

**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**  
Sixth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

Bangkok, 27–29 March 2019  
Item 3 of the provisional agenda\*

**Linking national, regional and global dimensions of  
the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

**Progress on the road to sustainable development in the  
Pacific\*\***

**Executive Summary of the 1ST Pacific Sustainable Development  
Report**

*Summary*

The present document is the Executive Summary of the 1st Quadrennial Pacific Sustainable Development Report (PSDR) under the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development (PRSD). It provides a high-level regional assessment of social, economic, environmental and means of implementation trends, progress and challenges in the Pacific subregion.

The report highlights: strong leadership and regional cooperation for sustainable development; positive but inconsistent economic growth across the Pacific; good access to education; improving empowerment of women and global leadership in marine conservation. While there is political commitment to addressing issues of vulnerable groups, implementation and financing is uneven and generally limited. There is increasing vulnerability and poverty; increasing impact and cost of climate related events; high Non-Communicable diseases (NCDs) rates; continuing gender pay gap; high youth unemployment and high levels of violence against women.

The report provides recommendations for more targeted support to enhancing opportunities for women, youth, the elderly and persons with disabilities; tackling gender gaps in employment including youth unemployment; a continuing focus on sustainable tourism and fisheries while conserving the Pacific's rich biodiversity; increasing women's participation in policy making; intensifying efforts for tackling Non-Communicable diseases and the dual threats of climate change and disasters; more effectively utilizing existing and mobilizing additional financing, strengthening capacities and institutions; and increasing investment in statistical systems.

To date, Samoa (2016), Australia and Kiribati (2018) have completed VNRs. Through the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development, development partners provided coordinated technical and financial support for the Kiribati 2018 Voluntary National Review process. Common challenges for the three countries included the lack of public awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities for Action (S.A.M.O.A) Pathway; a lack of ownership at sector level; a lack of data and statistics; challenges of consulting dispersed populations; and limited financing and human resources capacity. For Samoa and Kiribati, the positives were the embedding of the voluntary national reviews as part of government's national accountability mechanisms. All three countries noted the value of strengthening stakeholder engagement, improving national planning and budgeting coordination processes and focusing on strengthening capacities for data collection, analysis and use. Fiji, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Tonga, and Vanuatu intend to finalize their voluntary national reviews for the High-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) in 2019.

\* ESCAP/RFSD/2019/L.1/Rev.1

\*\* This document is being issued without formal editing.

## I. Introduction

1. In 2015, Pacific Islands Forum Leaders (PIFL) committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals. They called for the contextualisation of these commitments at the regional level through country led and inclusive processes to identify a regional set of indicators that take account of national priorities and which could help to jointly monitor the Pacific's progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities for Action (S.A.M.O.A) Pathway, the Framework for Pacific Regionalism (FPR)<sup>1</sup> and the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED).

2. In September 2017, the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders endorsed the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development to guide regional responses for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs within the context of national plans and priorities, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities for Action Pathway and the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. The Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development identified the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) as an important international multi-stakeholder platform that provides an opportunity for the Pacific region to advocate priorities and shared accountability for transboundary issues, leverage support including broader regional cooperation, and inform knowledge sharing and reciprocal learning. Similarly, the Outcome Document of the 4<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development on the Regional Road map for Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific recognizes that “*cooperation will be undertaken in coordination with regional and subregional organizations to ensure that activities contribute to subregional priorities, including the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A) Pathway*”<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development called for alignment of the Pacific and Asia-Pacific regional reporting processes to reduce the reporting burden. The Pacific Sustainable Development Report highlights progress made in *the Blue Pacific* region toward achieving sustainable development.

3. This report is the first, quadrennial Pacific Sustainable Development (PSDR) to be prepared under the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development (PRSD), that was endorsed by Leaders in 2017. The report highlights progress made in the Blue Pacific region towards achieving sustainable development – within the context of Framework for Pacific Regionalism and national development plans and reflected in the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A) Pathway; the Paris Agreement; the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA); the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; and the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC). It also includes a review of the 2012 Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED).

4. The report provides a high-level narrative on development trends, results and effectiveness in the Pacific. It aims to reduce the burden on small country administrations and to demonstrate the value of integrated reporting. The regional sustainable development priorities covered in this report include those identified as transboundary issues such as climate change (SDG 13),

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<sup>1</sup> 46th Pacific Islands Forum Communique, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, 8-10 September 2015 - [http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/2015\\_Forum\\_Communique\\_10Sept2015.pdf](http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/2015_Forum_Communique_10Sept2015.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> 4th APFSD Outcome Document, paragraph 37.

disaster risk management (SDG 11) and integrated oceans management (SDG 14); as well as poverty reduction (SDG 1); reducing inequality (SDG 10), including gender inequality (SDG 5); addressing the needs of persons living with disabilities (SDG 11); improving quality of education (SDG 4); tackling non-communicable diseases and cervical cancer (SDG 3); improving connectivity (SDG 9); and ensuring decent work and economic growth (SDG 8).

5. Because the mid-term review of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A) Pathway started in 2018, the report also considers the situation in the Pacific with respect to food security (SDG 2), water and sanitation (SDG 6), transportation (SDG 9), culture and sports, sustainable energy (SDG 7) and tourism, waste management, sustainable consumption (SDG 12), biodiversity (SDG 15) and peaceful, safe communities and migration (SDG 16). It seeks to review progress, challenges and priorities of the means of implementation, across the areas of: adequacy and effectiveness of financing; building stronger institutions and improving national capacity; increasing development effectiveness; and, the role of inclusive partnerships.

6. Not all of the 132 Pacific Sustainable Development Indicators are measurable by data based on international methodologies, and for some others there is limited data available. As a consequence, only 48 per cent of the indicators can be measured at this time. Of most concern is the lack of data to measure regional priorities of climate change, ocean and seas or “life below water”, and quality education. However, there are various national and regional initiatives underway that seek to manage information and data and expand the data set.

7. The report is a cooperative effort between Pacific Islands Forum Countries and the agencies of the CROP1 and the United Nations System in the Pacific.

## II. Pacific Progress in Achieving Sustainable Development: Trends and Challenges

8. Historically, economic development, as measured by Gross domestic product (GDP), has been the primary objective of national policymaking. The challenge therefore is to shift the developmental paradigm and place the well-being of people at the centre of sustainable development. The United Nations General Assembly confirmed “that unsustainable patterns of production and consumption can impede sustainable development” and recognized “the need for a more inclusive, equitable and balanced approach to economic growth that promotes sustainable development, poverty eradication, happiness and well-being of all people”.

9. It is within this context and was the basis for how the following analysis of the Pacific region’s response to this call has been laid out. The analysis recognises the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, and their combined impact on our development objectives and aspirations.

### A. People and Social Development

10. While the region can point to progress in a number of areas covered under the **people and social development** pillar, progress has often been uneven across countries. Data availability remains problematic and is often not disaggregated. While there is good data in the health area, more work is needed if we are going to be able to measure education quality and achievement and income inequality. The lack of disaggregation of a number of data sets makes

it difficult to identify accurately the actual development impact on people with disabilities, youth, women and the most vulnerable.

11. In the Pacific there is a focus on hardship, lack of economic opportunity and social exclusion. While extreme poverty remains relatively low, household surveys in 7 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) indicate that the elderly and other vulnerable groups are more often likely to fall into hardship and poverty with an estimated one in every four Pacific Islanders living below their national poverty lines (particularly in the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji and Papua New Guinea). There is increasing inequality amongst marginalised population groups and for people living in remote communities. Unemployment, and in this regard particularly among women and young people, is a major concern, with youth unemployment averaging 23 per cent in the Pacific region compared with the global average of 13 per cent.

12. At least 1.5 million Pacific islanders are living with some form of disability. Persons with disabilities in the Pacific are among the poorest and most marginalised in their communities. They are over represented among those living in poverty and underrepresented in social, economic and public life, including in national decision-making. They generally have lower economic, health and education outcomes.

13. Gender inequality in the region is manifested in the high prevalence rates of violence against women, with more than 60 per cent in Melanesia, and more than 40 per cent in Polynesia and Micronesia. Sexual and reproductive health and rights issues also remain substantial challenges to be addressed. For example, the burden of cervical cancer caused by sexually transmitted Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is significant and of import, with Melanesia classified as a sub-region with one of the highest incidence rates of cervical cancer in the world (33.3 cases per 100,000 females per year).

14. Traditional forms of social protection are increasingly under threat, however, all Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) have some form of social insurance or social protection while low compared to global figures are improving– highest in in Micronesia, then Melanesia and lowest in Polynesia.

15. At the regional level, Pacific Leaders have prioritised addressing challenges of vulnerable groups such as women, persons with disabilities through the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED) and the Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PFRPD). Despite this, Pacific governments allocate very limited financing to national institutions and initiatives to address gender equality (1 per cent) and persons with disabilities development (0.2 per cent).

16. Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are at crisis levels in the Pacific. The region has some of the highest rates of Non-Communicable Diseases and account for in some cases up to 84 per cent of deaths (Fiji and Samoa). Obesity and diabetes rates are among the highest worldwide, and are much greater than the estimated global prevalence of 10 per cent.

17. While access to education has improved, quality remains a challenge. There is a need to focus on improving quality and relevance of education and cognitive learning outcomes, where results such as literacy and numeracy have not made the expected gains for all. There is also a renewed focus on lifelong learning with early childhood care education and post-secondary education and training needing priority attention. Changes in approaches to learning will require new ways of teaching.

18. Culture, in all its dimensions, is a fundamental component of sustainable development. Through tangible and intangible heritage, creative industries and various forms of artistic expression, culture is a powerful contributor to economic development, social stability and environmental protection. However, it is not generally acknowledged as a formal sector of the economy and as a consequence the economic and social benefits and contributions of culture are not fully recognised and receive less than 1 per cent of national appropriations.

## **B. Prosperity and equitable economic development**

19. In the area of prosperity and equitable economic development, while data is limited some could be addressed through the inclusion of additional questions to household and labour force surveys. The economic trends in the region have been positive, yet inconsistent. Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) are highly sensitive to external economic shocks (such as, global commodity price fluctuations, disruptions in the global supply chain and financial stress), catastrophic events (such as Cyclones floods and droughts) and costs of adaptation to climate change. There are three major work deficits in the Pacific, including: the dominance of the informal economy; gender gaps; and youth unemployment.

20. The small and limited economic base of Pacific Island Countries and Territories restricts their capacities to increase employment opportunities and improve social safety nets for the vulnerable and elderly. Critical challenges for almost all Pacific Island Countries and Territories include: (i) creating employment opportunities for youth; (ii) reducing vulnerability and promoting sustainable enterprises; (iii) enhancing the impact of remittances; and (vi) enhancing gender equality. In the last three years, the Pacific has faced a number of disaster events causing significant economic impacts, injury and loss of life. Post-disaster needs assessments indicated significant damages and losses amounting to 30 per cent (Fiji), 2016 to 64 per cent (Vanuatu) in 2015 of national Gross domestic products (GDPs).

21. Tourism is an important sector of growth and development in the Pacific providing foreign exchange earnings, employment and income-earning opportunities for many including women. In 2017, the Pacific region (16 Pacific Island Countries and Territories) received a record number of 2,983,781 million tourists of which 2,000,983 million<sup>3</sup> arrived by plane and the rest by cruise ships and yachts. Fiji took the majority of the market share at 42 per cent followed by French Polynesia (10 per cent), Cook Islands (8.1 per cent), Samoa (7.8 per cent) and Papua New Guinea (7.1 per cent). Just over 50 per cent of tourists were from Australia (29.5 per cent) and New Zealand (20.8 per cent). The rest were from the United States, Europe, Other Asia, China, Japan and other Pacific Island Countries and Territories.

22. In 2017, total estimated tourism spending in the Pacific Island Countries and Territories was US\$3.35 billion<sup>4</sup> equivalent to an average of USD 1,674 per visitor and USD 291 per capita for the 11.5 million Pacific Islanders (excluding Australia/New Zealand). The South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) estimates that tourism contributes between 2.3 per cent to Gross domestic product in Papua New Guinea to more than 60 per cent to the Gross domestic product of Cook Islands, over 40 per cent to Fiji, Vanuatu and Niue Gross domestic products. Tourism provided between 25 and 35 per cent of total employment in the Cook Islands, Niue, Vanuatu and the Federated States of Micronesia in 2017. The Pacific Tourism Strategy 2015-

<sup>3</sup> SPTO, 2018. *Annual Review of Visitor Arrivals in Pacific Island Countries in 2017*.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

2019 promotes more sustainable low-volume, high yielding and green eco-tourism to protect and preserve the Pacific's highly sensitive biodiversity.

23. The fisheries sector is a significant contributor to Pacific economies, in particular to Gross domestic products in five Pacific Island Countries and Territories<sup>5</sup>. The value of fishing to Gross domestic product (not including processing or service industries) ranges between 0.2 per cent in New Caledonia to 14 per cent in Marshall Islands. Despite the region only harvesting 44 per cent (1.5 billion) of the total value of its fishery resources, (estimated to be USD 3.6 billion in 2014), there has been a doubling of revenue from fishing fees between 2012 (220 million) and 2016 (470 million) primarily due to the success of the Parties to Nauru Agreement Vessel Day Scheme.

24. A 2015 SPC and FFA fisheries study highlighted other challenges such as the stagnation or decline of coastal fisheries production between 2007 and 2014 and its impact on the largely coastal Pacific population and their dependence on coastal fisheries for food security and livelihoods. To address these challenges, the Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries aims to: increase the share of locally based fishing industry and revenue; increase employment as well as trade and investment facilitation; and, ensure adequate assistance is provided to national fisheries agencies and local communities to be able to manage their coastal fisheries resources.

25. Remittances are significant in the incomes and growth of Pacific peoples and economies as well as foreign exchange. According to World Development Indicators, remittances account for more than 7 per cent income for Pacific Island Small states<sup>6</sup>. On average, remittances' contribution to the gross domestic product of Tonga (26 per cent), Samoa (20 per cent), Marshall Islands (14 per cent), and Tuvalu (13 per cent) are well above the regional average of 7 per cent over the last 10 years. However, the average cost of remittances to the Pacific is between 8 to 12 per cent which is four times higher than Agenda 2030 target of 3 per cent. The closure of Money Transfer Operators (MTOs) in the Pacific remains a risk to low-cost remittances in the Pacific. A major driver of these closures has been the "de-risking" of the sector by commercial banks. The Forum Economic Ministers have called for concerted efforts by all stakeholders, including the development partners and the national governments, to address the issues around de-risking and its impact on remittances flows to the Pacific.

26. Accessing finance for sustainable development and climate change adaptation remains an ongoing challenge for Pacific Island Countries and Territories. Financing options determine how Pacific Island Countries and Territories can effectively invest in people, sustainable enterprises, institutions and resilient infrastructure and how they play a critical role in meeting the development challenges of the Pacific.

### **C. Planet and sustainable environmental management**

27. The Blue Pacific continent contains and supports the most extensive and diverse coral reefs in the world, the largest tuna fishery, the deepest oceanic trenches and the healthiest and in some cases, largest remaining populations of many globally threatened species such as whales and dolphins, sea turtles, dugongs, sharks and stingrays. The Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) provides 2.7 million tons of sustainably caught tuna into the global

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<sup>5</sup> Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, and Tuvalu.

<sup>6</sup> World bank classification and includes Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

market, which makes up more than 56 per cent of global supply annually with its fisheries worth about 5.7 billion. The Pacific's global leadership on Oceans management including successfully lobbying for the SDG 14 on Oceans reflects the importance of the Pacific Ocean to the region.

28. Demonstrating this global leadership, the Pacific is making good progress towards achieving the SDG14 target of 10 per cent marine protection and conservation with 8% already conserved through the many marine protected areas such as the Micronesian Challenge; the Phoenix Island Protected Area; the Cook Islands Marine Park, the Palau National Marine Sanctuary and the New Caledonia Coral Sea Nature Park.

29. Climate change is a critical development challenge for the region. Some of the greatest concerns are sea level rise, saltwater intrusion of freshwater lenses and ocean acidification which will impact humans, water and food security; livelihoods; and the rich Pacific biodiversity and culture. As a transboundary issue, climate change potentially effects population movement, tracking mobility patterns due to climate change is necessary as is viewing migration as an adaptation strategy.

30. The increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters, climate change impacts and increasing land and ocean pollution and contamination are already impacting the Pacific Ocean, coastal areas, homes, infrastructure, food and water security and livelihoods. The anticipated effects of global warming on the region's coral reefs is expected to cause a decrease of 20 per cent in fisheries and 30 per cent decrease in tourism earnings. The recent cyclones in the Pacific caused significant damage to people's homes, livelihoods and set back national development by a few years in Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. Natural disasters cost Pacific Island Countries and Territories an average 2 per cent of Gross domestic product annually and increased from 3.8 per cent of regional Gross domestic product in 2012 to 15.6 per cent of total regional Gross domestic product in 2016 and as high as 30 per cent of Fiji's Gross domestic product in 2016 and 64 per cent of Vanuatu's Gross domestic product in 2015.

31. There is concern about the impact of climate change and population on terrestrial, coastal areas and livelihoods. The Pacific Islands region's biodiversity is also under intense pressure from natural and human-induced disturbance, invasive species, population growth and other threats. More coordinated, integrated and ecosystem based sustainable development approaches are required to improve resource management practices and ensure food security and better livelihoods.

32. The inherent challenges of structural limitations and vulnerability of Pacific Island Countries and Territories are exacerbated by the impact of more frequent and intense climate induced and other natural hazard events. One event can undo decades of development progress, destroying vital infrastructure, biodiversity and adversely affecting the delivery of goods and services, and livelihoods and wellbeing. The 2017 World Risk Report identified the Pacific as the region of highest risk taken over a five-year timeframe and perspective. It also found it to be the only region in which the populations vulnerability to extreme natural events had risen.

33. Growing economies and population numbers coupled with poor waste management practices and limited land availability, has resulted in an increased volume of solid and hazardous wastes threatening the sustainable development of Pacific Island Countries and Territories. The indicative waste generation for the region's urban population is estimated at over 1.16 million

tonnes in 2013. It is projected to increase to more than 1.59 million tonnes by 2025. Over 80 per cent of ocean litter is from land-based sources which is impacting and killing sea life including coral reefs. The North Pacific Gyre, or the Great Pacific Garbage Patch between the US and Hawaii, occupies an ocean area that is twice the size of Texas. Ocean pollution kills more than 1 million seabirds and 100 million whales, dolphins and seals every year.

34. To help improve waste management there are a growing number of national initiatives. Local initiatives such as the ‘Container Deposit Programmes’; pre-paid waste collection bag systems; and the introduction of waste tipping fees should be supported and replicated. These initiatives are being promoted through public education and awareness activities, such as the 3Rs+Return, eco-bags and the Clean Schools programmes. Recycling initiatives in a number of countries, including Palau and Kiribati, have resulted in a substantial volume of waste being taken offshore. Other examples include: Vanuatu legislation to ban the use, manufacture and importation of single use plastic bags and polystyrene takeaway food containers; Palau banning the use of single use bags; Fiji has ‘user-fees’ to discourage the use of plastics and Samoa banning single use plastics. Despite the existence of these frameworks and legislation; enforcement and prosecution remain a challenge.

35. A multidisciplinary and integrated approach, involving several partners is required for sustainable ocean governance and management and conservation, adaptation, and mitigation and biodiversity activities. Mainstreaming through harmonisation of environmental objectives into existing national or multi-sector agency programs, plans and policies - including increased financial and technical support is one way to build and improve policy coherence and implementation. Improving access to funding, access to technology and improvements in capacity is necessary to build climate and disaster resilience and promote clean energy development.

36. Despite the region giving a high priority to issues covered under the planet and sustainable **environmental management** pillar, data availability for many of the targets and indicators is poor. These challenges are not unique to the Pacific and further work is underway at both at global and regional levels to provide proxy indicators to improve reporting in the future against these important priorities.

### **III. Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED)**

37. Under the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration, progress is uneven across the Pacific Island Countries and Territories and six priority areas. Most Pacific countries are close to achieving gender parity in primary enrolment while secondary enrolment shows girls outnumbering boys. The low investment in inclusive education and disability-friendly schools remains a barrier to education for women and girls with disabilities.

38. There has been some progress towards women’s empowerment and participation in decision making. Two countries currently have a woman as Head of Government and one has a female Deputy Prime Minister. Two countries have appointed women as Speakers of the House. Two of the Pacific regional organisations are led by women with an increasing number in the women executives. Despite this progress, Pacific women still hold the lowest per centage of Parliamentary seats worldwide with only 7.7 per cent of seats in national parliaments in FICs held by women. The Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu are three of only four countries globally that currently have no women representatives in their national parliament.

39. Laws still exist in the Pacific that treat women and girls differently and restrict their opportunities and rights in areas such as employment, social protection, sexual harassment in the workplace, decision making, land ownership, social, health and family status, education, and in constitutional protection. In 2018, four countries, Fiji, Republic of Marshall Islands, the Cook Islands and Nauru reported on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) with progress in areas of domestic violence, criminal and common laws.

40. Almost all countries have adopted gender policies and strategies, including disability policies and while many are engaged in global reporting processes, resources for integrating gender equality priorities and implementation are limited. Despite the call by Leaders for increased collection and use of sex disaggregated data across sectors, the lack of investments in national budgets remains a major obstacle. Budgets for national women's offices are less than 1 per cent of national appropriations and most ministries do not make budget allocations to address gender issues.

41. Women's labour force participation rates remain low across the Pacific, including in labour migration schemes. In a number of countries men's participation in the formal economy is almost double that of women. Pacific men outnumber Pacific women in paid employment outside the agricultural sector by approximately two to one. In Melanesia, this disparity is stark with women occupying just one-third of jobs available in the formal economy. Some countries have youth unemployment rates above 50 per cent. This problem is most apparent for women and there is no clear evidence showing changes to the difference in unemployment rates between women and men, between 2000 and 2015. As much as 75-90 per cent of market vendors in the Pacific are women. Wage or income disparity between men and women is also a major issue.

42. The Family Health and Safety Studies in eleven Pacific Island Countries and Territories since 2008 show that 63 per cent of women in Melanesia, 44 per cent in Micronesia and 43 per cent in Polynesia have experienced physical and sexual violence by an intimate partner. The cost of violence per annum has been estimated at AUD 22 billion for Australia, FJD 290 million for Fiji and NZD 8 billion for New Zealand. Women and girls with disabilities are two to three times more likely to be victims of physical and sexual abuse than those without a disability.

43. Fertility rates remain high in the majority of the countries. Limited sexual and reproductive rights and a lack of resources for women and girls, is constraining the attainment of improved levels of basic health in the region. The specific needs of women and girls with disabilities, especially in terms of sexual and reproductive health, are not adequately addressed.

#### **IV. Means of Implementation – Development Effectiveness and Partnerships**

44. 2030 Agenda, SDGs and S.A.M.O.A Pathway emphasise the importance of the means of implementation and for a transformational approach to development if the goals of prosperity, equality for all and a protected environment, are to be achieved. This will need to include harnessing policy coherence; forming multi-stakeholder partnerships; accessing both public and private finance; effectively adopting science and technology; and improving the collection and use of data and statistics.

45. While recognising that Pacific Island Countries and Territories are responsible for their own sustainable development, addressing many of the development challenges will require enhanced development cooperation and international support. To build on, and accelerate, progress already made, there is a need for increased focus on:

(a) Using country systems to strengthen country ownership and leadership on sustainable development;

(b) Embedding the SDGs and ensuring effective development cooperation through regional knowledge exchange;

(c) Engaging proactively with development partners to allocate sustainable resources to enable greater south - south cooperation and peer-to-peer learning across the Pacific;

(d) Institutionalising dialogue and engagement with private sector and civil society stakeholders including involvement in the implementation and monitoring of development initiatives; and,

(e) Driving multi-stakeholder partnerships for development, to combine resources and expertise to deliver on a joint development goal.

46. Partnerships are the defining characteristic of the S.A.M.O.A Pathway, recognizing the limited resources at the country level and that the achievement of sustainable development requires genuine and durable engagement of multiple stakeholders. Of the 527 registered S.A.M.O.A Pathway and UN Oceans partnerships, 223 currently involve Pacific SIDS. More than 50 per cent of these partnerships are aligned to SDG14 on Oceans, with a further 40 per cent aligned to either SDG13 on Climate Action or SDG17 Means of Implementation. Only 18 per cent of these partnerships have reported globally and there is limited awareness at national level of their existence or progress made.

## **V. Conclusions and next steps**

47. Production of this Pacific Sustainable Development Report (PSDR) 2018 highlights some good progress but also considerable remaining challenges. Our vulnerabilities are increasing, our inequalities are deepening, and access to infrastructure and basic services remain elusive for some.

48. The report also highlights that despite our ongoing challenges and limitations, we have significant potential and opportunities for accelerating development in the Pacific through our Pacific specific – know how, resilience, our ability to adapt to changing situations, our significant biodiversity, oceanic resources and ability to work as a Blue Pacific collective, and our increasing access to and use of ICT, increasing connectivity, increase in focus on renewable energy enabling more access to energy. Specific action is needed for:

(a) Enhancing equality including gender equality and opportunities for women, youth, the elderly and persons with disabilities by addressing intersecting patriarchal barriers, including discriminatory policy and legislation, social and cultural norms; and consider options to provide more targeted attention, resourcing and assistance to the most vulnerable communities including expanding and increasing financing for social protection measures and other priority actions in the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED) and the Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PFRPD);

(b) Tackling gender gaps in employment outcomes and high youth unemployment through: (i) domestic economic and labour policy that target the key growth sectors including agriculture, fishing, forestry and tourism; (ii) supporting an entrepreneurial culture through Young Entrepreneurs Councils now established in Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Samoa and Kiribati, and regional standards determined by Commonwealth Pacific countries to enhance the policy and regulatory environment to support young entrepreneurs graduate from the informal economy. Given the region's extreme vulnerability to climate change, there is a need to support the green economy and green job creation in areas including tourism, renewable energy, food production and recycling and waste management. Youth employment strategies need to be developed in a green growth framework;

(c) Continuing to promote efforts in sustainable tourism and fisheries for sustainable and equitable economic growth that conserves and protects our natural resources and environment. This includes sustainably fishing our oceans while increasing returns from existing efforts through the PNA Vessel Day Scheme, increasing value added and processing of fisheries onshore for Pacific Island Countries and Territories and other efforts promoted through the Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries. It also includes supporting sustainable tourism which includes low-volume, high yielding and green eco-tourism through various regional programmes through the Pacific Tourism Strategy 2015-2019;

(d) Intensifying multisector efforts and financing for addressing the Non-Communicable diseases (NCDs) crisis including through implementation of the Pacific NCDs Roadmap which promotes actions such as: increased taxes and enforcement measures on tobacco, alcohol and sugar-sweetened beverages; improved nutrient labelling on foods, improved NCD screening and management; and strengthened mutual accountability for monitoring NCDs. Other Actions include the need to: (i) increase resourcing for enforcement of policies and legislation; (ii) strengthen preventative interventions across people's life cycles; (iii) promote nutrition and food security and limit industry interference; and (iv) enhance investment, resource allocations and accountability;

(e) Strengthening efforts to tackle the dual threats of climate change and disasters by building resilience and ensuring that all development is risk-informed and protected against losses and simultaneously boost economic growth, create jobs and livelihoods, especially for youth and other efforts promoted through the Framework for Resilient Development (FRDP) in the Pacific;

(f) Addressing the consequences of growing populations, poor waste management practices that are contributing to increased volumes of solid and hazardous wastes threatening land and oceanic resources by expanding on existing efforts to recycle, reuse waste including increasing bans on plastic across the Pacific and through implementation of Cleaner Pacific 2025, the Pacific Regional Waste and Pollution Management Strategy, the Pacific Marine Litter Action Plan (PMLA) and the Moana Taka Partnership (Moana Taka Partnership);

(g) Continuing to address de-risking issues and high cost of sending remittances to the Pacific Island Countries and Territories as guided by Forum Economic Ministers Action Plans;

(h) More effectively utilising existing, and mobilising additional financing, and strengthening coordination, capacities and institutions as reflected in the Forum Compact for Strengthening Development Coordination and Components four and five of the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development;

(i) Increased adoption of multi-stakeholder engagements, greater use of peer learning modalities such as south-south exchanges and the effective implementation and monitoring of genuine and durable partnerships locally and internationally including the S.A.M.O.A Pathway partnership; and

(j) Increasing investment in and ensuring availability of timely, accurate disaggregated data to monitor implementation across the three dimensions of sustainable development to strengthen evidence-based policy, planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and accountability as reflected in the Ten-Year Pacific Statistics Strategy (TYPPS).

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