

Pacific Partnerships to
Strengthen Gender, Climate Change Response and Sustainable Development,

Nadi, Fiji 9th-10th June 2014

We are Pacific feminists, youth advocates, climate change advocates and representatives of diverse civil society organisations (CSOs), networks, and alliances working for gender, economic, and ecological justice and political transformation, from Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. In an inaugural gathering, we met in Nadi, Fiji from the 9th- 10th June 2014, where we critically strategised toward a more effective advancement of Gender, Climate Change and Sustainable Development in the Pacific region.

Pacific women and girls as well as their communities face multiple challenges of being ecologically complex and remote small island States, aggravated by high levels of economic, social, and environmental injustice. As recognized by the 5th Women's Ministerial Meeting (2013), climate change is one of the most serious threats to the lives, lands, and cultures of Pacific people. Communities facing high levels of poverty and hardships, including those in informal urban settlements in coastal and estuarine areas, are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change.

To urgently address these existential crises, we call for an inter-linkage approach that analyses the political, physical, ecological, economic, and social dimensions of these overlapping challenges through one holistic frame. The bringing together of different sectors, alliances, and government ministries will be necessary to ensure a truly transformative agenda for gender, social, ecological, and economic justice in the Pacific and globally. A fundamental shift in policy is necessary to incorporate a gender perspective in climate change programmes and initiatives, as well as in regional and international negotiations, to support the advancement of gender equality.

Any sustainable development framework post-2015 must be grounded in social inclusion and equity, human security and sustainable peace, the fulfillment of human rights for all and gender equality. We seek fundamental structural and transformational changes to the current neoliberal, extractivist and exclusive development model that perpetuates inequalities of wealth, power and resources between countries, within countries and between women and men. We challenge the current security paradigm that invests heavily in militarized peace and security, and call for a switch from the current model of over-consumption and production to one of sustainable consumption, production, and distribution, and a new ecological sustainability plan that applies a biosphere approach and respect for planetary boundaries.

This transformational shift requires the redistribution of unequal and unfair burdens on women and girls in sustaining societal wellbeing and economies, intensified in times of violence and conflict, as well as during economic and ecological crises. It must tackle intersecting and structural drivers of inequalities, and multiple forms of discrimination based on gender, age, class, caste, race, ethnicity, geographic location, place of origin, cultural or religious background, sexual orientation, gender identity, health status, and abilities. This involves reviewing and reforming existing laws and policies that criminalize consensual behaviors related to sexuality and reproduction.

A development model that will work for women and girls of all ages and identities must be firmly rooted in international human rights principles and obligations, including non-retrogression, progressive realization, and the Rio principles, including common but differentiated responsibilities, as well as the fulfillment of the Cairo Program of Action, the Beijing Platform for Action, the outcome documents of

the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and the declarations adopted by the Commission on the occasion of the tenth and fifteenth anniversaries of the Fourth World Conference on Women. The development model must also reaffirm the international commitments made through the Yogyakarta Principles¹, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1960, and the relevant conventions of the International Labour Organization, that obligate our States to adopt legal and policy frameworks for the elimination and prevention of all forms of sexual and gender based violence.

We commend our leaders for the strong positions taken in the Majuro Declaration on Climate Leadership (2013) and urge immediate national implementation. We also recall the existing Pacific State commitments including the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (2012); the Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (2012); the Final Communiqué of the 40th Pacific Islands Forum, including the Pacific Leaders Declaration on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (2010), the Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality (2013), and the outcomes of the 12th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and 5th Pacific Women's Ministerial Meeting (2013).

We remind the Pacific States of their obligations and accountability to translate gender equality and human rights commitments into legislation, policy and budget allocations, and to make these norms and standards the guiding principles of contemporary Pacific societies. This must be fully reflected in the framework for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, the Small Islands Developing States process, the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, and National Strategic Development Plans.

We therefore call for:

1. Gender equality to be crosscutting across all sustainable development goals, strategies and objectives, as well as enshrined in a **stand-alone goal to achieve gender equality, women's empowerment and the full realization of women's human rights**. We call for an end to all forms of gender-based violence including early and forced marriages, further torture and extrajudicial killing of women and girls under the guise of eliminating witchcraft and sorcery, and sexual violence, especially during and after conflict and natural disasters; an end to all forms of discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, cultural background and health status; a guarantee of women's equal, full and effective participation at all levels of political, private and public life, leadership and decision-making, including in all peace processes; a guarantee of all women's equal rights to land and property; a guarantee of all women's sexual, bodily and reproductive autonomy free from stigma, discrimination and violence; and the collection and analysis of disaggregated data and statistics to guide the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of laws, policies and programs. We strongly encourage the continued and strengthened engagement of men and boys including community leaders as strategic partners and allies. Particular focus is required on the principle of intergenerational justice, as further articulated in the statement at the 2013 Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) preparatory meeting, *'Youth as Partners in Sustainable Development'*, and including the cruel legacy to future generations of contamination from nuclear, mining and other toxics.
2. **Correction of inequalities** is needed for all development and for long-term well being of Pacific Island societies. Women in our region bear the burden of unsustainable export-oriented economic growth with environmental disasters exacerbating persistent poverty and rising social inequalities, human rights violations, and discrimination. We call on Pacific governments to affirm that care and social reproduction is intrinsically linked with the productive economy, and must be fully reflected in

¹ The Yogyakarta Principles are principles on the application of International Human Rights Law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity. <<http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org>>

microeconomic and macroeconomic policies, with government fulfilling their human right obligations. Governments must also advance the multiple dimensions of sustainable development in an integrated manner.

3. The **mainstreaming of gender as a crosscutting issue for strong action on climate change** is key to sustainable development. Pacific SIDS face an existential threat to territorial integrity due to climate change impacts as a result of continued burning of fossil fuels by developed countries. These effects include sea level rise, extreme weather events, ocean acidification, and king tides, which threaten livelihoods, food security, health, safety and wellbeing. It is necessary to take actions to address the security implications of climate change, including violation of territorial integrity, more frequent and severe climate-related disasters, threats to water and food security, increased natural resource scarcity, and forced displacement and the human dimensions of climate change, including, where necessary, initiatives for preparing communities for relocation.² To address needs for financing, technology transfer, and disaster response, all Pacific SIDS need urgent focus on mitigation and adaptation, based on long-agreed Agenda 21 principles. They also require concrete commitments on loss and damage, as recently affirmed at the UNFCCC COP19. Pacific SIDS must emphasize the inclusion and recognition of women and girls as essential to mitigation and adaptation efforts because they also have the skills and knowledge to contribute to resilience.
4. We support the PSIDS call for **a stand alone sustainable development goal on climate change with a gender perspective that addresses stabilizing global average temperature increase well below 1.5 degrees Celsius to reduce greenhouse gas emissions**. And we support the mainstreaming of climate change into other SDGs given the significant impact climate change has on sustainability of development efforts for, gender equality and empowerment of women.
5. **Increasing the gender-responsiveness of public climate finance** is an opportunity to improve its effectiveness and efficiency. The financial measures that address climate action must take into account social and economic development priorities and ensure the communities and the people most in need benefit. Climate financing must include adequate budget allocation for both national women's machineries and civil society.
6. The **meaningful engagement of all sectors of society, particularly women and young people**, in preventing and reducing disaster risk. The **skills, knowledge, experience, and creativity of women and young people must be incorporated into disaster risk management** and planning and action to ensure holistic and sustainable approaches to reducing risk and more effective response to hazards in the Pacific. We call on our governments to adopt measures to enhance and build resilience to natural disasters and hazards with particular emphasis on persons with disabilities, women and girls of all ages, and other groups that are disproportionately affected.
7. **Partnerships should accord an institutionalized role for civil society, particularly with regard to priority-setting and accountability**. Partnerships can only be truly effective if founded on full transparency and meaningful accountability of all partners involved. Ensuring accountability of these key development actors to human rights, through strengthened reporting networks and information-sharing mechanisms among women's machineries, Pacific parliaments, local governments and civil society, will be the essential ingredient to making the new generation of goals transformative, including towards gender equality and women's empowerment at national levels.³ We also call on regional intergovernmental development agencies and governments to establish clear, consistent and enabling environments to maximize meaningful civil society participation in the planning, design,

² PSIDS statement at OWG11.

³ Statement by Righting Finance Initiative on "Co-Creating New Partnerships for Financing Sustainable Development" <<http://www.rightingfinance.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Read-full-statement.pdf>>

implementation and monitoring of development objectives, programmes and projects.

8. We support the call of the Pacific SIDS to substantially **strengthen institutional and human capacities to address gender, climate change, and disaster risk reduction**. This includes access to timely and regionally relevant information. We reiterate the call for increased research and data, disaggregated and analysed on the basis of gender, sex, age, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, cultural background, health status, and abilities. We highlight the necessity of including traditional, local, and diverse knowledge in sustainable development information repositories for the Pacific. We encourage APFSD⁴ to establish centres for communications, knowledge and information sharing – to bolster the design of resilient and relevant national priorities, to support Pacific regional deliberations, and to facilitate the implementation of the post-2015 agenda.
9. Regulating the water, nitrogen, and carbon cycles, the oceans provide ecosystems services that support life on earth.⁵ We support the **stand-alone goal on Oceans** as proposed by Pacific SIDS. Under the priorities identified under economic issues with relation to “ocean-based” economy, maintenance of healthy ocean ecosystems should be the first priority, overriding concerns to balance budgets by mining deep-sea minerals and pursuing economic growth through unsustainable practices which threaten the basis of both artisanal fishing and commercial fisheries revenue. We need legally binding safeguards, including review of the UNCLOS,⁶ and global cooperation to address the drivers of environmental degradation and to reduce the impacts of contaminants transported globally.
10. **We call for an immediate halt to the loss of global biodiversity, including habitats and forests, and to protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.** Given the relative extreme biodiversity of the Pacific – home to 32 World Heritage sites – we also call for conservation and sustainable use of all ecosystems – with particular attention to forests, wetlands, and coastal and marine ecosystems – as well as promotion and restoration and natural regeneration of degraded ecosystems in all countries, with a focus on Pacific LDCs and SIDS.⁷ This includes the disastrous effects on ecosystems and biodiversity caused by extractive industries and unsustainable tourism, which must be addressed as a Pacific priority.⁸
11. We request governments to explore **innovative strategies and new technologies to increase access to good quality, comprehensive, and inclusive social, health and education systems, including social protection.** We emphasize the importance of improving health and education outcomes, including **sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)**, and reducing NCD-related deaths and disabilities in women, especially in rural and remote areas.⁹
12. In recognition of the importance of women’s economic empowerment, **we call on governments, the private sector and financial institutions to invest in and support women and girls**, including those with disabilities, women living in rural and remote areas, and working in the informal sector. We call on Pacific governments to secure food sovereignty based on the recognition of smallholder farmers, particularly women, as key economic actors whose sovereign right to use and own land should be protected through legally binding safeguards, including against land grabbing.

⁴ Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

⁵ Statement on World Oceans Day 8th June 2014, Biliana Cicin-Sain, President Global Oceans Forum

⁶ United Nations Convention on Law of Sea

⁷ Women’s Major Group position statement for the 12th session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

⁸ Women’s Major Group position statement for the 12th session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

⁹ 12th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women

13. **A rights-based approach is needed with relation to asymmetrical trade partnerships that encroach on national sovereignty and the ability of governments to negotiate fair and equitable trade agreements.** Trade agreements, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA), must not supersede national constitutions and legislation, and must not allow infringement by corporate actors on human rights or on national policy space. Governments should be empowered in their domestic settings to ensure that their partnerships with transnational corporations are accountable and provide for the needs of their citizens. Multilateral mechanisms must subject investors and transnational corporations to legally binding norms and standards.¹⁰
14. **At the global level, a stable, multilateral and equitable financial system, with representative and participatory international institutions and systematic international financial regulation is required.** Developed countries must implement their Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitments of 0.7% of GDP, and ensure equitable access of developing countries to environmentally sound, socially beneficial and economically productive technologies. It is also necessary to ensure debt sustainability, restructuring and relief.¹¹

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¹⁰ Women's Major Group

¹¹ Women's Major Group