Pacific Peacewomen’s Perspectives on Peace and Security

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MEDIA INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN

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Introduction

The 10th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security) was catalytic as Pacific Leaders put into motion action for the integration of 1325 into the regional peace and security architecture. What resulted was the high level development and adoption of a Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (RAP-WPS) elevating commitments articulated within existing regional mechanisms into tangible action-oriented strategies.

The formulation of the action plan was informed by the efforts of Pacific activists who belong to the Pacific Women’s Media and Policy Network on UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Coordinated by FemLINKPACIFIC, the group includes Leitana Nehan Women’s Development Agency, Vois Blong Mere Solomon and Ma’a Fafine mo e Famili of Tonga.

The action plan focuses on three pillars: (i) gender mainstreaming and women’s leadership in conflict prevention and management, political decision-making and peace building and peacekeeping; (ii) gender mainstreaming and women’s participation in security sector oversight and accountability; and (iii) protection of women’s human rights in transitional and post-conflict contexts.

While the implementation of the action plan has the oversight of Reference Group on Women, Peace and Security convened by the Pacific Islands Forum which includes representatives of governments (Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea and Tonga) and civil society (FemLINKPACIFIC and Leitana Nehan Women’s Development Agency), the responsibility of implementation should not be left to this reference group or the Forum Regional Security Committee alone.

It is therefore critical to strengthen and sustain regional and domestic efforts by women’s civil society networks who have a stake in defining and managing peace and security from the local to the global level.

This report aims to provide linkages to women’s voices through a review of the 2009-2011 Policy for Peace in our Pacific reports as well as insights from the members of the GPPAC Pacific Regional Steering Group and gender focal points, this publication services as a reminder and further affirmation of women’s peace and security narratives from Fiji, Solomon Islands, Bougainville and Tonga which have informed the development of the Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and which can further guide and inform the localization of the regional action plan.
Enhancing Regional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

“There are many examples of the roles played by women in peace building processes across the Pacific. For example, in Fiji women have organized peace vigils, dialogue and provided technical inputs into defence reviews and national security policy development; negotiations across crocodile infested rivers with armed combatants and developing education methods for peace building in the Solomon Islands; actions to bring about the laying down of arms in Bougainville; advocacy, research and education to encourage voting in Marshall Islands; efforts in Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu and across the region to end violence against women. These are only a few examples of responses to conflict or perceived threats to human security that women’s organizations have developed and sustained over the years. Despite women’s productive efforts their participation in peace building, post-conflict recovery and efforts to enhance the oversight and accountability of the security sector is still a matter for debate. Women still struggle to be heard at the negotiating table in leadership roles and are not given sufficient recognition and resources to do their work.” (Pacific Regional Action Plan 2013 – 2015)

Developing and strengthening ‘appropriate mechanisms to enhance the advancement of women at all levels’ is the first strategic objective of the Pacific Platform for Action (2004 – 2015) and includes ensuring the availability and use of sex disaggregated data and gender analysis across all sectors, supporting policy development, government services, budgeting, monitoring and reporting processes, ensuring national laws and policies complying with CEDAW and enforcing gender equality and women’s human rights and effective partnership exists between the government and civil society organisations.

FemLINKPACIFIC’s strategy to collaborate with regional inter-government organisations in particular the Pacific Islands Forum and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, as well as UN counterparts since 2007 provided the evidence for a Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (RAP-WPS) which was launched on October 18, 2012.

FemLINKPACIFIC’s engagement with the Pacific Islands Forum’s Regional Security Committee (FRSC) was simply a result of asking the question – if there is the UNSC in NY what is the mechanism in the Pacific? Subsequently Gender, Conflict, Peace and Security was brought to the attention of the FRSC through a high level workshop for officials in 2006 with outcomes and recommendations of the joint workshop were endorsed by the FRSC. In 2007 the collaboration progressed around the human security agenda and the first Track II dialogue was staged with FRSC officials in 2007. In 2008, linkages were made to the Security Sector Governance.

The Pacific Islands Forum Honiara Declaration (1992) saw Forum Leaders adopt measures to address security concerns. The Biketawa Declaration (2000) provided an entry point to integrate gender into peacebuilding and peacemaking.
Formulating the Conflict Prevention and Human Security framework and the RAP-WPS, has demonstrated the potential for member states, CSOs and regional inter-governmental organisations to collectively identify broad priorities, initiate strategic actions, and determine responsibilities among different actors. It also ensures that Women, Peace and Security activities are not seen as standalone efforts but rather as an integral part of regional peace and security discussions, in line with regional efforts of promoting gender equality.

The RAP-WPS provides a broad framework at the regional level to assist Forum Members and Pacific Territories to accelerate implementation of existing international, regional and national commitments on women, peace and security and has been informed by women’s civil society activism and action, and reflects the growing recognition of the need to invest in women, peace and security. The development of the Regional Action Plan has also been a substantive step towards mainstreaming gender and bringing more women and young women into official peace and security processes at the regional level, as well as creating a supporting mechanism for regional and national efforts on Women, Peace and Security. Even though it is a regional framework the RAP-WPS is closely connected to the promotion of peace and women’s political agency in terms of conflict prevention and management, mediation and dialogue from the local to the national level.

The RAP-WPS must:

- Facilitate the enabling environment we need to improve women and young women’s leadership in conflict prevention and management, peacekeeping, security policy decision-making
- Ensure women’s and girls’ human rights are protected and
- Strengthen civil society, women’s groups, including young women and gender equality advocates engagement with regional security and conflict prevention policy and decision-making.

Recommendation:

(i) Reaffirm UNSCR 1325 as a guiding tool for enhancing women’s participation for prevention – for human security, human development and human rights
(ii) Ensure the mobilization of resources to strengthen and support regional and domestic efforts by women’s civil society networks working on peace and security
(iii) Support RIGO and CSO collaboration to review and amend regional mechanisms to promote the integration of UNSCR1325 and subsequent resolutions into regional and national security sector governance, peace and security processes
Focus Area 1: Gender mainstreaming and women and young women’s leadership in conflict prevention and management, political decision-making and peacebuilding and peacekeeping

In the Pacific region, women and young women play an important role in brokering peace as they help to foster and maintain confidence and trust among the people and are able to address issues of concern to women and marginalized groups through:

- Strengthened capacity and networking of women and young women leaders from government, civil society and private sector in mediation, dialogue, peace negotiations and constitutional reforms.
- Enhanced capacity of governments to adopt measures to increase women's representation at all levels of leadership and decision-making.
- More effective participation of women leaders in the context of the Biketawa Declaration and Good Office role of the Secretary-General of the Forum Secretariat.

What Women Say:

“Peace-building is a very slow process; we really need to get those who are involved. Women are doing a lot of work in the communities, especially trauma counseling, and this was an excuse before the reconciliation ceremony. We feel that we should have the trauma counseling workshops or programmes in the communities to bring back people to their normal state again before reconciliation ceremonies have been held.” – Anne Saenemua, Solomon Islands

“If post-conflict reconstruction is carried out without looking for the root causes of conflict, recovery will only be superficial. Reconciliation is important to heal spiritual and psychological wounds, prevent hatred, distrust, and warmongering, and to encourage forgiveness and unity.” – Josephine Tana, Women for Peace and Freedom, edited by Josephine Taheo Sirivi and Marylin Taheo.

Communicating a Culture of Peace:

- Ensure resources and availability of women's space to organise dialogues and peace and trust building activities as a precursor to women's full involvement in the peace process.
- Ensure formal recognition of community media in regulatory frameworks, including licensing provisions for the establishment of community radio stations which reflect the non-profit nature of these operations.
- Reform of public service broadcast policy to ensure quota of content and gender mainstreaming of content, including through broadcast of local content production by community media practitioners.
- Pacific Islands News Association and the Media Councils and associations are urged to collaborate with women's media networks to enhance peace programming and implementation of gender equality commitments including UNSCR1325, and the training of editors and journalists to eliminate gender bias in reporting and investigative journalism in conflict and post-conflict situations, and to promote gender equality and peace journalism.
- Development assistance programmes designed to strengthen the media sector to take into account Pacific community needs, including implementation of the Digital Strategy of the Pacific Plan and recognition and support for existing community media initiatives and provision of appropriate equipment such as wind up radios.

“Everytime they shout at me telling me that I am trying to change custom I tell them that I am not trying to change custom; I am merely asking them to recognise women’s rights.” – Susan Pakoi, President Buin District Council of Women and Security of Women Peace and Security, Bougainville Provincial Women’s Council Location, Buin.

Governance: More than National Elections

• Governments to collect names and profiles in close collaboration with civil society for a national list of women’s experts for nomination for high level posts, Special Envoys, and Eminent Persons Groups, to be contributed to the Pacific Islands Forum data base of Pacific women peacemakers.

• Ensure long term support, including through the availability of scholarships and other training initiatives for developing a new generation of women’s leaders in the peace and security sector.

• International donors and development agencies to incorporate women, peace and security commitments, including adequate representation of women in decision making as a condition of supplying aid.

• Pacific Forum Leaders and Security Committee to include women civil society experts and gender analysis in official and informal working groups on small arms and light weapons, including border security and control to stop gun running

“During the ethnic conflict, women played a very important role. They risked their lives going to the camps, speaking to the militants, speaking to the government, speaking to all leaders at all levels, digging deep into their pockets to give the little that they had to people who had lost their homes, to refugees who had fled, to the militants themselves. So women for peace took a motherly approach and did a great job by driving the nation to end the conflict….People are beginning to say that women are playing a very important role, we should have women in parliament, it is very important for the future of this nation. These are things that have never been said before. We should capitalize on those statements - the increased calls for more recognition for women” – Ethel Sigimanu, Solomon Islands

• Adopt quotas and affirmative action measures to ensure democracy in all peace and security decision making, including at least 30% representation of women including in Cabinet, parliament, provincial and district committees, political party leadership, local government and committees.

• Gender equality to be incorporated into constitutional reforms, including into all relevant constitutional clauses, reaffirming the principles of nondiscrimination, equality, affirmative action, freedom and security. Special attention should be given to family, civil and labour laws and land reforms, as well as the protection of women participating in constitutional conventions.

• National electoral laws to incorporate gender equality quotas and ensure voter registration and education for women, as well as the increase of women in electoral commissions and observer missions; electoral experts to work with local women’s groups to provide relevant training for women candidates and political parties.

• Building the Pacific Conference of Churches commitment to peace building and conflict resolution, call on Churches and faith based leaders to explicitly support 1325 and include more women in decision-making positions, including through the development of curricula at theological colleges.
Focus Area 2: Gender mainstreaming and women and young women’s participation in security sector oversight and accountability

Security threats and the agenda of the FRSC over the last decade have changed significantly. For example at the 2011 meeting the FRSC discussed issues such as transnational organised crime; small arms and light weapons proliferation and arms trade treaty negotiations; unexploded ordnance; strategic law enforcement challenges in the context of police, customs, immigration, fisheries and maritime; criminal deportees; security sector governance; counter-terrorism; border security and management; conflict prevention and management of political crises; SGBV and; Women, Peace and Security through:

• Enhanced mainstreaming of Women, Peace and Security in the Forum Regional Security Committees priority setting and decision-making.
• Improved mainstreaming of Women, Peace and Security within the work of the Secretariat’s Political, Governance and Security Programme and Regional Law Enforcement Secretariats.

What Women Say:

“The situation of rural women also requires particular attention in the Pacific as they are especially vulnerable given their lack of access to basic services. We need to acknowledge women’s vulnerability, enhance their access to education, health, and economic opportunities, and realize their participation as decision-makers in peace-building processes in post-conflict situations. In short, rural women must benefit from gender equality initiatives and be specifically considered in all planning and budgeting processes” – Lisa Horiwapu, Solomon Islands

“So where do we invest as Peacewomen - to ensure that these critical commitments, do not get lost in the broader negotiations. After all, as a Security Council resolution, it provides a powerful foundation for the implementation of the section on women and armed conflict in the Beijing Platform for Action!” – Sharon Bhagwan Rolls

Security through Women’s Eyes

• Human security reiterates the indivisibility of human rights. For example, there is little point in having a vote if you cannot afford to leave your work or your children; you can get the best medical treatment, but it won’t stop your husband beating you.
• Pacific governments should commit to the international governance standards requiring democratic civilian oversight of the security sector & in close collaboration with civil society, conduct a review of defence and national security policy, their postures and budgeting processes in order to meet human security needs.
• Pacific governments to exert pressure for the reallocation of funds currently devoted to global military spending (1200 billion) to human security needs, implementing the MDGs (135 billion) and prepare for real security threats such as climate change.
• Democratise national annual budgets processes to ensure proactive community participation in identifying priorities and needs, which will help to ensure adequate line items to resource implementation of gender equality commitments across all government departments.
• National assessment of women’s contribution to the macro and micro economy, and gender budget analysis incorporated into all national development plans by 2010.

“There have been 10 women so far who were brutally raped at gunpoint during the Bougainville crisis who have taken their cases to court. The outcomes were really positive for the them, and women have been really strong, standing up in court. They have lawyers, but they were able to stand up and talk, and we were there to give them support. When they
came out they were so strong, and now they are able to walk the streets without fear, without shame, without guilt because they no longer blame themselves for what happened to them.” – Helen Hakena (2008)

- Women to be involved in the development of legislation on gun licensing, the marking and tracing of weapons and the destruction of homemade weapons and ammunition, including through their leadership in traditional ceremonies.
- Governments to actively work in close participation with civil society in disarmament and non-proliferation machinery including small arms and light weapons control and the ban of cluster munitions and landmines, and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, starting in our region with the banning of nuclear weapons and missile defence in our region.
- Governments should ensure gender sensitivity training of security sector personnel, in full compliance with resolution 1325, in order to support the implementation of existing commitments, and utilise tools such as gender-based early-warning indicators.
- Through institutions such as the Regional Commissioners of Police Network, law enforcement agencies, and the military, governments should provide gender disaggregated data in order to map the ratio of men and women in the security sector.
- Community police initiatives should be enhanced through regular engagement with women’s groups, and the recruitment of women.

“The lack of available resources for NGO efforts remains a challenge, as many governments and even UN agencies in our region have been slow in incorporating UNSCr 1325 into their own policy frameworks and therefore in recognizing the opportunity to support women and peace initiatives – from conflict prevention to post-conflict reconstruction/transformation, including reconciliation initiatives.” – Sharon Bhagwan Rolls

Focus Area 3: Protection of women’s and girls’ human rights during humanitarian crises and in transitional and post-conflict contexts

In November 2010 a Pacific Islands Forum Reference Group to Address SGBV was established. Members include senior government officials from Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Tonga; SPC, UN Women and Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre. The Regional Action Plan has been developed with significant inputs from members of Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) Reference Group.

The Regional Action Plan compliments the work of the SGBV Reference Group by focusing on achieving the following in the context of Women, Peace and Security:
- Ending Violence against Women (EVAW) policies ensure women and girls’ access to health, psychosocial, legal and protection in times of humanitarian emergency and in reconstruction and rehabilitation after conflict and crisis.
- State parties are better able to meet their obligations to protect, respect and fulfill women’s and girls’ human rights during transitional, conflict and post-conflict situations.

What Women Say:
“Traditionally women are peace-makers but don't they need protection when faced with violence? Don't they need a space in the decision making level when things are negotiated for the country's good? Don't they need to negotiate a good refugee camp site just to be near a water source, lest be they become targets of further victimisation? Don't they deserve
respect or dignity as mothers of the nation? These I believe already makes one wonder why 1325 or women, peace and security shouldn’t be a resolution women of the Solomon Islands be dancing to. It caters for everything a women needs, protection or security, dignity and decision making. 1325 has all the rights of women which are, of course, just human rights protected.” – Lisa Horiwapu, Solomon Islands

- Government and other agencies to ensure that annual budgetary allocation for post-conflict rehabilitation programmes have specific allocation to assist women and communities in post-conflict psycho-social recovery, including through safe houses, rape and trauma counseling services, sexual and reproductive health services including medical supplies, and free legal advice conflict survivors.
- During times of conflict, women need equal participation in the planning and management of camps and services for internally displaced persons.
- Ensure participation of women's human rights experts in drafting the mandate of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions and their planning and implementation so that crimes against women are included, special hearings for women are scheduled and the rights of women testifying and participating are protected throughout.
- Environmental impact of conflict to be incorporated into the post-conflict reconstruction effort, including the addressing of unexploded remnants of war, toxic pollutants and lead contamination.
- National legal systems to penalize and remedy all forms of violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations. Specially trained police units should be established to investigate crimes against women. Law enforcement officials, including judges, police and armed forces, should be sensitized about such crimes. Women's access to justice should be ensured through legal literacy programmes, support services and legal aid.
- The rights, needs and representation of women displaced by conflicts to be reflected in local and national legislation and regulation, such as ensuring provision of essential services, water, electricity, health centres, housing and schools.
- Governments to implement commitments to the elimination of all forms of gender based violence, particularly domestic violence which increases in the build up, during and after conflict, in close collaboration with women's human rights experts and advocates, including actively supporting the annual 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women.
- Police to increase level of response to the violation of women’s security, and uphold standards to build confidence and trust that may have been eroded through corruption, violence or abuse of power.
- All troop- and police-contributing countries should engage gender experts and expertise to be included in all levels and aspects of peace operations, including in technical surveys, the design of concepts of operation, training, staffing and programmes.
- All troop- and police-contributing countries should develop training for pre- and post deployment training in 1325, international human rights standards, violence against women and the UN's Zero Tolerance Policy.
