



## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

### New Pacific Partnership addresses gender equality and violence against women

**Thursday 8 March 2018 (Pacific region)** – This International Women’s Day, a new EUR18.2 million regional programme to improve gender equality and address violence against women and girls is being announced.

The new Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (Pacific Partnership) brings together governments, civil society organisations, communities and other partners to promote gender equality, prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG), and increase access to quality response services for survivors.

The programme is funded primarily by the European Union (EUR12.7m) with targeted support from the Australian Government (EUR4.9m) and UN Women (EUR0.6m). It will be jointly implemented by the Pacific Community (SPC) Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (Forum Secretariat) and UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office (MCO).

His Excellency Ambassador Julian Wilson, Head of the European Union (EU) Delegation for the Pacific said: “The European Union is strongly committed to gender equality, the empowerment of women of all ages and the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls around the world.”

“We are proud to be funding this new and important partnership programme through the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund in the Pacific, to address the causes of gender inequality and violence against women,” said Ambassador Wilson.

“It starts today on International Women’s Day and aims to deliver concrete results over the next years, turning each day into a women’s day,” he said.

Australia’s High Commissioner, John Feakes, said Australia is very pleased to support the new Pacific Partnership through the *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development* program.

“Recent surveys indicate that over 60 per cent of women in the Western Pacific Region have experienced gender-based violence,” Mr Feakes said.

“Women and girls who experience violence deserve accessible and high quality essential services – including health, police, justice and social services – to help them recover. Through the Pacific Partnership we will also work with individuals and communities to consider the influence of social norms, attitudes and behaviours in preventing violence against women and girls,” he said.

The Pacific Partnership aims to transform the social norms that allow violence against women and girls to continue; to ensure survivors have access to quality response services; and to support national and regional institutions to meet their commitments to gender equality and the prevention of violence against women and girls.

Speaking about the new programme, Dame Meg Taylor, Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, said “full inclusivity, equity and equality is a core value of the Forum and lies at the heart of its vision for a peaceful and prosperous Pacific.”

“As individuals we have a responsibility to uphold this and so do our governments and institutions. Civil society also has an important role to play in ensuring we are all accountable in our efforts to achieve this,” Dame Meg said.

“Therefore, a key outcome of this programme will be empowering national and regional civil society organisations (CSOs) to advocate, monitor and report on the commitments of governments and regional institutions to enhance gender equality and prevent violence against women and girls.”

The Pacific Community’s Director General, Dr. Colin Tukuitonga, highlighted the importance of the program’s education goals.

“Through this programme the Pacific Community will be working closely with our partners to integrate human rights, gender equality and the social norms of violence-free homes and societies into national school curricula and informal education,” said Dr Colin Tukuitonga.

“The programme will make a positive impact on current and future generations of Pacific leaders.”

UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office (MCO) Representative, Aleta Miller, said this programme has been developed with the goal to bring all parts of Pacific society together to successfully reduce levels of violence against women and girls across the Pacific, which is twice the global average.

“UN Women will focus on preventing violence against women and girls before it happens through the promotion of gender equitable social norms at the individual and community level and by engaging key pillars of Pacific society such as faith and sport,” said Ms Miller.

“We will also work with partners to ensure that survivors of violence have access to quality response services,” she said.

The five-year programme, from January 2018 to December 2022, targets Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) initially targeting Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

Central to the programme, is the partners’ recognition of the importance of gender equality for achieving sustainable development, that directly contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particularly SDG 5 to ‘achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’, of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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**Images available for use with Media Release, only (High resolution version available on request):**



Caption: This International Women’s Day, a new multi-million dollar regional programme to improve gender equality and address violence against women and girls is being announced.

Credit: UN Women / Ellie van Baaren

### **Social media – suggestions:**

**Facebook:** Big announcement! This International Women's Day, we're excited to announce a new multi-million dollar regional programme to improve gender equality and address violence against women and girls.

The new Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (Pacific Partnership) brings together governments, civil society organisations, communities and other partners. It aims to transform the social norms that allow violence against women and girls to continue; to ensure survivors have access to quality response services; and to support national and regional institutions to meet their commitments to gender equality and the prevention of violence against women and girls.

The EUR18.2 million programme is funded primarily by the European Union (EUR12.7m) with targeted support from the Australian Government (EUR4.9m) and UN Women (EUR0.6m). It will be jointly implemented by the Pacific Community (SPC) Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office.

The five-year programme, from January 2018 to December 2022, targets Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) initially targeting Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

Following this announcement, partners will soon join together for an event to officially launch the programme.

*[Ideas for handles: @European Union in the Pacific @Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade @AustraliaInFiji @AustraliaInSolomonIslands @Pacific-Community-SPC @Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat @UNWomenPacific]*

**Twitter:** Big news! This #IWD2018, we're excited to announce a new EUR€18.2 regional programme to improve #GenderEquality: the #Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against #Women & #Girls

#PacPartnership #TimelysNow #EVAWG

*[Ideas for image tags: @dfat, @EUPasifika @EU\_Commission @ForumSEC @UNWomenPacific]*

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Pacific region has some of the highest rates of violence against women recorded in the world – twice the global average with an estimated two in every three Pacific women impacted by gender-based violence. Along with high rates of violence – a violation of human rights – women and girls in the Pacific region experience constant and continual inequalities including low levels of participation in decision making, limited economic opportunities, restricted access to sexual and reproductive health and [other] rights.

The Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (Pacific Partnership) brings together governments, civil society organisations, communities and other partners to promote gender equality, prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG), and increase access to quality response services for survivors.

To achieve this, the Pacific Partnership aims to transform the social norms that allow violence against women and girls to continue; to ensure survivors have access to quality response services; and to support national and regional institutions to meet their commitments to gender equality and prevention of violence against women and girls. Working through partners, it will promote equal rights and opportunities for all Pacific people, through innovative approaches to education, access to essential services, and policy development.

The EUR€18.2 million partnership is primarily funded by the European Union (€12.7m) that supports all three outcome areas of the programme, with the Australian Government providing targeted funding to the second outcome (EUR€4.9m or AUD\$7.6m) supported by UN Women (EUR€0.6m or USD\$0.75m).

The programme's three outcome areas are jointly implemented through a partnership between the Pacific Community (SPC) Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (Forum Secretariat) and UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office (MCO).

The five-year programme, from January 2018 to December 2022, targets Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) initially targeting including Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

The Pacific Partnership recognises the importance of gender equality for achieving sustainable development, and directly contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particularly SDG 5 to 'achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls', of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The programme directly supports the implementation of the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration 2012, the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development, and the Pacific Platform for Action (PPA) on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality.