

RESOLUTIONS OF THE FIFTH PACIFIC REGIONAL MEETING
ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

WE:

The participants at the Fifth Regional Meeting on Violence Against Women in the Pacific, held at the Naviti Resort in Sigatoka Fiji from 5 to 12 June 2009 have deliberated and agreed that we have made many advances in our respective countries in bringing the issue of violence against women and children to the forefront of the national agenda. The meeting focused on prevention strategies targeted at eliminating violence against women in the Pacific and key lessons learned in this area. The cumulative work over the years by organizations throughout the Pacific have led to some key achievements and milestones including law reform, increased programming, greater awareness, recognition of the issue of violence as violation of women's human rights as well as the increased involvement of men in these efforts. However, despite our continuing efforts in our respective communities, violence against women and children continues to be a major problem in our countries with emerging challenges including the lack of recognition of the vulnerabilities of women with disabilities and the increase in trafficking of women and girls.

1. **We are concerned** that all our governments have not given priority through commitment or resources to policy and legislation development in relation to violence against women and children.
2. **We are concerned** that there is a lack of gender sensitivity towards victims/survivors of violence against women in the area of law and law enforcement.
3. **We are concerned** that human rights abuses exist within the area of law enforcement leaving women and children vulnerable to various forms of abuse.
4. **We recognize** that there are insufficient policies and procedures within the disciplined forces to deal with perpetrators of gender-based crimes.
5. **We are concerned** that policies and procedures set up to deal with violence against women within the Police Force and other law enforcement agencies are not always adhered to.
6. **We are concerned** that services of law enforcement are not applied consistently throughout our countries, leaving women and children from isolated areas and rural communities vulnerable to victimization.
7. **We recognize** that there is often insufficient resource allocation to specialized services and units for women and children who are victim/ survivors of violence.
8. **We are concerned** that within the police force and other law enforcement agencies, cultural issues such as the Wantok system, nepotism and traditional reconciliation lead to many victim/ survivors being denied access to a just legal system.
9. **We are concerned** that bribery and other forms of corruption have led to delays in processing cases of violence against women.
10. **We are concerned** that an increasing number of young (adolescent) men are involved in the perpetration of crimes of gender-based violence.
11. **We recognize** that conflict situations within our region leave women and children vulnerable to gender-based violence.

12. **We recognize** that HIV/AIDS has reached epidemic proportions in the Pacific and that women and children living in violent situations are most vulnerable.
13. **We recognize** that globalisation, in particular the free market principles has a direct impact on our communities and contributes to women's vulnerability to violence.
14. **We are committed** to community mobilization, civil society efforts and activism in addressing and eliminating violence against women and children in our communities.
15. **We are committed** to working towards peace in our communities and the region through non-violent means and processes.
16. **We reaffirm** our solidarity to work with each other, other civil society groups, government agencies and through the Network to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women at all levels of our communities.

Therefore in our pursuit of access to law and justice at multiple levels of society for the elimination of violence against women, we resolve to:

ADVOCATE AND LOBBY: comprehensive integrated approach that focuses on prevention and protection as well as the empowerment and support to victim/survivors

17. **Call on** our Forum Leaders to support the development of a comprehensive integrated legislative approach that focuses on prevention and protection as well as the empowerment and support to victim/survivors of violence against women.
18. **Continue to** lobby our National Governments for the development of violence against women legislation from a human rights framework.
19. **Call for** the removal of the Rule of Corroboration and past sexual history in rape cases in all Pacific Island countries.
20. **Call for** the establishment and strengthening of National and Regional Human Rights Mechanisms.
21. **Call for** our governments to be accountable to their obligations and commitments for women's human rights under international declarations, conventions and mechanisms, especially: the Universal Periodic Review, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination of Against Women, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and International Convention for the People with Disabilities.
22. **Advocate for** gender and human rights training to take place for all judiciary staff and that there is dialogue with judiciary staff in terms of crimes of violence against women and children, and also focusing on disability and sexual minorities.
23. **Advocate for** the establishment and maintenance of Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Units within the Police Force in all our countries.
24. **Lobby for** the adoption and proper implementation of No Drop Policy on Domestic Violence within the Police Force.
25. **Lobby the** Pacific Island Chiefs of Police to continue to promote the introduction of, and/or the implementation of policies to deal with Sexual Harassment and Domestic Violence within National Police Forces.

26. **Advocate for** policies and procedures for perpetrators of gender-based crimes within the security forces, especially noting women's vulnerability in conflict situations.
27. **Strengthen** inter-agency liaison, in particular between the security forces and service providers.
28. **Advocate for** gender and human rights training for the security forces, also focusing on vulnerable and marginalized groups such as women with disabilities and sexual minorities.
29. **Demand that** brutality and human rights abuses by our security forces is not tolerated by the state.
30. **To call** on the state to recognise and protect the right to defend human rights.
31. **To call** on the state to recognise that women's human rights defenders are vulnerable in the work they do, and ensure their protection.

PROMOTE PEACE AND JUSTICE

32. **To continue** to work in solidarity with women on human rights violations in areas of the region experiencing armed conflict and in post-conflict situations, threats of ethnic and/or tribal/civil violence and women in colonized and militarized areas.

EMERGING ISSUES

33. **To call** on governments to recognise global economic trends and economic liberalisation impact our communities and contribute to the vulnerability of women to violence.
34. **To call** on governments to recognise the link between VAW and HIV and AIDS and ensure that their programmes, policies and funding address the dual epidemics of VAW and HIV and AIDS.
35. **To call** on governments to take steps to ensure that there is at least 30 per cent representation of women at all levels of decision making.

MALE ADVOCATES ON WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

Encourage the continuation of the Male Advocacy on Women's Human Rights Program, utilising the following guiding principles:

36. The use of a human rights framework and pro-feminist approach to increase men's awareness of gender equality as a fundamental human right, which involves challenging harmful traditional and cultural beliefs and practices on violence against women and gender relations;
37. The importance of men addressing their own violence before they can be effective advocates, or provide counselling to other men, and the provision of training and support to facilitate this process; and
38. The importance of accountability of men's groups to the women's movement, and to the human rights of both women and men.

SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE

39. **To devise** and implement appropriate and sustainable programmes that target youth as both survivors and perpetrators.

40. **Include the active** participation of young people in the programmes of the Network to respond to issues relating to violations of human rights.

AFFIRM DISABILITIES

41. **To support** the work of Women With Disabilities Pasifika Network in promoting issues of women with disabilities especially in the areas of gender-based violence both at national and regional level.
42. **To continue** including women and children with disabilities and their organisations in all regional training, meetings and activities organised.
43. **To call** on government to ratify the International Convention on Persons with Disabilities.

AFFIRM HUMAN RIGHTS FOR SEXUAL MINORITIES

44. **To affirm** the human rights of all, including sexual minorities as a vulnerable and marginalised group in the region.

FACILITATE RESEARCH, DOCUMENTATION AND DISSEMINATION

45. **To encourage** consistent data collection methods throughout the Pacific region.
46. **Encourage** the facilitation of national research projects on violence against women
47. **To call** on donors and funders to use the network as a point of reference for all work in the area of ending violence against women.
48. **Continue to** carry out participatory research projects and surveys on women's experiences of violence.
49. In addition, FWCC as Secretariat of the Network, to continue to act as a 'clearinghouse' on information on violence against women in the Pacific.

STRENGTHEN THE NETWORK

50. **Continue to support**, strengthen and improve management systems and accountability of Network members to better address the issues of violence against women
51. **Support and strengthen** other agencies/network members in accessing core funding for programs to eliminate violence against women.
52. **Continue** the process of information sharing on best practice models and lessons learnt to facilitate effective programs.
53. **Lobby for** the representation of the network in relevant regional intergovernmental processes and forums, including the Forum Leaders and Officials Meetings and Pacific Women's Triennial Meeting.

SUPPORT REGIONAL SOLIDARITY

54. **Continue** to actively promote networking and solidarity at community, national, regional and international levels to prevent and eliminate violence against women and children.
55. **Continue** to urge governments to ratify and report on CEDAW.
56. **Continue** to promote Inter-Agency co-operation and dialogue on the issue of violence against women and children.

57. **Continue** to urge our respective governments to address the issue of violence against women at every regional forum and ensure the presence of the Violence Against Women Network as part of the NGO Lobby at such forums.

WE, THE WOMEN AND MEN WHO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE FIFTH REGIONAL MEETING AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, MAKE A PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT TO PUBLICISE THIS DOCUMENT AND WE UNDERTAKE TO MAKE THE WHOLE DOCUMENT, OR PARTS THEREOF, A REALITY BY YEAR 2012.

**12 June 2009
SIGATOKA, FIJI.**

