

**From:** [Lailia Tamata](#)  
**To:** [Committee\\_JSCFADT \(REPS\)](#)  
**Subject:** Inquiry into the human rights of women and girls in the Pacific  
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## **TOR - Inquiry into the human rights of women and girls in the Pacific**

With respect to the status of human rights of women and girls in the Pacific, the JSCFADT, in particular the Human Rights Sub-Committee shall, in the context of the Pacific Step-up, give particular regard to:

1. The role of civil society groups in Pacific Islands in responding practically to domestic, family and sexual violence, and other human rights issues such as gender equality

- The role of civil society in responding to domestic, family and sexual violence is being compromised in many ways but some of which include:
  - by a culture that pays to be engaged in, to see the conduct of and the professionalism of personnel in "domestic, family and sexual violence, and other human rights issues such as gender inequality" that is promoted over the internet and entertainment movies
  - International Foreign relations still has *the use of force by the armed forces* as the final determinant of resolving issues between nation countries and this develops the research for types of violence to enforce one's will over another
  - The world was never fair and instead of only promoting equality, human rights programs should promote equity as well as:
    - Traditional and modern societies have always been hierarchical where the stronger look after the weaker in a community - equity could be promoted alongside equality
      - Where equity works, let it be the standard
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    - Many Pacific Islands struggle with the concept of individualism and individual human rights
      - where communal rights brings about justice, let communal rights be the norm
      - Where they co-exist, allow them to co-exist
      - For the middleground, find one
  - State Parties have formed voting blocks so some State Parties can not criticise other State Parties because of their Foreign relationships - this is a huge compromise of the rights of women and girls through the CSOs
    - In this case, communities that depend on other State Parties to continue the fight for the people through local NGOS and Civil Society Organizations no longer have the support of strong State Parties to condemn Pacific Islands Governments that abuse their women and girls
  - The other concern with Civil Society is when the Australian Government continues to support rogue regimes in the region when similar to the above, the people through their CSOs look to Australia to offer a helping hand
  - Sovereignty of the State - some Pacific Island countries have successfully objected to Australian intervention at national level when the Pacific Island Government cites Sovereignty of the State
    - Sovereignty of the State can and should be only cited by States that recognise and observe Sovereignty of their Citizens
    - When Citizens within the State are not sovereign in their own State, the State can neither claim nor plead sovereignty
- The equality of women as *a one size fits all development approach* should be revisited
  - For this reason, MICNGOS promotes *"Rethinking Development and Shaping the Marshall Islands We Want"*

2. The key figures and groups which advance the human rights of women and girls' in the Pacific context

- Key figures that advance the human rights of women and girls are not the majority women and girls organizations but the minority groups that make up those whose choices are new and not one that is common and popular like the lesbians and gays
- Whilst they have their own issues as minorities and equity has a place to entertain and accommodate them, that they champion women's issues and even Climate Change issues could be incorrectly perceived as the promotion of LGBTI
  - In fact it is the protection of minority groups that is promoted, not the promotion of their choices

3. Engagement of these groups with Australia's Pacific Step-up

- The Pacific and Marshall Islands for instance is very much comprised of Christian atolls
- That there are misinterpreted Christian practices that are based on the Law and not on Grace is a struggle within the religion itself
- It must not mean however that the religion is to be discarded as in that way, people discard their only hope - God
- Christianity's main message is on the Grace of God and in this same grace there is room for LGBTI protection
- The promotion of LGBTI choices could be seen as the denouncement of Christianity that have been lifetime and lifelong values for societies
  - If LGBTI values and principles are out to replace traditional women values and if these LGBTI values and principles can sustain communities that make up peaceful and just societies would be an interesting ask?

4. The effectiveness of Australian overseas development assistance programs in supporting human rights of women and girls - POWER V. PEACE, HARMONY AND STABILITY

- Australia has been doing a lot to support the human rights of women and girls in communities and societies that do not see women and girls as equal
- Could it be that an approach that sees individual Power as the issue is being pursued in a Pacific culture of peace, harmony and stability are a mismatch?
- Whilst Fiji can promote individualism and individual human rights because of its elvel of clonization and majority of other races blowing up the closeness of communities and societies which were blood relatives, individualism, power as the core of *domestic, family and sexual violence, and other human rights issues such as gender equality* might work for some communities in Fiji
- In other Pacific Islands, power does not appeal to all as many still pursue peace, harmony and stability
- To the Power lense person, they see this as weak so they develop the power in a women and girls and make their goals power instead of peace, harmony and stability

5. Any related matters

- lost in Interpretation and Translation - Australia sould invest in local experts and make them part of their development experts. If Australia can pay international consultants handsomely, why can Australia not pay local consultants the same as a recognition of their expertise in translating and interpreting the development language and issues for the lcoal who is the development owner/recipeint
- After Busan and the CPDE concept of Development Effectiveness, development must not be used anymore as an extension of State parties Foreign Relations but as humanitarian and human assistance
- The one size fits all worked with a heavy hand and now that we are in the years of human rights and freedoms, the one size fits all must be discarded for taking case by case situatuons with the appropriate programs that are evidence informed
- Utilise the Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) to the fullest to get to the fact and not the interpretation of development
- Always apply public consultation with the owners of development
- Promote inclusive participation through local consultants

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