



**NATIONAL WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND
GENDER EQUALITY TONGA POLICY and
STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION
2019–2025**



NATIONAL WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY TONGA POLICY and STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION 2019–2025

Prepared by the
Ministry of Internal Affairs, Women's Affairs Division,
Government of the Kingdom of Tonga



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Some specific government ministries and departments, development partners and civil society organisations (CSOs) have played important roles in achievements made to date with the policy, by applying their own gender policies to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment features in their projects and programmes regardless of whether these were for infrastructure, agriculture, family violence or other sectors. Indeed much of what has been achieved is a result of the commitments to gender mainstreaming within these sectors.

The Women's Affairs Division have also done an admirable job in coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the 2014–2018 policy through the collection of information and stakeholder meetings to exchange information.

Regional agencies that have contributed to the achievements of the policy include SPC, SPC-RRRT, UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP, IPPF and Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (Pacific Women). Support has been greatly appreciated and the Women's Affairs Division looks forward to continuing these partnerships and to forming new partnerships, which will be crucial to the next stage of progress on gender equality and women's empowerment in Tonga.

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The Women's Affairs Division looks forward to building new partnerships with the sustained communication and cooperation that has led to this result as we collectively pursue gender equality into the future.

Ministry of Internal Affairs
Women's Affairs Division
P.O. Box 2395
Nuku'alofa
Tonga
Phone: +676 27145 / +676 27099

II. INTRODUCTION

Since 2000, the goal of Tonga's *National Policy on GAD* has been gender equity by 2025. Social change of any kind cannot be rushed if it is to be long-lasting.

A common misperception is that gender refers only to women. However, the concept of gender denotes the roles girls and boys, women and men play in society that are constructions of social and cultural norms and attitudes. The roles are learned from culture and religion, families and friends, in schools and communities, and from the media and government. The roles are not locked in time and often change, along with social changes brought about by external influences, such as the Internet.

Gender equity is described as the quality of being fair. A gender equity approach ensures females and males have equal access to, and control over, the resources and benefits of development through targeted measures. Scholarships for girls are one example of an equity approach that contributes to all children, girls and boys, accessing school and equally benefiting from education opportunities. Increased gender equity is only one part of a strategy that contributes to gender equality.

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women, men, girls and boys rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

Gender mainstreaming is another part of that strategy. Mainstreaming is a process that addresses what an organisation does and how an organisation works. Gender mainstreaming means that all policies, programmes, as well as organisational and management processes, are designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated taking into account the different and relative needs and constraints of girls, boys, women, men, girls and boys with the aim of promoting equality.

Overprotection of our women and girls and respectful relations, for example, of wives to their husbands and children to their fathers, could be seen as subordination of women and could be argued as undermining the well-being of women and girls, of the family and community, and of Tonga's prosperity. Some Tongan men and women argue that there is no gender inequality in Tonga because women are revered in the culture. Tradition gives rank to the oldest female in the social sphere and on ceremonial occasions; however, it is the most senior male of the extended family who has the highest decision-making power.

The review of Tonga's *2014–2018 National Policy on GAD* has given us insight for progress and where the focus is required. The priority outcomes of Tonga's *2014–2018 National Policy on GAD*, remain relevant and applicable and as such have been recommended to continue for the new term of the Policy 2019–2025. The review however has identified a few minor changes:

- Priority outcome 5, which focused on those living with disabilities and other vulnerable populations, to cut across all priority outcomes;
- Priority outcome 6 becomes priority outcome 1 as mainstreaming gender is one of the main strategies that contributes to gender equality; and
- Minor amendments are made to the wording of some of the priority outcomes.

These changes however do not take away the quality of each priority outcome and the effect given to each one.

This document provides a summary and presents the reviewed policy statement on *GAD 2019–2025* for the Kingdom of Tonga. A *Strategic Action Plan 2019–2025* is annexed.

This Policy continues to promote the concept of producing development. The benefits of development should be distributed and made equitably accessible to everyone but, more importantly, the needs of all family members should be taken into consideration in the development process. Reports also show that empowering women to fully participate in economic life across all sectors throughout all levels of economic activity is not only right and fair, it makes good economic sense.¹ Generally, equitable societies and economies are more prosperous. Economic development stands to accelerate when opportunities for women are expanded mitigating the effects of any financial crisis.

¹ <http://www.worldbank.org/mdgs/gender.html>

Tonga has committed to advancing gender equality and development at national, regional and international levels. At the regional level these include:

- ▶ *SPC Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights 2018–2030*
- ▶ *Pacific Islands Forum Leaders GAD Equality, 2012*
- ▶ The Pacific Plan and various Forum Communiqués

At the Commonwealth:

- ▶ Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015

Tonga is committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2016 and to implementing a more inclusive, sustainable and empowered women and girls development agenda by strengthening its commitment to SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 10 (Reducing Inequalities), 13 (Climate Change), and 16 (Peace, Justice, Strong Institutions). Further to the following:

- ▶ SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway 2014
- ▶ ILO Conventions 2016 (especially No. 100, No. 111, No. 156 and No. 183)
- ▶ United National General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on the Implementation of the Outcomes of the Platform for Action (Beijing +5), New York, June 2000; for the Beijing +10 Review, March 2005 and the Beijing +15 Reviews, March 2010
- ▶ UNGASS on the Implementation on the Outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development, May 2000
- ▶ UNGASS on the Implementation of the Outcomes of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD +5), Hague, February 1999
- ▶ Declaration and Platform for Action on the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 1995
- ▶ Declaration and Program of Action on the UN World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, Denmark, March 1995
- ▶ Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1995
- ▶ UN International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, Egypt, 1994

The Government of Tonga has established national, regional and international commitments to gender equality, including: TSDF II, SDGs, PLGED. This policy further supports the government to achieve its commitments and reporting obligations (e.g. UPR, Forum Leaders Meetings).

III. TONGA'S STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK 2015–2025

This Policy is consistent with *Tonga's Strategic Development Framework 2015–2025 (TSDF II)*, National Outcome 3 for 'a more inclusive, sustainable and empowering human development with gender equality'. This Policy is the mechanism for achieving the National Outcome and 'ensuring a more balanced and effective engagement by both men and women in decision-making and social, economic and political institutions'. TSDF II further supports this policy through: Outcome 2.1 improved collaborations with and support to CSOs and community groups; Outcome 2.2 closer partnership between government, churches and other stakeholders for community development; Outcome 2.3 more appropriate social and cultural practices; and Outcome 2.7 better care and support for vulnerable people, in particular the vulnerable and disabled.

IV. GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES IN THE KINGDOM OF TONGA

Long-term social change takes many years to be truly adopted by any population. The early findings of the review of the *2014–2018 National Policy on GAD* identified that the policy has relevance to the social well-being in Tonga and that work should continue until 2025, at which time another review could be undertaken to evaluate and measure the achievement of the vision of gender equity in Tonga by 2025. Tonga's traditional values and the promotion of family as the foundation of the society are still important to the general public and, as such, efforts will continue to preserve and promote them. One of the key findings following the review is that gender mainstreaming across the government was not well advanced by 2018. As a result, the values of gender equality are not yet well understood by society. Progress has mostly been through donor-funded projects like that of CC-DRM, GESI in NCDs and NGOs. Awareness on the *Policy and the Family Protection Act 2013* has been conducted throughout Tonga, including the Outer Islands by the Women's Affairs Division and relevant NGOs. The general consensus among key stakeholders to the policy however is that community awareness needs to continue as a way forward for making additional progress. Key international events celebrated at the national level during the year, like International Women's Day, White Ribbon Day and the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaigns, have been instrumental in promoting the priority outcomes of the policy. Despite that, lack of funding continues to be the bottleneck of progress and the spread and consistency of outreach, in particular to the Outer Islands.

The following issues have been identified as a result of the review of the *2014–2018 National Policy on GAD*. It is important to reiterate that these are not only women's issues but rather familial, social and economic concerns. They equally require the attention of the government and civil society as adequate resources continue to be required to address them.

A. Weak enabling environment for gender mainstreaming

The TSDF II is well mapped to the SDGs, which has a specific goal for gender equality (Goal 5). Positively, alignment of finance policies and processes will follow including indicators in corporate plans. In a Stakeholder Forum in June 2016, where an informal mapping of gender activities took place, mainstreaming of gender was visible in projects being delivered by some of the government departments. Unfortunately, they were mainly made possible through external influence and funding (regional agencies and bilateral donors) and not as a result of national initiatives. Most NGOs, with the exception of churches, were seen to focus already on gender issues or had already incorporated gender mainstreaming into their work. These initiatives have flourished with the support of regional technical support from development partners both from regionally and internationally. A *Climate Financing and Risk Government Assessment Report* found that in the 17% of government policies mainstreamed: only 6% targeted actions on gender equality; 22% limited gender elements; and 44% was gender blind. Such findings impacted Tonga's accessing the Green Climate Fund. A *Gender Mainstreaming Handbook* has been developed since 2016 to assist with the mainstreaming of gender across government policies, programmes and services. There have been delays in completing this handbook, which held up training to build the capacity of government personnel and officials to mainstream gender. This has become a barrier to the effective mainstreaming of gender. Other factors that have impacted the weak enabling environment for gender mainstreaming included constant changes to the accountable ministers and delays in recruitment of CEOs. Further challenges include there being no gender budgets in corporate plans; Women's Affairs Division being understaffed and under resourced; lack of institutionalised data collection especially disaggregated data by relevant ministries; public service lacking awareness on mainstreaming gender and the capacities to do it; and town officers lacking basic understanding of gender. Taking into consideration the barriers to gender mainstreaming and the status to date, the *WEGET 2019–2025 policy* proposes key outputs and actions to strengthen the enabling environment, capacities and mechanisms for mainstreaming gender across the government.

B. Family and Social Issues

The establishment of the *Family Protection Act 2013 (FPA)* is a milestone for Tonga as one of the mechanisms in addressing the rampant problem of domestic violence in the society. The FPA 2013 provides protection for all members of the family, more awareness in the justice sector through the establishment of the Family Protection Legal Aid Center (FPLAC) and also crisis support. Mobile psycho-social support is now available to women in Tongatapu and 'Eua over a number of villages, and necessary information is provided across both islands through NGOs. There is a 24/7 counselling helpline provided through the Women and Children's Crisis Center (WCCC). Reports from the two main service providers, WCCC

and Tonga National Center for Women and Children (TNCWC), indicate an increase in reported domestic violence cases in 2014–2016 since the FPA 2013 was enforced in 2014. In 2018, the FPLAC found that 20% of cases reported to them on domestic violence were not reported to the police as a result of trust issues or fear of being shamed. The reports indicate that women are still overwhelmingly the victims and that there has been an increase in sexual abuse of children. There is progress in developing an official referral network for service providers, which was previously a barrier in Tonga. While information is readily available, lack of action to complement the information distributed is weak. Joint stakeholder action plans are needed with effective communication. The church is also identified as an effective partner and has been invited to the table for collaborative discussion on the issue, and is now a member of the National Advisory Committee on Gender and Development (NACGAD).

Sexual reproductive health rights (SRHR) and Family Planning remain an issue. A 2012 report indicates an upward trend of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) with highest rates among young people, aged 15-19 years and 20-24 years. The DHS 2012 report found 13% of males and 8% of females engaged in sexual activity before the age of 18 years. This is reflective in the high teen pregnancy rate of 30/1000 reported, which the Ministry of Health is struggling to address. The impact on females compared to males are far worse, as teen pregnancies result in young women dropping out of school or being expelled, poverty, and limited opportunities for children of teenage mothers. In comparison, boys face fewer related consequences.

Barriers to SRHRs include discriminatory laws preventing women from having control over their own bodies. Further multiple stakeholders involving multiple plans, programmes and activities for implementation cause confusion, delay and unnecessary duplication in actions; and less time for implementing plans to produce the intended and desired outcomes.

The policy has provided key outputs and actions that could potentially address these identified family and social issues and the current barriers to development in these areas in Tonga.

C. Unequal Access to Economic Opportunities and Employment

The November 2016 Census found that just over half (53%) of the working age population (15+ years) have paid or voluntary work; however, men fulfilled 66% of roles while women fulfilled 41%. By contrast, the 2011 Census found that 52% of the working age population had paid or voluntary work, made up of 63% of eligible males and 42% of eligible females. While the active population percentage has improved by 1% in the intervening five years, females have dropped back by 1% and males have improved by 3%. These shifts are marginal, but the figures indicate that, overall, women have not made gains in paid employment in the past five years. Added to that is the unemployment rate (actively seeking work). In 2011, women and men were close to evenly represented in the unemployed figure but, in 2016, women made up 75% of the unemployed. These results suggest that there may be systemic and social barriers to women's equal employment opportunities and to achieving equality in the workforce. More effort is required by the public and the private sectors to ensure that activities to improve the Tongan economy benefit women and men equally. In particular, the private sector could do more to engage women, as it employs twice as many men as women.

The *Employment Relations Bill (ERB)* 2013 has been the subject of national consultations for five years. There is optimism that the Bill will go to cabinet in 2019. In the meantime, there is no protection from workplace harassment, including sexual harassment, and parental leave is only mandatory for the public sector (12 weeks for mothers and one week for fathers); however, most NGOs and some private sector organisations have their own policies and provisions in place.

Stakeholders reported that the most pressing need of Tongan women for economic empowerment is access to micro loans. The Tonga Development Bank (TDB) offers 1% interest agricultural loans to women and men, but these loans are mostly allocated to commercial farmers, leaving nothing for small farmers or women in agriculture. Historically, women report that they have not fared well with this scheme. TDB also has a 4% and an 8% interest loan programme for women's groups, including on the Outer Islands. The Social Protection and Disability Division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) runs a disability benefit scheme and a social pension scheme and was reported to be providing a loan scheme to people living with disabilities. Various agencies are providing business skills and other vocational training. An August 2018 report showed that, since May 2017, the Tonga Skills programme has delivered 117 trainings to 2,665 clients of whom 67% were women and 67 individuals identified as having a disability. Half of the trainings were delivered in the outer islands. Focus areas included

tourism, agriculture and fisheries, construction and handcrafts or handicrafts. This is a positive new development.

The right policy environment is not in place for gender equality and corporate plans do not facilitate progress for women. Systematic barriers are evident with respect to women's access to employment in the public sector and even more so in the private sector. Access to land is a major barrier along with social norms that discriminate on resource ownership. The discriminatory practices and lack of flexibility in financial institutions set back women farmers and entrepreneurs.

This policy looks at addressing these through the revised key outputs and actions under the Strategic Action Plan.

D. Unequal Participation in Decision-making and Political Representation

Candidate training for women, including practice parliaments, were held in the lead up to both the 2014 and 2017 national elections. In 2014, no women were elected; however, a by-election in 2016 resulted in one woman entering parliament. In 2017, that woman was returned and one other woman elected. Two women out of 26 positions equates to 7.7% representation. Candidate training was also provided prior to the 2016 local government elections, which resulted in one woman elected as a district officer out of 23 positions (4%) and one woman elected as a town officer out of 156 positions (0.6%). A Women's Coalition met regularly to advocate in favour of progress on a Temporary Special Measures (TSM) Bill to reserve seats for women in parliament and had made a submission to cabinet in 2017 to which no decision has been made to date. Advocacy will continue in order to move the bill forward. Women candidates received only 14% of votes at the 2017 national election. Some stakeholders felt that mistrust is one reason for the lack of support but there are other cultural reasons. Increased civic education may assist to balance understanding among voters of how women complement and strengthen the political process. There were also suggestions from stakeholders to amend the District and Town Officers Act (1988) and for WAD to be included in amendment discussions and consultations.

Generally, women are under-represented on national boards, commissions and other decision-making bodies. In some villages, women chair community development committees but, in other villages, women only influence the women's committee and subcommittees, like the women's agriculture committee. In some villages, neither women nor young people are represented on the village development committee and by extension on the district development committee, which is made up of representatives of village development committees. The Community Development Plan (CDP) process identified village women's practical priorities but women's strategic needs, such as the inclusion of women's concerns in village development committees, were not explored. More community awareness is required that includes improving women's knowledge of the roles of committees and why women should have a voice.

Some of the barriers that have been identified include a lack of recognition of women's leadership abilities. There is lack of support for women in politics and also lack of campaigning funds. The district and town officer legislation requires amending and continuous leadership training are also needed.

The Policy proposes key outputs and actions to break down the barriers that have been identified and further balance out the imbalances that are obvious under this specific issue.

E. Unequal Conditions to Respond to Natural Disasters, Environmental Challenges and Climate Change

Activity on disaster risk management and climate change has stepped up in the past four years as a result of regional donor programmes operating out of the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC) and MIA Local Government and Community Development (LG&CD), including the Safety and Protection Cluster. These programmes acknowledge that women and the vulnerable are overwhelmingly the hardest hit by natural disasters and climate events and play an important role in environmental management. Mainstreaming gender has been an effective strategy used by relevant projects specifically targeted to address the issues that are associated under this heading. Examples include gender being incorporated into the *Joint National Action Plan (JNAP II) on Climate Change*; the Green Climate Fund which is reserved for women's projects and organisations; Pacific Risk Resilience Program (PRRP); Outer Islands Renewable Energy Project (OIREP); Nuku'alofa Urban Development Sector Planning (NUDSP) gender action plans; and the multi-year community-based Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (CC-DRM). The responses following tropical Cyclone Gita, which devastated Tonga in early 2018, have also been incredible. For example, the WASH Cluster has provided women, children and elderly disabled person's access to clean water and

sanitation and the WCCC providing post-Gita psycho-social support to those who were affected after the cyclone. In the 20 Stories of Resilience, mixed results were reported post-Gita by vulnerable groups. This has acknowledged the need for equal access to information and training on preparation and recovery and, at the same time, natural resource management. The use of formal and social media to raise awareness is effective and should continue to be used.

Some of the barriers identified by stakeholders include the feeling of exclusion from government services by those affected by Gita. Some town officers were also viewed as being uncooperative in the CC-DRM preparedness process. Additionally, some reports indicate that some district and town officers reflected favoritism by only supporting villagers who had voted for them. Agencies were seen to be duplicating response efforts, which confused those on the receiving end. This revealed the importance of constant two-way communication in the response efforts. There was also ad hoc data collection and sharing discovered in all areas of disaster preparedness and evacuation centres.

This Policy has designed relevant key outputs and actions that aim to achieve equal conditions to respond to natural disasters, environmental challenges and climate change.

V. POLICY

THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY TONGA (WEGET)

A. VISION

Gender equity by 2025

That all women, men, girls and boys as a whole achieve equal access to economic, social, political and religious opportunities and benefits.

B. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The policy proposes a revised set of agreed priorities and guidelines for the government and civil society to improve their capacity to address gender issues and enhance the well-being of the families by integrating a gender perspective in the process of developing laws, policies and programmes which will serve to ensure equal rights, opportunities and benefits for women and men.

C. POLICY GOAL

The goal of the *WEGET* is to advance gender equality ensuring the active contribution and meaningful participation of both women and men in all spheres, and at all levels, of development and decision-making for the well-being of the family and for the benefit of the whole society.

D. STRATEGY

Promoting universal and free participation and partnership of women and men in all spheres of life – religion, society, politics, economics, and culture.

Based on the proposed vision and strategy, Tonga must build a society that allows equal participation of women and men, young and old. Such a society will respect the uniqueness of each individual and will ensure that opportunities are fair and that each may play a role in society according to his or her abilities and ambitions. Striving for this will mean rethinking the rigidly defined roles of women and men. This can be achieved by providing opportunities and support for women to develop their abilities to maximise their participation and benefits from society.

The Policy acknowledges the greater struggle of women and men living in the Outer Islands as they have limited access to information and awareness-raising initiatives and on gender equality and human rights, which do not always reach them. Services to address their needs are more limited. They have less access to employment opportunities and their production reaches the market with difficulty. Hence greater attention needs to be given to ensure their fair contribution to the implementation of the Policy and benefits from it.

E. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- ▶ The family is the basic and most important unit in society and equity in the family needs to be promoted, based on harmonious partnership between women and men, including wife and husband, including husband and wife.
- ▶ Women and men are equal partners in the development of Tonga and equal value needs to be given to their respective roles and responsibilities.
- ▶ Strong partnerships and coordination mechanisms need to be in place between the Women's Affairs Division, other line and sectoral ministries, CSOs and Tonga National Forum of Church Leaders.
- ▶ Mechanisms must be put in place to ensure that women and men living in Outer Islands contribute to the implementation of the Policy and benefit from it.

F. PRIORITY POLICY OUTCOMES

In order to achieve gender equality that will benefit the whole of the society for future generations, the *WEDGET Policy* proposes the following five (5) priority outcomes:

1. Enabling environment for mainstreaming gender across government policies, programmes and services, corporate budgeting and monitoring and evaluation
2. Families and communities prosper from gender equality
3. Equitable access to economic assets and employment
4. Increased women's leadership and equitable political representation
5. Create equal conditions to respond to natural disasters, environmental challenges and climate change

People with disabilities and vulnerable groups are integral to the five (5) priority outcomes..

G. IMPLEMENTATION

The Women's Affairs Division is a national machinery that plays the leading role of coordinating, monitoring and providing advisory services in respect of this Policy. The implementation of the Policy requires the engagement of all sectors and all government agencies at both local and national levels. Each sector and agency concerned with the outcomes of the Policy must dedicate appropriate human, financial and material resources and are expected to play a leading role in achieving the outcomes in relation to their sector.

H. MONITORING AND REPORTING

Monitoring and evaluation are critical for measuring the national progress toward gender equality and advancing the development and status of women. The NACGAD which is chaired by the MIA and comprises Chief Executive Officers and key stakeholders from civil society, will continue to monitor the implementation of the Policy, play an advisory role for directing interventions, and will report to parliament annually through the MIA. Each of the priority outcomes of this Policy will be overseen by NACGAD and relevant Sub-Committees. Through cabinet reports, its annual report, and other reports or forums, the Women's Affairs Division will inform the nation on the progress of the Policy outcomes. Such reports will highlight progress and achievements on implementing the Policy; provide information about recurrent and emerging gender issues; and draw attention to the need to have a greater impact in achieving the Policy outcomes. The key performance measures will incorporate:

- ▶ The SDG targets
- ▶ Equal opportunities for employment
- ▶ Equal access to productive and economic resources
- ▶ Equal participation in decision-making at all levels
- ▶ Increased involvement of men in addressing gender issues, especially gender-based violence
- ▶ Systematic collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and identification of gender gaps
- ▶ Linking national plans, *TSDFs*, policies and legislation to international and regional commitments such as the UN SDGs, *Pacific Plan*, the *Pacific Platform for Action*, the *Beijing Platform for Action*, the *Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration*, *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and *SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway*.

APPENDIX I: STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION 2019–2025

Outcome 1:

Enabling environment for mainstreaming gender across government policies, programmes, services, corporate budgeting and monitoring and evaluation

Outputs and Key Actions:

1.1 Increased national capacity to address gender issues and promote values of gender equality

1.1.1 Enhance the capacity and competency of the Women's Affairs Division (WAD) to coordinate, advise, monitor, and provide technical assistance to the government's institutions by mobilising adequate funding and human resources for the WAD to fulfil its mandate as the key gender policy oversight, advisory and monitoring unit.

1.1.2 Strengthen the capacity of relevant officers (policy advisers, planners, budgeters, monitoring and evaluation staff) in all ministries with respect to gender mainstreaming.

1.1.3 Develop partnership MOUs reflecting levels of engagement and coordination with stakeholders (e.g. NGOs, CSOs, faith-based organisations), to advocate, raise awareness, conduct media campaigns and play an effective role in promoting the values of gender equality and human rights across society.

1.2 Gender perspectives are mainstreamed in government policies, programmes and services

1.2.1 Develop and disseminate guidelines for gender mainstreaming in policy design, the management cycle and service delivery, using the Government's *Gender Mainstreaming Handbook* as a key resource. Include gender budgeting in corporate plans and gender monitoring and evaluation systems with gender targets and indicators, for all national, divisional and sectoral strategies and plans. Assist divisions to access MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support) through the UN Joint Program.

1.2.2 Support the production and use of sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis to inform government policies and programmes.

1.2.3 Ensure job descriptions and terms of reference (TORs) of national and international project staff and consultants incorporate gender analysis and gender perspectives into all sectors and that the gender components of TORs are achieved by the end of the contract.

1.3 The principle of gender equality is embedded in legislative and statutory reforms and policy initiatives across government

1.3.1 Review existing laws, including local government law, and draft legislation for discriminatory clauses and amend, as required, to support gender equality and the government's national, regional and international commitments.

1.3.2 Provide orientation on gender equality and non-discrimination in the law to members of parliament in particular judges, magistrates and lawyers, and the whole justice sector on an ongoing basis to strengthen good governance

1.4 The NACDG monitors and publicly reports on progress made toward advancing gender equality and on implementation of the Policy

1.4.1 Strengthen the capacity of the NACDAG to monitor progress and the impacts of government policies and programmes on gender equality.

1.4.2 Prepare an annual report on the achievements of the Policy's outcomes for the government, the National SDG Committee and public distribution.

1.5 Build in competency and accountability mechanisms for gender mainstreaming

1.5.1 Establish – through WAD – a close collaborative relationship with the Public Service Commission (PSC), National Planning, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Foreign Affairs on progress with gender mainstreaming.

1.5.2 Support the PSC to review and strengthen the gender component of induction training for new public service recruits; provide information on the government’s gender policy, and raise awareness of the benefits of gender mainstreaming and their individual responsibility to mainstream gender in their work.

1.5.3 Include gender mainstreaming capacity as a core competency to be developed or as a criteria for selection of all public service staff; incorporate responsibility to mainstream gender in TORs; and monitor adherence to this competency and fulfilment of this responsibility in performance reviews.

1.5.4 Strengthen collaboration between GFPs and WAD to access training and resources.

1.5.5 Put in place a centralised gender information management system which captures comprehensive disaggregated data and information in relation to gender and the family; make reports freely available on request.

1.5.6 Facilitate the training of trainers on gender analysis and gender mainstreaming for focal points from both public and private sectors, including civil society.

Stakeholders:

Ministry of Internal Affairs, Women’s Affairs Division, Social Protection and Disability Division, Public Service Commission, Prime Minister’s Office, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, all ministries, Members of Parliament, District Officers, Town Officers, Disabled Persons’ Organisations, NATA, civil society, churches, Youth Stakeholders Forum, development partners.

Outcome 2:

Families and communities prosper from gender equality

Outputs and Key Actions:

2.1 The values of gender equality are better understood and promoted in the family, workplace and society

2.1.1 Develop a plan of action in favour of the *Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)* for community awareness, sectoral consultations, capacity building of government, NGOs and faith-based organisations .

2.1.2 Support the ongoing review of the education curriculum in order to integrate into it gender equality, children's rights and the Tonga Family Life Education curriculum developed by UNFPA.

2.1.3 Develop an action plan and implement the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, led by the MOE and Training and supported by relevant stakeholders. Advocate to change existing legislation, which permits child marriage, in order to reflect international commitments and better protect children and, in particular, girls.

2.1.4 Support the development of a *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security* with respect to relevant United Nations Resolutions.

2.1.5 Support peer training on gender equality for adolescent boys and girls, including those with disabilities, both in and out of school.

2.2 Measures are in place to eliminate domestic violence and provide services to the victims

2.2.1 Develop and implement a coordinated national prevention strategy and action framework that includes a national faith-based prevention strategy to prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG) by engaging faith denominations in Tonga, linking into the regional faith-based strategy for the Pacific, and supporting CSOs to develop – as agreed – joint, rights-based messaging in line with the national prevention strategy.

2.2.2 Support community mobilisation prevention programmes to effectively engage women and men, youth, girls and boys in communities to transform harmful attitudes, beliefs and norms pertaining to VAWG and to promote positive cultural and traditional values of love, reciprocity and respect.

2.2.3 Promote the concept of families free from violence, recognising the different forms of today's family units, such as female-headed households and blended families.

2.2.4 Support the mobilisation of community groups and male advocates (Community Network for Domestic Conflict Resolution) to intervene in favour of protecting victims of domestic violence and other forms of violence, facilitate access to counselling and settlement of domestic conflict and violence, and advocate for offenders to be held accountable.

2.2.5 Work with youth sports to challenge gender norms and empower women and girls to pursue the same sporting opportunities as men and boys and to participate equally in sports decision-making forums.

2.2.6 Continue to raise awareness and support implementation of the *FPA 2013*, in particular as it pertains to the prevention and response components of the Act, to challenging misconceptions about the Act, and to include young people in its implementation.

2.2.7 Strengthen multi-sectoral service delivery coordination in line with best practice, including development of the *National Service Delivery Protocol for Responding to Cases of Gender Based Violence (GBV)*.

2.2.8 Develop and implement minimum standards for survivor-centred GBV counselling, based on the measures WAD has already implemented in this area; maintain the national Domestic Violence helpline to provide immediate crisis support to survivors of violence; and continue to extend counselling services to women in rural areas.

2.2.9 Assess current pathways of GBV survivors through the health system. Support prioritisation of survivor-centred training and guidelines in order to strengthen GBV response within the health system. Develop a comprehensive GBV Training Strategy, inclusive of pre-service and in-service training priorities for all levels of health workers in health facilities, in order to support identification, referral and treatment of GBV survivors.

2.2.10 Map existing legislation and policy gaps in relation to VAWG, the Family Health and Safety Study recommendations, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and UNFPA's report, "A Deeper Silence", in order to support a robust policy environment.

2.2.11 Deliver training to police and court officers focused on a survivor-centred approach to GBV prevention, protection and prosecution.

2.3 Improve sexual and reproductive health rights including access to family planning

2.3.1 Support delivery of Family Life Education (FLE) in schools, grounded in the global evidence-informed technical guidance, which includes strong focus on gender, GBV, relationships, values, rights, and culture, both as a standalone and as infused topics across other areas of the curricula related to SRHR.

2.3.2 Map existing community-based FLE resources, tools and organisations for out-of-school FLE, with the aim to develop a standardised package and agreed network to deliver FLE in communities.

2.3.3 Review and report on social, cultural, religious and traditional norms and attitudes which prevent women's access to SRHR services, inclusive of those related to GBV incidence and care for persons with disabilities, to inform a *Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) Strategy*.

2.3.4 Conduct research in order to identify and analyse the socio-cultural context that contributes to adolescent pregnancy as well as the economic impacts of adolescent pregnancy. Drawing on this social norm research, develop and test information, education and communication (IEC) materials and multi-media products specific to the Tongan context and targeted at groups including adolescents, youth, and persons with disabilities. Lobby to ban the discriminatory practice of expelling pregnant teenagers from school.

2.3.5 Support inclusion of gendered adolescent and youth SRHR in the *National Youth Policy and Action Plan*.

2.3.6 Support peer education initiatives delivered by Tonga Family Health Association, Tonga Leitis Association and the Talitha Project on SRHR, targeting diverse groups of young people (adolescents, single/teen mothers, all affected populations).

Stakeholders:

Ministry of Internal Affairs, Women's Affairs Division, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Police, Prisons and Fire Services, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education and Training, Public Service Commission, Parliament, Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance, Social Protection and Disability Division, Disabled Person's Organisations, civil society, media, Church Leadership Forum, Youth Stakeholders Forum, UN Women, UNFPA and other development partners

Outcome 3:

Equitable access to economic assets and employment

Outputs and Key Actions:

3.1 Increased women's access to economic opportunities including self-employment

3.1.1 Enact and strengthen employment legislation in order to meet the standards of ILO Conventions on gender: 100—Equal Remuneration; 111—Discrimination (Employment and Occupation); 156—Workers with Family Responsibilities; and 183—Maternity Protection.

3.1.2 Identify and strengthen enabling mechanisms for the implementation of business development/income-generating opportunities (aquaculture, traditional farming practices, cash crops, organic production, food processing, small business management, computer skills, etc.), including in rural areas and outer islands.

3.1.3 Support establishment of women's groups in the most vulnerable, remote communities. Recognise the different capacities of vulnerable populations and support them to plan and pursue economic activities and to achieve access to markets.

3.1.4 Schedule regular National Women's Handicraft Expos in Tonga and support women's groups to access overseas festivals and trade fairs for the sale of handicrafts.

3.1.5 Support the Small Business Advisory Centre to provide comprehensive advisory services to both women and men in the creation and development of sustainable enterprises, ensuring that the needs of women entrepreneurs are well served.

3.1.6 Promote sustainable women's business development in the tourism and cultural industries. Using a value chain approach, support women's businesses through training in order to foster their innovation and improve the quality of their products.

3.1.7 Ease legislative, administrative and financial procedures needed to formalise micro-enterprises, enabling women small entrepreneurs to strengthen their enterprises.

3.1.8 Encourage a long-term government commitment, both human and financial, to gender-mainstreamed flexible technical and vocational education throughout Tonga, with a continued focus on remote areas and vulnerable populations (e.g. female-headed households, women and men with disabilities and all affected populations). Provide business management skills, value chain and marketing training customised to women entrepreneurs' needs and capacities for sustainability.

3.2 Equal access to and effective management of productive and economic resources

3.2.1 Commission research on Tongan women's contribution to Gross Domestic Product.

3.2.2 Facilitate women's access to financial services, capital formation and insurance for small and micro-enterprises, including for survivors of domestic violence.

3.2.3 Conduct training and disseminate information about family budgeting and effective management of family financial resources.

3.2.4 Investigate how remittances can be used to support development of women's small businesses.

3.2.5 Prepare a submission for government on a culturally appropriate model of equal land rights and equal ownership of productive assets for men and women.

3.3 Improved working conditions supportive to the parental and family roles of women and men

3.3.1 Promote appropriate and adequate leave entitlement for mothers and fathers to ensure the healthy growth of newborn children, and promote equitable sharing of child care and related responsibilities (e.g. sick leave, vacation leave, parental

leave) both in the public and private sectors.

3.3.2 Support development of services for families (e.g. affordable pre-school, day care centres for children, community services for elderly people and persons with disabilities).

3.3.3 Conduct a time-use survey on the division of labour and tasks at the family level and raise awareness about the benefits of sharing household responsibilities.

3.3.4 Survey female government scholarship recipients to identify levels of seniority in the workforce and barriers to accessing professional opportunities (e.g. child birth).

Stakeholders:

Ministry of Internal Affairs, Women's Affairs Division, Ministry of Education and Training, Public Service Commission, Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forests and Fisheries, MCCTIL, Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Financial Institutions, Social Protection and Disability Division, Disabled Person's Organisations , Women in Sustainable Enterprises, civil society, Youth Stakeholders Forum, training institutions, private sector, development partners

Outcome 4:

Increased women's leadership and equitable political representation

Outputs and Key Actions:

4.1 Increased representation of women in parliament and in elected local government offices

4.1.1 Support CSOs, faith-based organisations and youth groups to make women's leadership roles visible in the private sector, faith-based organisations, and civil society, and raise awareness about women's capacity to be leaders, their actual contribution to the well-being and development of their communities and society overall, and the positive role women can play in parliament and in local governance institutions.

4.1.2 Support women candidates and elected representatives to build confidence and develop agency to increase their influence on political debates pertaining to gender equality and social inclusion.

4.1.3 Support adult and youth community civic education initiatives and review school curricula to integrate leadership training for all students. Support Youth parliament activities.

4.1.4 Conduct studies to identify obstacles faced by women who wish to run for election; and to identify which factors influence voters' choices (notably the reasons women and men are typically unsupportive of women candidates). Raise awareness about temporary measures and other approaches to foster dialogue on an effective strategy to promote the equitable political representation of women in parliament.

4.1.5 Develop a programme to build media capacity in favour of analysing how gender issues affect family, social and economic development of Tonga, treating female and male candidates fairly and equally, promoting gender equality, particularly for disabled populations, and explaining the benefits of women's participation in political affairs. Support practice parliament training.

4.2 Increased participation of women in decision-making in all spheres of society

4.2.1 Support women's networking to foster support for women in leadership positions, especially in political positions.

4.2.2 Support continuous leadership training for women seeking to be candidates in local or national elections as well as for those pursuing leadership roles in their professions or in civil society.

4.2.3 Promote the participation of all members of the family in important decision-making.

4.2.4 Develop a database on women in politics and in leadership positions, including boards, in the public and private sectors.

Stakeholders:

Ministry of Internal Affairs, Women's Affairs Division, Ministry of Education and Training, Public Service Commission, Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, Members of the Parliament, District Officers, Town Officers, Electoral Commission, Social Protection and Disability Division, Disabled Person's Organisations, civil society, Youth Stakeholders Forum, Church Leadership Forum, media, private sector, development partners.

Outcome 5:

Create equal conditions to respond to natural disasters, environmental challenges and climate change

Outputs and Key Actions

5.1 Improved knowledge about the gender perspectives in response to natural disasters and environmental and climate change adaptation

5.1.1 Build the competency of the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, MEIDECC, including the National Emergency Management Office, and civil society stakeholders in mainstreaming gender in disaster risk preparedness and climate change adaptation strategies and plans.

5.1.2 Support the Division of Climate Change to achieve the gender targets of JNAP II.

5.1.3 Conduct a study to identify local knowledge regarding the distribution of responsibilities within the family in preparation for, and response to, natural disasters and the distribution of roles and responsibilities in the household's strategy to adapt to environmental and climate stresses.

5.1.4 Disseminate information to the public on preparing for the different gender impacts of natural disasters, environmental change and climate change adaptation.

5.2 Increased capacity of households to respond to natural disasters and to the impacts of environmental challenges and climate change

5.2.1 Ensure equal access to information for all members of households as it pertains to preparatory measures to natural disasters (e.g. emergency measures; safe roads and shelters; securing the house and productive assets; protecting lives; and other important measures). Improve the maintenance and adaptation of basic infrastructure and services (hospitals, roads, communication, water and sanitation, waste management, energy supply) to climate stresses.

5.2.2 Raise awareness of the increased vulnerability of certain members of the family (pregnant and lactating women, children, elderly people, people with disabilities) and certain households, and ensure they receive proper attention in the preparedness and recovery phases.

5.2.3 Support initiatives to improve the management and conservation of natural resources, notably of biodiversity, sustainable land use, water resources, coastal fisheries, and forests. Build the capacity of populations living in rural areas and in the outer islands to diversify or adapt their livelihoods in an effort to increase their resilience to natural disasters and climate change.

5.2.4 Support initiatives to improve conservation of energy (in particular in relation to electricity consumption and transport), and promote technologies for renewable energy as a mitigation and adaptation measure, keeping in mind that energy services must serve the needs of the household and livelihoods.

Stakeholders

Ministry of Internal Affairs, Women's Affairs Division, Ministry of Education and Training, Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Climate Change and Communications, NEMO, Public Service Commission, Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, Members of the Parliament, District Officers, Town Officers, Electoral Commission, Social Protection and Disability Division, Disabled Person's Organisations, civil society, Youth Stakeholders Forum, Church Leadership Forum, media, private sector, development partners.



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