



PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

United Nations Member States

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Nauru to the United Nations
800 Second Avenue, Suite 401A, New York, N.Y. 10017

Tel: 212 937 0074

Fax: 212 937 0079

E-mail: nauru@un.int

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Statement by H.E. Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Nauru
on behalf of the

Pacific Small Island Developing States

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I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS), represented at the United Nations, namely Fiji, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Tonga, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Vanuatu, and my own country, Nauru.

Let me first congratulate you and your entire staff on your election, and assure you of our support in the work of this Commission.

Mr. Chairman,

As we meet at this 55th Session of the Commission on the theme of its very important theme, we are reminded of the different challenges we face today, particularly the crisis that has affected our economies and our societies. The Beijing Platform for Action is clear and we are committed to our responsibility as States to fulfill the standards contained therein. However, it is important to emphasize that the challenges each of our societies face in fulfilling these obligations.

The PSIDS is a vibrant and pluralistic society that is full of diverse cultural and traditions. Not only have these traditions and cultures been a part of our lives, they have defined us as a people. The roles of our men, women and children have their genesis in those value systems. As in many of our societies, the role of women is still closely associated with the care of the family and supports the economic activity of men. That role is also reflected in the type of work women do in the formal sector. Despite the fact that there is an increasing number of educated women, we find most women employed in the health, education, and support services sector. Education and awareness has however facilitated the shift in a

Mr. Chairman,

The geography of the PSIDS is unique. We are challenged by our isolation, small population size, lack of resources, high frequency of natural disasters and vulnerability to rising sea-levels. These challenges are further exacerbated by global climate change. The limited size of most of our economies affects the range of our opportunities as well. Education and training in the field of science and technology are vital in enhancing our women and children

the advice those preferences and will undoubtedly generate more opportunities for them in the workforce. In that regard, it is encouraging to note that in our regional university, the University of the South Pacific, female enrolment in science and technology programmes has increased steadily in the last 10 years and more programmes are needed to meet the demand. We also recognize that NGOs and individual non-profit organisations play a complementary role in these efforts. Several initiatives by NGOs and academic institutions in the region, in partnership with other local and overseas NGOs, have enabled young female students to be more informed about future education opportunities and career choices.

The issue of climate change and natural disasters is an on-going challenge for our peoples and our land. Natural disasters have displaced communities. Aside from the emotional trauma these have caused, their adverse impacts affect food security, tension over land resources, access to land and increased violence against women. Moreover, climate change has increased challenges for women's livelihoods and access to land and property.

The need for international support for programmes that provide access to education for women's economic empowerment is an ever-evolving and ever more multifaceted one. In order to address the needs of our women, it is critical to have a coordinated approach to training, technology and ensuring women have the same right and opportunities to full employment and decent work.

Mr. Chairman,

There is still a long way to go to support our women in getting loans to start businesses and the administrative frameworks on the advancement and empowerment of women, particularly for many of the disadvantaged communities. Overcoming such challenges is not easy but with the continued support of our development partners, we can make a difference. We welcome the policy recommendations stipulated in the Secretary-General's report. However, we acknowledge that such recommendations can only be implemented if countries create a conducive environment for investment in the economic transformation of small economies. It is here that the majority of poor women and children live who do not have access to basic, appropriate, and affordable technology to start a decent livelihood for themselves.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, in concluding our support of our development partners to support our efforts for gender mainstreaming, a robust monitoring and assessment mechanism, new development indicators to measure progress in gender equality and continue to address practical tasks that exist between the national and regional organizations. The strategies we create for the future must be sustainable and have minimal conflicting interests in the implementation of this very important global agenda.

Thank you.