

# Pacific Heads of Nursing & Midwifery Meeting

## Réunion des directeurs des soins infirmiers et obstétricaux du Pacifique



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## Pacific Women Lead: Opportunities for collaboration for gender equality

One of the largest global commitments to gender equality, **Pacific Women Lead** (PWL) aims to promote women's leadership, realise women's rights, and increase the effectiveness of regional gender equality efforts. Pacific Women Lead is at the centre of the Pacific Community's (SPC) work for gender equality, sitting within SPC's Human Rights and Social Development (HRSD) division. PWL supports the implementation of key regional commitments, outlined in the Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration, the Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights, and the outcomes of the Triennial Conference of Pacific Women. Through PWL, SPC provides technical, convening and funding support to government ministries, civil society and other partners, while also supporting the independent PWL Governance Board.

**Women's health** has been included in the program design, with a focus on improved access to **sexual and reproductive health and rights** (SRHR) and services for women and girls. For the PWL at SPC team at HRSD, this will involve a focus on supporting policy development in the area of SRHR and focused research to address knowledge gaps in this area.

## 1. BACKGROUND

The largest regional commitment to gender equality, Pacific Women Lead (PWL) aims to promote women's leadership, realise women's rights, and increase the effectiveness of regional gender equality efforts. Pacific Women Lead is at the centre of the Pacific Community's (SPC) work for gender equality, sitting within SPC's Human Rights and Social Development (HRSD) division. PWL supports the implementation of key regional commitments, outlined in the Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration, the Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights, and the outcomes of the Triennial Conference of Pacific Women. Through PWL, SPC provides technical, convening and funding support to government ministries, civil society and other partners, while also supporting the independent PWL Governance Board.

## 2. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Within its first six months, PWL at SPC coordinated funding for seven projects, through support to six key partners. This number will soon increase with a **grant call-out scheduled for late 2022** to welcome more partners from civil society, government and other sectors. PWL has also reached more than half of the SPC's 22 member Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs), implementing programme activities across 10 PICTs, with active partnerships in 13 PICTs.

## 3. PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The PWL programme works on:

1. Women's leadership: increasing the voices of women and girls in decision-making
2. Women's rights:
  - a. **Women's health** – Women and girls have improved access to quality health care services, including **sexual and reproductive health**, through addressing gender inequality that underpins poor health outcomes
  - b. Women's safety – Survivors of **gender-based violence** have access to quality support services including in times of disaster, and Pacific governments and communities work together to address and prevent violence, through tackling harmful social and cultural norms.
  - c. Women's economic empowerment – Women have more equitable access to resilient economic opportunities and increased voice in economic decision-making

3. Regional partnerships: Pacific regional partners increase the effectiveness of regional gender equality efforts

#### **4. FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Women's health has been included in the program design, with a focus on improved access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and services for women and girls. For the PWL at SPC team at HRSD, this will involve a focus on:

- supporting policy development in the area of SRHR
- and targeted research to address knowledge gaps in this area

The PWL at SPC team at HRSD will explore opportunities for collaboration with SPC's Public Health Division to support PICTs in the above areas. There is also an opportunity for collaboration in an upcoming call for grants from PWL at SPC, to support programme and Triennial Outcomes.