



FWRM
FIJI WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Social Protection Schemes in Fiji

5 FEB, 2019

Demographics and Population by Sex

TOTAL POPULATION: 884887 • MALE: 448595 • FEMALE: 436292

NORTHERN DIVISION



64,395



188,260



67,519



190,020

EASTERN DIVISION



19,999



171,053



17,649



165,988

CENTRAL DIVISION

WESTERN DIVISION

URBAN POPULATION

TOTAL: 494252
MALE: 245928
FEMALE: 248324

RURAL POPULATION

TOTAL: 390635
MALE: 202667
FEMALE: 187968

TOTAL POPULATION AGED OVER 15

TOTAL: 625099
MALE: 315442
FEMALE: 309657

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

TOTAL: 356789
MALE: 241091
FEMALE: 115698

UNEMPLOYMENT

TOTAL: 16050
MALE: 7032
FEMALE: 9018

PAID AND UNPAID

TOTAL: 340739
MALE: 234059
FEMALE: 106680

OUTSIDE OF LABOUR FORCE

TOTAL: 268310
MALE: 74351
FEMALE: 193959

GLOBAL GENDER GAP INDEX FOR FIJI

- ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION AND OPPORTUNITIES = 127/144²
- EDUCATION ATTAINMENT = 71/144³
- HEALTH AND SURVIVAL = 36/144⁴
- POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT = 105/144⁵

Gender Inequality Status

Access to Justice

- According to FWRM's **Balancing the Scales: Improving Fijian Women's Access to Justice Research Report 2017**; the women surveyed experienced violence for an average of 868 days before they went to the police or courts to resolve these issues⁶
- The **Balancing the Scales: Improving Fijian Women's Access to Justice Research Report 2017** revealed that for every 9 out of 10 sexual offense cases (rape and attempted rape; indecent assault; child sexual abuse) reported to the Fiji Police, women and girls were the victim/survivors⁷
- In FWRM's **Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls Rape Case Analysis 2018**; a total of 94 rape cases were decided

in the High Courts of Fiji in 2018. The youngest victim/ survivor was 6 months old and the oldest was 71 years old⁸

Economic Status of Women

According to the Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2017, there is a significant gender gap in the labour force participation rates - it stands at 76.4% for males and 37.4% for female. The unemployment rate stands at 2.9% for males and 7.8% for females; and persons engaged in paid and unpaid work stands at 234,059 for males and 106,680 for females.⁹

Political Participation

- In the 2018 Fiji General Elections, 56

out of the 235 candidates standing for elections were women; and from the 56 women, 10 were elected into Parliament¹⁰

- According to the Fiji Elections Office, there was a total of 634120 voters registered for the 2018 General Elections as of 17th September 2018¹¹. Of those registered, 319434 were male registered voters and 314,686 female voters

Poverty Status

- Under the **Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update**, Fiji's HDI value for 2017 sits at 0.741 which puts the country in the high human

- development category— positioning it at 92 out of 189 countries and territories.¹²
- In rural areas of Fiji in the Northern, Eastern and Central Divisions, between 4 and 5 out of 10 women and men live on or below the Fiji basic needs poverty line. The weekly per capita adult income for a woman living on the basic needs is \$50.00 FJD.
- To initiate or defend a case, it would cost a woman \$50.00 FJD Court fee in the Family Court which is 1 weekly income; and \$100.00 FJD Court fee in the High Court which amounts to 2 weekly income; which is beyond her financial means¹³.

1 (Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2017) Population and Housing Census - Release 2

2 (World Economic Forum 2017)

3 Ibid 2 page 11

4 Ibid 2 page 11

5 Ibid 2 page 11

6 'Balancing the Scales- Improving Fijian Women's Access to Justice'

research report is supported by the European Union and UN Women http://www.fwrmm.org/fj/images/fwrmm2017/publications/analysis/Balancing-the-Scales-Report_FINAL-Digital.pdf

7 Ibid 6

8 Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls Rape Case Analysis 2018 <http://www.fwrmm.org/fj/images/AZJ/FWRM-2018-Rape-and-Trend-Analysis.pdf>

9 (Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2017) Population and Housing Census

Release 1: Page 10-11

10 56 Women Candidates to contest the 2018 Fiji Elections (2018) PACIFIC WOMEN in Politics <https://www.pacwip.org/resources/news/56-women-candidates-to-contest-the-2018-fiji-elections/>

11 FWRM congratulates all political candidates (2018) Fiji Women's Rights Movement <http://www.fwrmm.org/fj/news/media-releases/67-all-category/news/press-releases->

es/515-fwrmm-congratulates-all-political-candidates-2 (Accessed 21 November 2018)

12 2018 Fiji General Elections <http://fjilelects2018.org/fj/voters/>

13 Briefing note for countries on the 2018 Statistical Update Fiji http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/FJI.pdf

13 Ibid 6 page 13

Overview of Various Social Protection Schemes in Fiji

Name	Type of Social Protection Coverage		Age category		
	Universal*	Specific**	Girl Child & Adolescent Girls	Young Women	Older & Ageing Women
Education					
Free Bus Fare for school children (Year 1-13)	•		•		
Tuition Fee Free Grant (TFFG) (Free education)	•		•		
Scholarship Scheme for Special Children (SSSC)		•	•		
National Toppers Scheme	•			•	
Civil Service Scholarship Scheme		•		•	•
Donor Funded Scholarships		•		•	•
Technical College Of Fiji		•		•	•
Pilot Training		•		•	
Tertiary Education Loans Scheme ("TELS") & Accommodation Support Scheme		•		•	
TELS-Public Sector Employees		•		•	•
TELS-Private Sector Employees		•		•	•
Sports Scholarship Award		•		•	
Commercial Agriculture Scholarship Programme		•		•	
Free Milk Programme - Year 1 Students		•	•		
Health					
HPV vaccinations for Year 8 students		•	•		
Free School health check-ups (vaccinations, eyesight and dental)	•		•		
Free Medicine Scheme	•		•	•	•
Food voucher for rural pregnant mothers		•		•	•
Cancer screening and treatment services		•	•	•	•
Overseas Referral Treatment		•	•	•	•
Subsidisation of the cost for kidney dialysis		•	•	•	•
Economic & livelihoods					
Taxi and Bus Concessions for senior citizens and PWDs		•			•
FNPF accounts for children		•	•		
Care and Protection Allowance		•	•	•	
Young Entrepreneurship Scheme		•		•	
Economic Empowerment grant for PWDs		•		•	•
First Land Purchase Programme		•		•	
Interest subsidy for home loans		•		•	•
Building codes for PWDs		•	•	•	•
Social Housing Assistance		•		•	•
Barefoot College		•		•	
Parenthood Assistance Payments (Allowance for new mothers for infants)		•		•	•
Foreign Employment Service Unit		•		•	•
Brackishwater Development Programme		•		•	•
Food Security Program for Aquaculture		•		•	•
Micro and small business grants		•		•	•
Northern Development Programme		•		•	•
Fiji Volunteer Scheme		•		•	•
Social Pension Scheme		•		•	•
DVRO support fund		•		•	•
Free water initiative		•		•	•
Rainwater Harvesting scheme - Free Water Tanks		•		•	•
Legal Provisions					
Family Care leave	•			•	•
Paternity Leave		•			
Maternity Leave		•		•	•
Other essential services					
National Child Helpline		•	•		
Free Legal Services - The Legal Aid Commission		•	•	•	•
Family Law Fee Wavier		•		•	•

*Please note that this indicates that the SP scheme is available for both male and female

**Please note that this indicates that the SP scheme is inclusive of either male/female

Women and Social Protection

Poverty Benefit Scheme

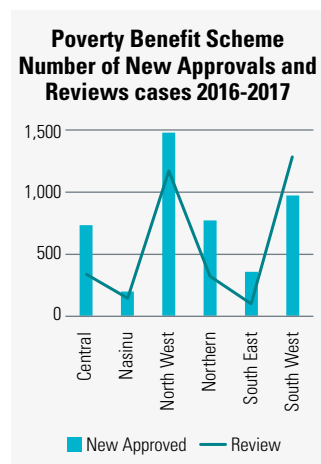
The Poverty Benefit Scheme replaces the Family Assistance Program allowing anyone below a certain income threshold to apply for the scheme. However, eligibility is determined by the evidence gathered during the assessment process. The Scheme ensures that a maximum of four members in a household are assisted.

Assessment is done by looking at the properties, land ownership and household items owned by the applicants. Evidence gathering through home visits is a compulsory component in processing all the applications under Poverty Benefit Scheme.

Previously, the Family Assistance Program was based on 3 criteria targeting individuals however, this new scheme targets are households and poverty which, together, are the main factors determining the eligibility of households¹⁴.

Total Number of Approved and Reviewed cases for Poverty Benefit Scheme

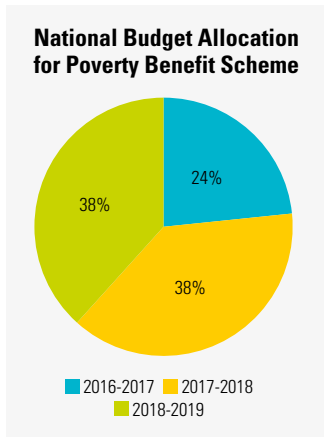
- The Department of Women under the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation approved a total of 4505 according to the 2016-2017 the Ministry of Women's Annual Report.
- A total of 3358 cases under the Scheme were then subsequently reviewed – the south-west division accumulating the highest reviews for 2016-2017 with a total of 1273 cases¹⁵



Source: Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation

National Budget Allocation

National Budget	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Poverty Benefit Scheme ¹⁶	\$23,200,000	\$38,050,931	\$38,050,931



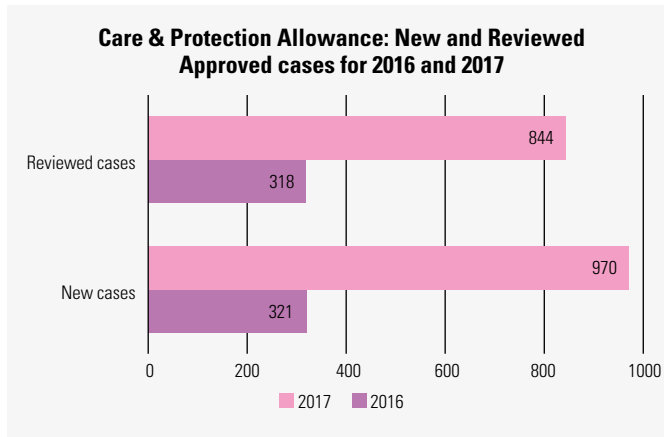
Source: Fiji Government Portal

Care and Protection Allowance

- Child Protection Allowance targets single mothers, deserted spouses, widows, prisoners' dependents and children under the care of the State to ensure that underprivileged children are provided proper care and protection. The Allowance provides \$30 to \$60 per month to children, depending on age and dependency, while families are permitted to receive a maximum of \$100 plus a food voucher of \$30. The CPA also gives cash grants to residential homes that provide foster care, adoption and residential facilities to orphans¹⁷

Total Number of Approved and Reviewed cases for Care and Protection Allowance

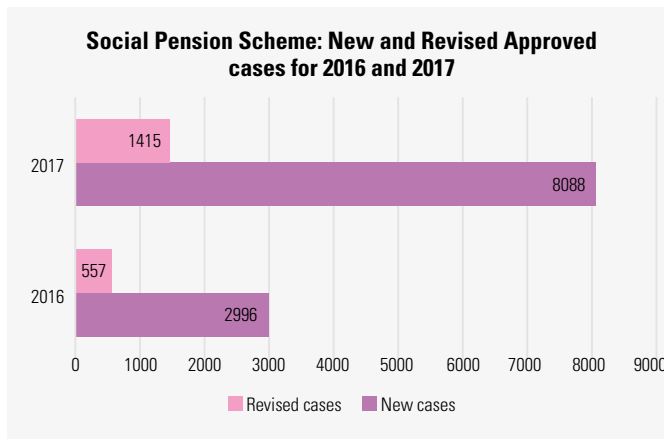
- The Department approved 970 new cases and reviewed 844 cases under the scheme as of 2017¹⁸. For 2016, the Department approved a total of 321 new cases and reviewed a total of 318¹⁹.



Source: Ministry of Women, Children & Poverty Alleviation

Social Pension Scheme

- This scheme is targeted at elderly people at the age of 66 years and over who have no source of income and are not recipients of Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF) pension/lump sum beneficiaries; Ex-Serviceman of After Care Funds; Government Pension. The monthly allowance has increased from \$30 to \$50 and the eligibility age was reduced from 68 to 66 years old in July 2016²⁰
- In 2016 a total of 2,996 new approvals were processed and a total of 557 cases were reviewed under this scheme²¹
- A total of 8058 new cases were approved while a total of 1455 cases were received according to the Ministry of Women's Annual Report 2016/2017²²



Source: Ministry of Women, Children & Poverty Alleviation

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14 Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation website 2019 <http://www.mwcpa.gov.fj/index.php/social-welfare/poverty-benefit-scheme-pbs.html>
 15 Ministry for Women, Children & Poverty Alleviation. 2016-2017. Annual Report (Page 25) http://www.mwcpa.gov.fj/images/stories/Files/2018/MOWCPA_AR2016-2017_final%20approved_web.pdf
 16 2016-2017. National Budget Estimates 2016-2017. Fiji Government Portal (Page 179) <http://www.fiji.gov.fj/getattachment/97c4b8ba-1407-4573-a6f3-a2a8e9d0a4d8/2016--2017-BUDGET-ESTIMATES.aspx>
 17 2017-2018. National Budget Estimates 2017-2018. Fiji Government Portal (165) <http://www.fiji.gov.fj/getattachment/0707c3ee-3d0c-4e14-a560-5b971d5c45da/2017-2018-BUDGET-ESTIMATE.aspx>
 18 2018-2019. National Budget Estimates 2018-2019. Fiji Government Portal (Page 164) <http://www.fiji.gov.fj>

getattachment/f228b9fe-ffc3-4237-a3f5-2157657a7ac9/Budget-Estimates.aspx
 17 Ministry for Women, Children & Poverty Alleviation. 2016. Annual Report 2016 (page 25) http://www.mwcpa.gov.fj/images/stories/Files/2018/MOWCPA_AR2016_final%20approved_web.pdf
 18 Ibid.15 Page 25
 19 Ibid.17
 20 Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation website 2019 <http://www.mwcpa.gov.fj/index.php/social-welfare/sps.html>
 21 Ibid.17 Page 26
 22 Ibid.17 Page 26

Analysis and Policy Language

Regional Language

Pacific Platform for Action for Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights 2018-2030	
Specific Language	
Advances in Priority Area 4: Women's economic empowerment	Some Pacific island countries have begun to address barriers to women's economic participation as employees or entrepreneurs by removing discriminatory workplace legislation. However, the majority of economically active women participate in the informal economy. While this gives them more flexibility in terms of their time and ability to attend to other tasks, disadvantages include low earnings and the absence of any form of protection, including social protection . Women are frequently home-based workers relying on subsistence agriculture, marketing of agricultural products, and petty trading.
Emerging issues for achievement of gender equality	Poverty is an increasing concern, and women and children are at greater risk, especially in urban areas where women's role in subsistence food-growing is no longer a viable survival measure. Some countries are introducing social protection programs , but slow economic growth limits the extent to which this can make a difference.
Strategic objective 1: Enhance the generation of knowledge to inform policies and decision-making, and support advocacy for gender equality	Countries need area-based evidence to support their advancement of legislation, policies, planning and programs for sustainable development. Although data collection in the region has improved over time, many gaps remain. There is also a need for more in-depth and qualitative research in several areas relating to gender equality. In particular, information and/or gender analysis is lacking in areas such as the impacts of social protection , wage gaps and income inequalities, and social and cultural factors that promote resilience to climate change and disasters.
4.2 Expected outcomes	As Pacific Small Island States, there are additional regional and international priorities: The improvement of all aspects of women's health and well-being. This is by exploring innovative strategies and new technologies to increase access to good quality, comprehensive, and inclusive health systems, including social protection , to improve health outcomes, reducing deaths and disability from non-communicable diseases in women, especially in rural and remote areas (Outcomes of the 12th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women, 2013, para. 58).
6.3. Leaders Declaration: Women's economic empowerment	Investment: 1) Realign available resources and identify additional sources of financing to support women's economic opportunities and develop their productive assets. 2) Implement social protection programs to support women by alleviating the burdens of paid and unpaid work, including providing paid parental leave in both the private and public sectors.
13th Triennial Outcomes Document	
21b)	ensure appropriate social protection measures for poor women, and their dependants, that provide cash and in-kind transfers, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks and enhance the social status and rights of marginalised people
21c)	protect migrant workers as well as the human rights and social protection of women migrant workers
21g)	strengthen social protection measures to support women's economic security throughout their lives

National Level

1. Fiji National Gender Policy	
Specific language	5. Revise social protection measures and policies that affect older persons for improved responsiveness to the differential experiences and needs of women and men, with provisions not only determined by contributions made in the productive sector, but also determined by the burden of care and reproductive work provided by women throughout their lives.
2. Fiji National Policy on Ageing	
Goal 2: Strengthened social assistance for older persons.	Objectives: (1) Reduction of poverty among older persons; Strategy i. Review existing pension arrangements and the level of participation of older people to pension schemes and state benefits; ii. Provide a full review of all assistance measures available to older persons; iii. Improve financial literacy among all workers, both young and old, but especially among those approaching retirement age (Financial education could be included in school curricula).
National Employment Policy	
Policy Priority 6: Create more income generating opportunities for those reliant on subsistence activities for their livelihood pp.24	Proposed Strategic Actions 65. The first requirement is to measure the extent of informal employment based on the two different types of self-employment. One type is for survival and the other is aimed at growth, each with different value to the national economy. This information is necessary to identify the needs of those in different types of self-employment so that appropriate forms of support can be developed to increase the productive potential of these types of work. It is also necessary to improve the working conditions and social protection for the workers who are vulnerable to poor health and exploitation. The forms of support can include ways to access credit for those who need it by developing an appropriate regulatory framework, and helping workers to acquire more legal protection and support.

National targets in relation to Social protection: National Development Plan

National Development plan	
Social Protection pp 13	Fiji's social welfare system continues to evolve to ensure that it is well targeted and provides support to vulnerable Fijians. Social protection programs have been expanded from welfare allowances to support the living expenses of needy families, the elderly and disabled persons. In addition, targeted assistance is provided to support education, the health of pregnant women in rural areas, subsidies to basic utilities, and access to essential medicine.
Inclusive development policy: pp3	Targeted social protection will continue to be provided for the vulnerable through new initiatives to empower Fijians so that they may graduate out of poverty.
Social Inclusion and empowerment pp.49	Over the next 5 years, the government will ensure that every Fijian is provided with the basic amenities of life. Social inclusion programs such as the poverty benefit scheme, welfare graduation program and social pension scheme will be maintained. Targeted assistance will be provided to the vulnerable, including children living in poverty, children in orphanages and foster care, people with disabilities and special needs, and the elderly. A major focus in the years ahead will be to support Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and other self-employment initiatives to ensure all Fijians have a stable source of income. Major government initiatives will ensure that the guarantee of socio-economic rights in the Constitution is realised. This will empower Fijians to become self-reliant. Government will ensure that prosperity is shared and all development is inclusive.
Goal: A socially inclusive Fiji and empowered Fijians. pp 50	Review state social protection systems for the protection and care of vulnerable groups.

National development Plan Targets

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Poverty Benefit Scheme (PBS) (Recipients)	24450	24400	24350
Child Protection Allowance	3254 kinship care 120 residential care	3254 kinship care 120 residential care	3254 kinship care 120 residential care
Social Pension Scheme (No. of recipients)	34200	34500	3500
Food Voucher Programme (FVP) for pregnant mothers	2500	2500	2500
Welfare Graduation Programme (WGP)	200 assisted, 30 to graduate	200 assisted, 30 to graduate	200 assisted, 30 to graduate

Poverty Targets

Indicators	2015	2021
Incidence of national poverty (%) (HIES) (SDG 1.2)	28.1	22
Rural poverty (%) (SDG 1.2)	36.7	25.6
Urban poverty (%) (SDG 1.2)	19.8	13.8
Poverty Gap(%) (SDG 1.2)	3.1	2.2

Recommendations for Social Protection

General Recommendations

1. Create and implement a national social protection legislative framework, policy, and strategy which focuses on social protection for poverty reduction, bridging gender gaps in critical areas and protection of the rights and wellbeing of the poor and vulnerable communities
2. An integrated social protection system, which sustainably contributes towards the advancement of gender equality, elimination of existing forms of discrimination, protection of human rights and wellbeing of the citizens of Fiji, particularly women, as opposed to sectorial approach operating

in silos

3. Ensure principles of Gender sensitivity, human rights based approach, transparency and accountability, inclusivity, equity and Dignity is embedded within all aspects of social protection programs including service delivery
4. Mainstream Gender Responsive Budgeting and Planning within all government ministries and departments
5. Develop a multi-sectorial institutional arrangement for effective coordination, integration and implementation of social protection programs within various sectors
6. Strengthen accessibility,

information management and dissemination as well as short term and long term monitoring; evaluation of State initiated social protection programs

7. Strengthen gender sensitive responses to the threats and shocks during humanitarian crisis particularly before, during and after natural disasters
8. Provide transparent and accurate data to the public in regards to short term and long term state-initiated social protection programs
9. Ensure that public services, which are part of the service delivery for social protection schemes and programs, are easily accessible to women

and are responsive as well as sensitive to the needs and challenges of vulnerable groups.

Specific Recommendations on social protection measures

In reference to Poverty Alleviation:

1. Establish and maintain the social protection floor for Fiji in order to ensure all in need have, at a minimum, access to essential health care, basic income security, effective access to goods and services as per the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) adopted during 101st ILC session in on 14th June 2012 in Geneva

2. Create a Single Registry for the identification of poor and vulnerable household/ women in order to develop a holistic integrated approach targeted at poverty alleviation, via income-generating activities, particularly for women
3. Review existing social protection programs to develop an integrated sustainable Social Protection system which is tailor-made to respond to the needs and vulnerabilities of women in reference to the multidimensional nature of poverty and its impact on women
4. Focus on investments in human capital and assets for the poor and vulnerable amongst us
5. Households to break intergenerational cycle of poverty and graduate from social assistance to become financially self-sufficient
6. Ensure women and female-headed households have equitable access and derive benefits from various forms of social assistances, particularly the in-kind transfers of livelihood assets, subsidies and grants for agriculture
7. Scale up programs such as Young Entrepreneurship Scheme; Economic Empowerment grant for PWDs; Micro and small business grants; Fiji Volunteer Scheme; via a gender responsive approach
8. Expand conditional cash transfers, public work schemes

and provision of micro pensions specifically to women

In reference to gender differentials in labor force participation, unemployment, paid and unpaid work and outside of labor force participation:

1. Develop a comprehensive social protection system for the informal sector and, in particular, for the large proportion of women that are employed in the informal sector in Fiji
2. Strengthen women's access to micro-finance systems to expand entry into banking, credit, as well as savings and to build skills training and business development services to facilitate informal and formal employment
3. Strengthen social economic institutions such as cooperatives and self-help groups for women
4. Create employment opportunities through deliberate positive discrimination to persons with disabilities.

As per the concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Fiji by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against women:

1. Adopt and enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in a new employment relations promulgation and regularly review wages in sectors in which women are concentrated (recommendation 40a) FWRM positon
2. Improve the working conditions of women market vendors (recommendation 40b)

3. Adopt temporary special measures to address vertical segregation and ensure that women and men have the same promotion opportunities. This includes women who have taken maternity leave and time off to raise their children; (recommendation 40c)
4. Develop national policies to ensure that progress in education for women and girls translates into improved employment prospects; (recommendation 40d)
5. Redouble efforts to enforce the prohibition of the dismissal of pregnant women while ensuring that women in all industries have a right to paid maternity leave. This is to be accompanied by petitioning for new legislations to regulate the provision of maternity leave benefits, whether through compulsory social insurance or a fund to avoid the employer's liability for their payment; (recommendation 40e)
6. Set up a public fund to pay pension contributions for women while they take leave to raise their children (recommendation 48b)
7. Revise the current age of retirement for women to allow for accrued pension benefits (recommendation 48c)
8. Ensure that destitute rural women have full access to social benefits and non-contributory social protection so that they may lead a dignified life, and improve the availability of microfinance and

microcredit at low interest rates to enable them to engage in income-generating activities and to start businesses, with a particular emphasis on empowering rural women so that they are not dependent on male family members throughout their lives; (recommendation 50b)

In reference to Gender Specific Vulnerabilities and challenges

1. Set up public funds to support families in the wake of disasters and create a system for the immediate supply of basic necessities, including water and sanitation, food and urgently needed medication, in case of emergency (CEDAW Fifth periodic report recommendation 54a)
2. Scale up the funding for Domestic Violence Restriction Order (DVRO) fund to support victims of domestic violence
3. Introduce longer terms for social protection programs specifically for victims of domestic violence to support financial autonomy and economic empowerment in order to reduce the possibility of women living in or returning into the cycle of intimate partner violence
4. Develop public and private partnerships for the provision of subsidized social care and childcare services in order to encourage women's labour force participation
5. Prioritize and expand employment schemes for the growing youth population.



A Feminist Coalition in the Pacific



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