/femlinkpacific/femtalk89fm-suva-jul17-pasifika-peace-talanoa>)

FemTALK: A Tool For An Equitable and Just Region – The Pacific Platform for Action

by Sian Rolls

“I think more and more, our region, our women and movements are talking about... for regional approaches of approaching the issue of the advancement of women and gender equality,” says Tupou Vere, of the House of Sarah.

Reflecting on more than 20 years of her story as she spoke to femLINKpacific during a civil society consultation in the Revised Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality.

Listen to the interview here: <https://soundcloud.com/femlinkpacific/femtalk89fm-suva-jul-17-the-pacific-platform-for-action-with-brigitte-and-tupou> (<https://soundcloud.com/femlinkpacific/femtalk89fm-suva-jul-17-the-pacific-platform-for-action-with-brigitte-and-tupou>)

Convened by the Pacific Community (SPC) in Suva yesterday (July 3), the day long programme brought together Pacific civil society from Bougainville, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu in the lead up to the next iteration of the Pacific Platform.

“Unfortunately, in 20 years, we still have the same priorities,” said Brigitte Leduc, Gender Advisor in the SPC’s Social Development Programme. “So, in this revision, what (are trying) to identify is what measures need to be implemented to accelerate progress so that in 20 years, we can say, ‘well, we have many more women in leadership, women are economically empowered in the Pacific, we are... we have done significant progress in eliminating violence against women’ so that we don’t repeat the same stories. That in 20 years, we can talk about something else.”

And acceleration is the key across the 5 key areas of the plan:

- Gender responsive government programmes and policies,
- Decision making
- Economic empowerment
- Ending violence against women
- Health and Education

Clearly a priority is addressing the gaps in political participation, particularly when that temporary and non-binding commitments have not brought Pacific Island states any further in meeting even a 30% target whether in parliament or local government. There is also a need to track and support women's leadership in faith based organisations and traditional governance.

Progress is also pending when it comes to economic empowerment, including the recognition of women’s unpaid care work and addressing the structural as well as social and political barriers to women's economic security.

When realising better health, education for all and ending violence against women, it needs the effort of all members of the community and all arms of the state.

Civil society, has a vital role to play in progressing gender equality goals says Vere and it starts with public awareness of government commitments and being at the decision making table to bring research and findings from communities.

The review consultation, she says, is the start of sharing information back to their communities.

“We are able to come and learn more as a civil society community about this Pacific Platform for Action,” said Vere. “We all know that in this business, we work together with government in advancing gender equality and women’s human rights on the ground. There’s a lot of diverse experience present in this room from different parts of the Pacific. Therefore, it provides for a very useful forum (and one after) which we can build on in the future, in our own respective countries... on how we can advance the discussion with those in government - through the national machinery for women and also with other government ministries.”

What has changed since 1994, however, is the process to get to the goal of realised gender equality. Once the path to success is paved, then all actors can seek out the information together.

“We’re beginning to talk about the process,” stressed Vere. “The steps that we need to take which, for me, is very different from what took place in the past. We didn’t have a chance to talk about this necessary step of how do we get to the kind of goals we’re working towards and I think the review process is exciting in that regard, is that it will provide a framework of monitoring how we progress.”

The Revised Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality is expected to be adopted later this year at the 13th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and will be a tool for operationalising gender commitments for the 22 Pacific Island Countries and Territories including the including the series of commitments made since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action by Pacific Governments in 1995 at the UN Fourth World Conference of Women.

Since then more Pacific Island governments have ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, they have adopted national gender policies and action plans and Pacific Forum Leaders have also adopted a political declaration on gender equality and of course the Sustainable Development Goals.

But a message from Pacific Women's Ministers at the 2013 Triennial Conference was revise the plan and help us not just progress commitments but also monitor and communicate progress.

And to understand the level of implementation and success, keeping a track of information and collating it into useful findings is part and parcel of the work of state machineries.

“Data is very important and even the invisibility of women’s economic activities again as an example was at the forefront of a lot of our discussions because that lead to a lot of recommendations that made its ways into the Beijing Platform for Action, issue of statistics and data, and having it disaggregated by sex and gender,” said Vere.

“It’s also to bring this all together and talking about specific measures to progress and what was discussed a lot this morning was about the importance of knowledge and raising awareness and sharing information so that’s probably going to make its way in the new Pacific Platform for Action,” explained Leduc.

Consultation with civil society has been vital and an online survey from July 4 will also reach out to women across the Pacific.

“It’s a very simple form with very simple questions to answer and that’s also an opportunity for as many women as possible to contribute to the reflection,” Leduc continued, adding a further consultation will coincide with the Micronesian Women’s Conference in August in the Marshall Islands. “The Platform will also be sent officially to government and civil

society so that they can, again, look into it and advise so that when we get together in October, we can officially endorse the tool and start working because, of course, developing the Platform is just the simple part, I would say. Then we have to implement it.”

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