

Climate Security: Achieving Inclusive Peace, Development and Humanitarian Nexus

GPPAC Pacific

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A Network of People
Building Peace

The Pacific Island region is recognized as one of the most vulnerable to the consequences of the ongoing global climate crisis, including environmental disasters, intense variations in temperatures, and extreme storms. Growing climate crisis insecurities at the local and national levels require a conflict prevention and human security approach. This is particularly important as current political strategies have a tendency to rely on military responses and the “securitization” of the climate crisis.

Human security recognises that there are several dimensions related to feeling safe, such as freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom from indignity. A people-centred approach to security has implications for how we carry out and understand conflict assessment, programme planning, implementation, and evaluation of peacebuilding initiatives. It addresses sustainable peace by recognising the social, economic, and political grievances that are often the root causes of conflict and societal violence. It challenges us to consider participatory ways of doing and evaluating our work. The human security approach is not only centred on people as objects of interventions, but also as providers of security in their own right.

When approaching the difficult issue of how best to respond to the climate crisis, ecologically just approaches to locally driven solutions must align and be accountable to the gender equality, just peace and human security agendas.

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Furthermore, in times of climate change induced national and local natural disasters, which are increasing in the Pacific region, women and girls are more prone to increased cases of sexual violence in the context of

displacement, due to the loss of their homes or traditional protection mechanisms through family/clan structures.¹ Humanitarian crises may increase with the rise of sea level, increased occurrences and severity of natural disasters and other impacts of climate change in Pacific Island Countries.

A REGIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

In 2018, Pacific Forum Leaders adopted the Boe Declaration, which broadened the definition of security to include human security, humanitarian assistance, environmental security, and regional cooperation building on successive Pacific Forum statements during previous open debates on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR1325) that amplified the need to address the growing climate crisis.

This expanded notion of peace and security is a welcome development and an opportunity to enhance multistakeholder collaboration at both regional and national levels, as well as enhance a peace, development and humanitarian nexus approach for the Boe Declaration Action Plan.

In implementing this action plan a new multi-actor consultative framework can ensure the local integration of peace, development and humanitarian agendas address the root causes of conflict through enhanced early warning and early response measures, national planning and budgeting as well as security sector governance processes.

¹ A 300% increase in new domestic violence cases was reported by the Tanna Women’s Counselling Centre after two tropical cyclones hit Tafe Province in Vanuatu in 2011 for example (see CLIMATE CHANGE, DISASTERS AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THE PACIFIC, UN Women - <https://www.uncclearn.org/sites/default/files/inventory/unwomen701.pdf>)

GPPAC PACIFIC² RECOMMENDS

1. The Boe Declaration Action Plan must be informed by a conflict prevention analysis and strategies must support the alignment of the Pacific Resilience Framework, the Forum Conflict Prevention, Human Security and Security Sector Governance Frameworks, as well as the Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Such an alignment and conflict sensitivity are a must if we want to prevent technically, state security driven responses that often increase existing vulnerabilities of women, youth, families and people with disabilities;
2. Implementation of the Boe Declaration Action Plan requires a new multi-actor consultative framework for regional peace and security that structurally includes and supports civil society representatives who can prioritize, localize and operationalize Women, Youth and Civil Society Peacebuilding, Prevention and Participation frameworks as equal partners;
3. That this multi-actor consultative framework includes pre and post Forum Leaders Meeting dialogues on Regional, Peace and Security priorities and initiatives on the conflict prevention and peacebuilding nexus with government, Pacific Island based peacebuilding networks and forum officials;
4. The integration of the recommendations of the 2012 – 2015 Pacific Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (Pacific RAP-WPS) into the Boe Declaration Action Plan as well as the establishment of a Pacific Women Mediators network to enhance women's leadership and contribution to peacebuilding and peace support efforts in our region, including in response to disasters and humanitarian crises.

CLIMATE SECURITY IS HUMAN SECURITY

The implementation of the Boe Declaration must ensure human security of the most affected communities is enhanced when developing and rolling-out environment security responses:

The Pacific Conference of Churches a member of GPPAC Pacific reaffirms, for example, that achieving climate security requires unified political, economic and community action that addresses both the responsibility to manage finite environmental resources and prevent further environmental loss and damage, as well as ensure inclusive approaches to building climate change resilience by integrating the psychological, spiritual and cultural factors that need to be considered in the contexts of displacement and relocation for both those being displaced/relocated and the receiving/host communities. The Breaking Waves project which has been running for the past 3 years with a focus on climate-induced migration in Fiji, Kiribati, Tuvalu, and the Solomon Islands has identified that all programmes and schemes which address forced climate displacement and relocation, including internal and external migration, must address human security first to treat families with dignity and be inclusive of people with disabilities. This requires the equal involvement of all members of our communities in determining indicators of resilience and implementation of actions for peaceful communities. The PCC is working in collaboration with Transcend Oceania to enhance conflict prevention within the programme for affected communities and other stakeholders.³

We know we will have more frequent local and national climate change induced disasters of greater scale and impact. We also know this will deepen existing gender and other inequalities and increase the threats to women's safety and security unless measures are put in place to prevent and mitigate this.

² Members of the GPPAC Pacific Regional Steering Group include Transcend Oceania (Regional Secretariat), FemLINKpacific, Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding, Talitha Project, Vanuatu Young Women for Change, Vois Blong Mere Solomon and the Pacific Conference of Churches . Ms Sharon Bhagwan Rolls is the GPPAC Pacific Regional Representative & Media Liaison. Adivasu Levu is the GPPAC Pacific Regional Liaison Officer

³ Pacific Conference of Churches presentation at the GPPAC Pacific Regional Steering Group meeting, June 2019

That is why successive Pacific Island Forum (PIF) and Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) country statements during Open Debates on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325: Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR1325) brought early warning attention to the reality of climate change and why as GPPAC Pacific we advocated for the peace, human security, development and humanitarian nexus in our contribution to the 2015 Global Study on UNSCR1325.

That is also why the Pacific RAP-WPS had the foresight to recommend that humanitarian action must take into account pre-existing gender inequalities and the discrimination faced by women, and ensuring that these are not further magnified or exploited during humanitarian crises.

Subsequently the Global Study stresses that conflict prevention is at the center of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, stating that: “The women, peace and security agenda is about ending conflict, not making it safer for women” and that “conflict and atrocity prevention measures require both a short-term approach which includes women’s participation and gender based violations within early warning measures, as well as longer term structural approaches to address the root causes of conflict, including inequality, and address new sources of conflict, including the impacts of climate change and natural resources”

SUPPORTING PACIFIC WOMEN LED COALITIONS

We welcome the outcomes of the 2019 Pacific Forum Leaders meeting that include the commitment to support women’s leadership in regional and national efforts for the prevention of conflict and all forms of violence, and the protection of all peoples in line with human rights treaty obligations.

But this is not enough to achieve the progress we seek. We believe that almost 20 years since the adoption of UNSCR1325, participation requires the redesigning of the peace table through the greater, structural inclusion and leadership of women. Only by redesigning the table at which our common futures are conceived can we get to the heart of addressing the peace, development and humanitarian nexus with women of all diversities.

That is why GPPAC Pacific has contributed to the establishment of the Shifting the Power Coalition – forged by diverse Pacific women and women’s organisations

The study also enabled GPPAC Pacific to get two significant words into the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2242 which seeks to fast-track 1325 implementation: “**climate change**”.

This resolution reminds the UN Security Council of its responsibility to bring about a gender inclusive shift from reaction to prevention, also when considering climate change. The resolution notes *“the impacts of climate change and the global nature of health pandemics, and in this regard reiterating its intention to increase attention to women, peace and security as a cross-cutting subject in all relevant thematic areas of work on its agenda”*

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from Fiji, Papua New Guinea including Bougainville, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, Australia, the Pacific Disability Forum, demonstrating the power and potential of our collective leadership to achieve peaceful and gender equal societies. The Coalition focuses on strengthening women’s capacity to engage in policy and decision making, driving evidence-based and women-led innovations from the region, as well as engaging in national and regional advocacy. Action Aid as a women’s rights focused humanitarian organisation supports Coalition members to engage in the humanitarian system.

In Bougainville, the Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation (NCFR) continues to demonstrate how the women continue to sustain the peace process and mobilise women and mediate with the Autonomous Bougainville Government to enhance greater accountability to women's peace and security priorities including increased inclusion and access to information: "Today you can hear people say, "we do not want to return to a conflict situation So we really hold that dearly. We feel that all these initiatives are working. It's mainly from local knowledge, and what we think can work based on our own context. Peacebuilding is another big area with NCFR is concerned with and is running a lot of peacebuilding training intensives, conversations, dialogues, mediations, and reconciliations."⁴

The coalition reflects our recommendations that birthed the Pacific RAP-WPS – and its specific recommendations:

- The protection of women's rights is central to all humanitarian efforts and must be integrated into early warning, response, recovery and resilience building and
- Women's rights organisations must drive the community-based responses.

Peacebuilding in our region requires a balancing of traditional and customary practice with modern governance including accountability to the culture of human rights by engaging with indigenous leaders and church leaders. GPPAC Pacific's peacebuilding practice will also create a sustainable space through peace education, peacebuilding dialogue and mediation that enables women and youth of all diversities to access all decision making spaces

This requires a redesigning of the table or processes of engagement, that not simply rely on the invitation "to the table" but redefining processes that creates a new inclusive space that integrates faith and indigenous practice into the local, national and regional development processes and frameworks.

The GPPAC Pacific network is committed to deepen a collective understanding of peacebuilding and conflict prevention by supporting multi-stakeholder initiatives that continue to contribute to establishing a culture of nonviolence and prevention that will:

- Collectively promote Human Security, Inclusive Conflict Prevention and Climate action for Ecological Just Peace
- Enhance national and regional solidarity action for a peaceful referendum in Bougainville;
- Use peace education to support democratic transitions and contribute to ending the culture of armed and gender based violence;
- Enhance collaboration between peacebuilders and governments for the implementation of international and regional commitments to peace and security including the Arms Trade Treaty

We look forward to enhancing collaboration with inter-governmental partners, civil society allies and member states to deepen collective understanding of peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

Together we can ensure peacebuilding practice aligns with the human rights treaty system and contributes to greater state accountability in its goal to realize just, peaceful and inclusive communities.

¹ Agnes Titus, GPPAC Pacific Regional Steering Group Meeting, Suva, June 2019