

## **Outcome Document:**

Pacific Feminists and Activists: Recommitting to the Pacific Movement for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

14 October 2015, Suva, FIJI

We are Pacific feminist, sexual and reproductive health and rights advocates working for gender, erotic, economic, ecological justice and political transformation, from Bougainville, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

We reaffirm and recommit to our founding document, “Pacific Feminists and Activists: Reframing, Rearticulating and Re-energising Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights”, the outcome of our inaugural Pacific strategy meeting in February 2013.

The second Pacific gathering of a broad and diverse coalition of women, men and trans\* people from key civil society organisations and networks was held in Suva, Fiji from 12 to 14 October 2015. We celebrated our progress over the past two years, identified what is yet to be done, and mapped out strategies for advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights in the Pacific.

Our diversity is our strength, and we call for the full recognition of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\*, and intersex Pacific persons, including those with indigenous third gender identities, women living with disabilities, mental health consumers, sex workers, women living with HIV and AIDS, urban poor and those living in informal settlements, rural and remote women, widows, young women, the girl child, older women and heterosexual women, at all stages of their lives, as rights holders with specific attention to our sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Rising to this challenge will require an interlinkage approach that analyses the political, physical, ecological, economic, cultural and social dimensions of these overlapping concerns 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. Any policies and programs involving our communities must be initiated and implemented by our communities and our chosen allies, working from a human rights and gender equality framework.

Nothing about us without us.

Bodily integrity and autonomy is at the core of sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender equality. It is core to independent action, and therefore a precondition for realization of all other human rights. Pacific Island States must therefore recognise, protect and promote the rights of women and girls to control their own bodies and sexualities, as agreed to in various regional and international human rights and policy commitments, including:

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and its global and regional reviews; the Programme of Action at the International Conference on Population and Development and the key actions for its further implementation; the Yogyakarta Principles; 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 the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1960; and the relevant conventions of the International Labour Organization; Pattaya Declaration on Sex Work in Asia and the Pacific (2010); the Pacific Leaders Declaration on Gender Equality (2012); the Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2012); the Pacific Leaders Declaration on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (2010); the Revised Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality 2005-2015; the Moana Declaration (2013); Pacific Youth Development Framework (2014); the Pacific Sexual Health and Wellbeing Shared Agenda 2015-2019; the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action [S.A.M.O.A.] Pathway (2014); the Suva Declaration on Climate Change (2015) and the Port Moresby Declaration on Climate Change (2015).

We commend Pacific governments on the progress they have made over the past two years towards the realisation of these rights. This includes the decriminalisation of homosexuality by Palau in 2014, Fiji's 2013 Constitutional provision against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, the decriminalisation of Fa'afafine with the repeal of female impersonation legislation in Samoa in 2013, passing of marriage equality for Guam in 2015, and the 2015 high-level launch of the Pacific Free and Equal Campaign. This is important progress on our earlier call for the repeal of all laws and policies in Pacific island states that criminalise same-sex relationships, and for the recognition of all people with non-heteronormative sexual orientation and gender identity as full and equal rights-holders.

We also commend Pacific leaders for their strong regional commitment to ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights for all our peoples, without discrimination, as contained in the Moana Declaration of 2013. Pacific governments went on to back up these commitments at intergovernmental negotiations at the regional and global level, working closely with feminists and civil society groups to further the Pacific rights agenda.

We further commend progress on increasing women's access to the formal decision making arena, including successful implementation of quotas for women in local government in Vanuatu. There has also been commendable progress on women's access to justice in the area of Family Law, with legislation passed in the Solomon Islands, family protection law enacted in Tonga, and the family protection unit established under recent legislation in Vanuatu.

However, despite this progress, there is still much to be done.

We call on our Pacific leaders and policy-makers for the following:

1. The realisation and prioritisation of sexual and reproductive health and rights outcomes in Pacific national implementation plans for the Sustainable Development Goals and Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These plans must address the unfinished human rights agenda, including for women and girls living with disabilities, as outlined in international commitments, by ensuring access to and quality sexual and reproductive health services, and strengthen governmental monitoring and evaluation systems so that they are based on human rights principles. Communities in all their diversity must be enabled to meaningfully participate in these development planning processes, including through accessible, adequately resourced information and capacity-building programmes.
2. Rights to legal, safe, and accessible abortion for all Pacific women and girls;
3. Full access to justice for all Pacific women, girls and trans\*persons, recognising that justice requires the full realisation of sexual and reproductive rights. Pacific Island states must strengthen policy, legislation and institutions, towards ending gender-based violence, recognising vulnerable groups such as women living with disabilities, trans\*persons, and sex workers. This should be prioritised in National Development Strategies, including through budgetary allocations and appropriate monitoring. Achieving full access to justice may necessitate reform of socio-cultural institutions and non-state actor accountability for rights violations.
4. Recognition that lesbian, bisexual and trans\* rights are women's rights and human rights, and to fulfil those rights. This means the eight countries and territories of the Pacific Island region that still criminalise homosexuality must repeal those discriminatory laws.
5. Decriminalisation of sex work and elimination of the unjust application of non-criminal laws and regulations against sex workers, including full realisation of the right to freedom of association and freedom of expression;
6. The immediate ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by Tonga and Palau; and regional solidarity to support Tonga and Palau towards ratification and implementation, including sharing the positive experiences of ratification by other Pacific Island states. We further call for the full implementation of CEDAW by all other Pacific Island countries and territories.
7. Monitoring of the planning and implementation of comprehensive sexuality education and related programmes in Pacific schools, to ensure such programmes uphold global human rights standards. Where there are gaps, take immediate steps towards reviewing and improving sexuality education to empower women and girls, in a way that is rights-based, non-discriminatory, non-judgmental, consistent with evolving capacities, gender-sensitive, women-friendly and evidence based.

8. Recognition of the right to self-determination by the people of West Papua, and attention to the human rights violations in this region, particularly the violation of the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls. We also support the self-determination of Bougainville, New Caledonia, Rapa Nui and Tahiti. We recognise that colonialism is a violent process, often accompanied by extractivism, that impacts on sexual and reproductive health and rights, and call for a free and independent Pacific.
9. Climate justice and the recognition that the current growth-led model of development directly contributes to climate change and the associated violations of sexual and reproductive health and rights, with the greatest burden falling on women and girls. Climate justice for all includes placing Gender Justice at the heart of various climate agreements, and solutions to climate disruption must be based on gender responsive policies, with processes to adequately address the developmental and human rights impacts of climate change. We want to see ambition and urgent action in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to better address climate change causes, impacts and solutions. We reaffirm that the global average temperature increase must be limited to below 1.5 degrees Celsius, to limit catastrophic and disproportionate impact on our region.
10. Full accountability of the private sector to human rights standards, given their increasing role in the delivery of development. Of particular concern is the embrace of public-private partnerships as a development solution, without adequate consultation and accountability mechanisms in place. The corporatisation process that is arising as a consequence of greater private sector involvement in the United Nations, including funding of sexual and reproductive health and rights global initiatives, has the potential to negatively influence long and hard fought gains, including for our region.

States must ensure a rights-based approach to trade agreements, including asymmetrical agreements such as Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER+) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA), which must not supersede national constitutions and legislation, and must not allow infringement by corporate actors on human rights or on national policy space, including in relation to sexual and reproductive rights.

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.

11. Specific support, measures, and resources to enable increased participation and meaningful engagement of diverse women in local, national and regional decision-making, including Pacific Parliaments, with an emphasis on leaders who are committed to gender equality and the full realisation of sexual and reproductive health and rights. This would require resources and support for the exercise of leadership, including for young women, girls and other persons through skills-sharing measures such as youth-friendly and rights-based leadership training, and intergenerational learning.

12. Acknowledge and support the work of women human rights defenders and put in concrete measures to protect and promote the rights of those working for the realisation of sexual and reproductive rights, including addressing threats posed by non-state actors. These human rights defenders are often on the frontlines of peacebuilding and conflict prevention. We also call on States to recognise the impact of armed conflicts and political instability on the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls in the Pacific

We further call for:

Pacific governments to take on the responsibility for sustainable, long-term resourcing for promoting and realising the sexual and reproductive rights of their peoples. We further call on all States, development partners, bilateral and multilateral organisations, regional and international intergovernmental agencies, faith-based organisations and wider social movements to work with us as partners, and effectively resource, recognise, promote and support this coherent and transformative approach to addressing sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and girls in the Pacific.

This statement was developed and endorsed by the following Pacific organisations and individuals, in Suva, Fiji on 14 October 2015:

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