



The Pacific Island Countries Fiji, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Tuvalu

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(This country profile is available online at www.unisa.edu.au/genderbudgets)

1 Background

The Pacific Island Countries comprise 25 nations and territories spread over more than 25,000 islands and islets of the western and central Pacific Ocean. Reflecting the great cultural diversity in the region, some 1,200 languages are spoken in the region with English and French often being official languages.

Pacific Island Countries have been traditionally grouped along racial and cultural lines as Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. The Melanesian islands include Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, Torres Strait Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and the Solomon Islands. The Micronesian islands include the Marianas, Guam, Wake Island, Palau, the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru and the Federated States of Micronesia. The Polynesian islands include New Zealand, Hawaiian Islands, Rotuma, Midway Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, the Cook Islands, French Polynesia and Easter Island.

	Samoa	Fiji	Vanuatu	Solomon Islands	PNG
Socioeconomic indicators					
Population in 2008 (in millions)	0.2	0.9	0.2	0.5	6.5
GDP per capita, (PPP \$US), 2005	6,170	6,049	3,225	2,031	2,563
Proportion of population living below US\$1 (PPP) a day (percent)	5.5% (2002)	38% (1996)	26% (1998)	---	30.2% (1996)
Human Development Index 2007, value *	0.771	0.741	0.693	0.610	0.541
Human Development Index 2007, rank *	94 th /181	108/181	126/ 181	135 /181	148/181
Gender equality indicators					
Gender-related development index (GDI) 2007 *	0.763	0.732	---	---	---
Seats in lower house or single house (% held by women) 2009*	8.2%	---	3.8%	0	0.9%
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births), 2005	---	210	---	220	470
Adult literacy rate, female (aged 15 and older), 2005	98.3%	95.9%	76.1% (*1999-07)	---	50.9%
Gross secondary enrolment rate, female (%)	85%	91%	38%	27%	23%
Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, 2000	*30.2%	29.6%	---	30.8 (1999)	32.1%
Budgetary indicators					
Public expenditure on education (% of GDP) 2002–05	4.5%	6.4%	9.6%	3.3%	---
Public Expenditure on education (% of Total expenditure) 2002-05	13.7%	---	26.7%	---	---
Public expenditure on health (% of GDP) 2004	4.1%	2.9%	3.1	5.6%	3%
Public Expenditure on health (% of Total government expenditure) 2005	11.6%	9.6%	12.8	12.6	9.6%
Public expenditure on defence (% of GDP) 2005	---	1.2%	---	---	0.6%

Sources: UNDP (2007) *Human Development Report 2007/08*; Population Reference Bureau, (2008) *World Population Data Sheet*; World Economic Forum (2007) *The Global Gender Gap Report*; UN Statistics Division (2008) *Millennium Development Goal Indicators*; United Nations Population Division(2008) *World Population Prospects*; UNESCAP (2008) *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific*; IMF (2007) *Government Finance Statistics*; Open Budget Initiative (2008); * UNDP(2010) *Asia-Pacific Human Development Report: Power, Vice and Rights*, UNDP: Colombo (See Explanatory Notes for details).

Note: There exists little data on Tuvalu and frequently Tuvalu is absorbed within the category 'other countries'.

2 The Pacific Island Countries

According to the AusAID's *Pacific Economic Survey* (2008a), historically economic growth in the Pacific has been comparatively low, averaging 2% - 3% per year. AusAID (2008a: xv) identifies political instability as having a significant impact on the region's economic growth. The majority of the population in the region lives in the poorest Pacific Island Countries of Kiribati, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. Governance standards are variable across the region, having improved between 2002 and 2005 in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Federated States of Micronesia, but becoming worse in Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Tonga.

Furthermore, not one Pacific Island Country is on track to achieve all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (AusAID 2008a; 2009b). While Samoa and Tonga are likely to achieve four MDGs, countries such as Cook Islands, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu are expected to meet few MDGs. Fiji, Niue, Palau and Vanuatu are likely achieve three MDGs. In many of these countries the progress observed in the 1990s in sectors such as health and education has declined to a slower pace or even a reversal of the previously progressive trend, including in child and maternal health (AusAID 2009b). Many Pacific Island Countries face growing health problems, increasing environmental threats, high levels of joblessness and poverty, and population pressures (ADB 2009a).

The Asian Development Bank's *Pacific Economic Monitor* (2009a) notes that while women have made significant progress toward equality and empowerment (MDG 3), many remain disadvantaged in many areas, including education, employment, and political representation. Pacific Island Countries hold one of the lowest record for women's representation in the political sphere and provide five of the eight countries in the world with no women represented in the Parliament of the region. These countries are, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu (PIFS 2006: xi).

Most of the Pacific Island Countries rely heavily on Official Development Assistance (ODA), and these countries receive some of the largest ODA per capita amounts in the world (AusAID 2009b: 3). AusAID (2009b: 41) estimated ODA per capita of US\$136 for the Pacific region which is much higher than the estimated ODA per capita of US\$19 for developing countries as a whole. Among the Pacific Island Countries the three top ODA per capita receivers are Niue with US\$5,514 and Nauru US\$2,912 and Tuvalu with US\$1,197.

2 Gender responsive budgeting in the Pacific region

Initial steps towards the implementation of gender responsive budgeting across the Pacific Island Countries have been undertaken mainly through awareness raising and pilot activities. A two-year pilot *Integrating a gender and youth perspective into public expenditure management* funded by ADB was undertaken in the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Samoa (2001-2003). In Fiji an ADB funded gender audit included some activities around the budget. In 2009-2010 UNIFEM has begun support for gender responsive budgeting in PNG as part of a UNIFEM framework of the EC/UN Partnership on Gender Equality for Development and Peace with a view to expanding these initiatives to other Pacific Island Countries in the future (email communication with aid agency 01/10/09). Some other Pacific Island Countries (Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu) have indicated some limited interest but this has not yet translated into concrete action.

An assessment of gender responsive budgeting activities and capacity amongst Pacific Island Countries was undertaken in 2004 by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community – Pacific Women's Bureau. It found limited efforts by the Pacific Island Countries and the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific to link gender issues and inequalities with the budget process (Sharp 2005: 276). Further, at the national level and across the Pacific, 'anecdotal evidence places domestic budgetary financing of gender activities at 1%' – mainly directed to core operational costs of the women's machinery (Utoikamanu 2008: 3). Sharp (2005: 276) argued

that that gender responsive budgeting in Pacific Island Countries has been equated with specifically targeted expenditures for women and girls.

At the regional level, gender responsive budgeting has been recommended in the *Revised Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality 2005-2015*. It acknowledges gender responsive budgeting as a mechanism to promote the advancement of women. It notes the importance of local conditions in shaping and sustaining the process of mainstreaming gender perspectives into budgeting policy beyond the period of a pilot. In the final decisions of the 10th Pacific Triennial Conference for Women and the 3rd Pacific Women Minister's Meeting (May 2007) Pacific Island Countries were urged to strengthen gender mainstreaming, including 'establishment of gender-responsive budgeting to assist in implementing budget reforms' and academic institutions and regional organisations are asked 'to include gender responsive budgeting in their training and technical assistance programmes' (Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) 2007: 3). Also at this high-level meeting some commentators contested focus on gender responsive budgeting and argued that due to weak policy and budgetary system these countries should invest in institutional capacity in planning, development, evaluation and monitoring (Suhas and Naidu 2007).

Following the 10th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women (in 2007) several aid agencies, including the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, UNIFEM and UNDP, explored avenues to support the implementation of such commitments at the national level. So far none of the proposed programs and activities from the 10th Triennial Conference have been implemented (email communication with aid agency 22/09/09).

In 2008 at the 52nd Session on the Commission on the Status of Women, Mrs Fekitamueloa Utoikamanu, in her statement on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Group noted:

Development partners have become increasingly active in the development of national gender policies including innovative resource allocation approaches and systems to better integrate gender initiatives in the planning, budgeting and institutional policies of governments. However, efforts to implement these on a sustainable basis are severely constrained by limited technical capacity in both national women's machineries and other related government agencies.
(Utoikamanu 2008: 3)

This profile focuses on the countries that have undertaken some gender responsive budgeting activities within the Pacific region - namely Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Vanuatu, Tuvalu. Solomon Islands is included because there is record of aid assistance mobilized to implement gender responsive budgeting. The Marshall Islands, perhaps the most developed gender responsive budgeting initiative in the Pacific region, is discussed in a specific Country Profile – [Republic of the Marshall Islands](#).

2.1 Republic of the Fiji Islands

Background. Fiji consists of 322 islands with 90% of the 0.9 million population (see table) living on the two main islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. The majority of the population are Indigenous Fijians, a mixture of Melanesian and Polynesian ancestry. Indo-Fijians are a sizeable minority group (AusAID 2009a).

Fiji became independent from Britain in 1970 and adopted a constitutional democratic government inspired by the Westminster model and structured around a bicameral (2 house) parliament. A council of chiefs, Bose Levu Vakaturaga, appoints the President (DFAT 2009a). In 2006 Fiji experienced its fourth military coup in 20 years with Commodore Frank Bainimarama assuming executive powers and dismissing the elected Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase. AusAID

(2009a) reports that each coup has caused political and social upheaval, and has undermined institutional capacity and independence.

In 2010 the military-led government banned foreign media ownership in the country and this has been criticized by the Australian and New Zealand governments for its implications for democracy and free speech (ABC News 2010). The military regime has suspended the Constitution and is not planning elections until 2014 pending adoption of a proposed People's Charter which includes changes to the Constitution. Fiji has been suspended from the main regional organisation, the Pacific Islands Forum and from the Commonwealth of Nations (AusAID 2009a; World Bank 2010).

The World Bank (2010) observed that 'Fiji is the largest economy of the Pacific Islands Countries'. Fijian per capita income at US\$6,049 is one of the highest in the region (see table). Also it is the least aid-dependent Pacific nation with an aid per capita averaging US\$69 in 2007 (World Bank 2010). However the economy has been contracting, with the coup reducing investor and business confidence, resulting in declines in its key revenue sources of tourism, remittances and sugar. This situation has been aggravated by the 2009 heavy floods. It is estimated that 38% of the population live below the poverty line (see table). Female headed households, particularly vulnerable to poverty, are increasing (Nelson 2008; World Bank 2010).

Fiji's ranks 92/177 countries on its Human Development Index (see table), with a value of 0.762. It has been classified as a medium human development country. It ranks 82/ 157 countries in its GDI, with a value of 0.757 (UNDP 2007). Historically Fijian's have had reasonable access to education and health services (AusAID 2009a). Female adult literacy is 96% and the gross secondary female enrolment rate is 91% (see table). The maternal mortality rate is 210 per 100,000 live births (see table). Signs of decline on some of its Millennium Development Goals, particularly those related to health, are apparent (AusAID 2009a).

Gender responsive budgeting in Fiji. Fiji was the first Pacific Island Country to engage with gender responsive budgeting. However, despite significant donor support to implement gender responsive budgeting and policy, progress has been slow in Fiji.

In 1999 the newly democratically elected Fijian Minister for Finance committed his government to joining the Gender Budget Initiative of the Commonwealth countries. This pilot was to be managed by the Ministry of Finance and was approved by the Cabinet (Fiji Government 2002: 19). Assistance was provided by the Commonwealth Secretariat and Professor Rhonda Sharp was asked to set-up the pilot. However a coup in May 2000 against the Fijian Labour government brought a halt to this initiative.

Fiji's commitment to gender equality and gender mainstreaming is outlined in the Women's Plan of Action (1999–2008). The Plan's priority areas include: 'i) mainstreaming gender into policy and planning; ii) review of discriminatory laws; iii) facilitating women's access to credit; iv) promoting gender balance in decision-making and training opportunities; and v) ending violence against women' (Nelson 2008: 17). However the Plan does not outline monitoring indicators nor discusses its budget implications (ADB 2006a: 10). While interdepartmental taskforces were created to lead the implementation of the Women's Plan of Action these were not integrated into national planning, policy making and budgetary processes (ADB 2006a: 57).

In 2000 the Ministry of Finance, with Asia Development Bank assistance, undertook gender audits of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture, Sugar and Land Resettlement (Nelson 2008: 17; Fiji Government 2002: 19). The aim of these audits was to 'demonstrate the process of gender analysis, planning, and mainstreaming in a practical way' (ADB 2006a: 59). Its objective was not gender budgeting but a link was made to the budget. In line with the Women's Platform of Action, it connected with the budget processes and systems to audit

whether gender issues were mainstreamed in national policies and programs (Sharp 2005: 271). This pilot project led to the inclusion of a question in the 2003 budget circular requiring the departments to provide an analysis of impacts on men and women of the budget expenditures proposed (Sharp 2005). Yet this question was not an effective accountability mechanism as it was not grounded on a 'systematic monitoring and an enforcement system of incentives and/or penalties' (Sharp 2005: 278).

Nelson (2008) argues that a large gap exists in Fiji between gender mainstreaming commitments and implementation. Further, the ADB (2006a: xi) notes that gender mainstreaming is not 'well integrated into the government institutional structure, planning, and budgetary processes'. As in other Pacific Island Countries, the Ministry responsible for women's affairs has been constrained by low technical capacity and inadequate resources to support the improvement of gender equality outcomes (Nelson 2008). Continuing political instability following the 2006 military coup has disrupted institutional structure and knowledge, and capacity in the bureaucracy, including in the national women's machinery (Nelson 2008).

2.2 Papua New Guinea

Background. With a population of 6.5 million (see table), Papua New Guinea (PNG) is the largest and most populated of the countries in the Pacific region. Since 1970s the population growth rate has been on average 2% and as a result 40% of the population is younger than 15 years old (Government of PNG and UNDP 2004). PNG, predominantly a Melanesian country, consists of more than 600 islands. While there are more than 700 language groups, English, Tok Pisin (Pidgin), and Motu (the lingua franca of the Papuan region) are official languages (DFAT 2010e).

PNG became independent from Australia in 1975 and joined the Commonwealth with the British monarchy as head of state (DFAT 2010e). Australia remains PNG's most significant source of foreign aid. PNG's democracy is grounded on a 109-members Parliament elected from the 19 provinces and the capital Port Moresby (Government of PNG and UNDP 2004: 6). Volatility has been characteristics of PNG's politics with a high turn-over of members of Parliament at general elections and governments based on coalitions. Significant reforms are being implemented to bring about more stability in the political sphere, such as the Constitutional guarantee that governments cannot be challenged with a no-confidence motions in the initial 18 months of a five-year term. In mid-2000 some of these reforms were declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court (DFAT 2010e). In 2007 the incumbent Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare, from National Alliance party, established a government comprising a coalition that included the People's Action Party, United Resources Party, PANGU Pati, People's National Congress, People's Democratic Movement and other smaller parties (DFAT 2010e).

The World Bank (2007) describes PNG as having a highly dualistic economy with a narrow formal sector that focuses on large-scale export of its extensive natural resources, and an informal sector dominated by the subsistence activities of the majority of the population in rural areas. The global commodities boom led to an economic growth rate of 6-7% between 2006-2008 and, despite the recent global economic crisis, economic growth continued at a robust 4% in 2009 (World Bank 2007; ADB 2009b; World Bank 2010). While remaining vulnerable to commodity prices in the international markets, PNG is expected to grow 15 to 20% in GDP per annum with the ExxonMobil-led PNG LNG project (DFAT 2010e).

In 2005 GDP per capita was \$US2,563 (see table). PNG is ranked 145/177 on the Human Development Index with a value of 0.530 (see table) and has been classified as experiencing medium human development (UNDP 2007). While progress has been recorded with regards to

meeting the MDGs, PNG is currently unlikely to achieve any of the MDG targets by 2015 (UNDP date unspecified; AUSAID 2010e). It has the highest rate of reported HIV cases in the region with nearly 76,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in 2008 representing 98% of the total estimated persons infected in the Pacific (AusAID 2009b). In 1996, 30.2% of the population was living on less than one dollar a day (see table) and the World Bank (2007) observed that a decade later this had increased to 40% of the population. Further:

urban unemployment and crime rates are high, the delivery of basic services and the state of infrastructure is poor and PNG ranks poorly in surveys on governance and corruption. Law and order problems add significantly to economic costs and remain a deterrent to investment. (World Bank 2007)

The Government of PNG and UNDP (2004: 7) reported that around 50% of all health and education services in the rural communities are provided by church and community groups.

PNG's ranked 124/157 on the Gender Development Index with a value of 0.529 (UNDP 2007). UNIFEM (2010) observes that maternal and infant mortality rates are high. Female adult literacy rate is low at 50.9% and female's gross secondary enrolment rate is 23% (see table). UNIFEM (2010) noted that the female gross enrolment ratio, including primary, secondary and tertiary education levels, is lower for women at 38% than for men at 43%. In 2000, only a very small percentage (5.3 %) of all women had a wage job (Government of PNG and UNDP 2004: 18). Women's representation in the political sphere is a mere 0.9% with 1 woman elected amidst 109 members of Parliament (see table; UNIFEM 2010).

Gender responsive budgeting in PNG. In 2009, the PNG government, with UNIFEM's assistance, began planning for a gender responsive budgeting initiative. This was part of a UNIFEM program within the framework of the EC/UN Partnership on Gender Equality for Development and Peace. It is aimed at 'ensuring that gender equality commitments are integrated into the aid effectiveness agenda' with a view to expanding these initiatives to other Pacific Island Countries in the future (UNIFEM 2010).

The focus of UNIFEM's work on gender responsive budgeting in 2010 is 'on sensitizing stakeholders from the Government and civil society on GRB tools and methodologies and provide technical assistance on the drafting of GRB policy guidelines that will facilitate the adoption of GRB at the level of sectoral and provincial budgets, when appropriate' (UNIFEM 2010). UNIFEM has been successful in gathering support from PNG Department for Community Development and the Department of National Planning and Monitoring. As part of its support, in late 2009, UNIFEM organised a visit by public officials and NGOs to Nepal to expose them to other gender responsive budgeting experiences in the region (communication with donor 01/10/09). In January 2010 UNIFEM advertised a call for tenders to provide technical assistance over an 11-month period for key actors in PNG on gender responsive budgeting (UNIFEM 2010). In mid-2010 UNIFEM began recruiting a gender responsive budgeting adviser to strengthen their assistance to the PNG government.

In PNG the public commitment to increase budget allocations for the improvement of gender equality has not resulted in changes to the budget processes and allocations (Nelson 2008). The ADB has argued that the potential for implementing gender responsive budgeting in PNG is dependent on improvements to the current public finance management systems and processes (ADB 2006b: 33). Donors have supported recent efforts to improve the linkages between planning and budgeting as well as the budget systems and processes. Chief among these efforts have been the Public Expenditure Review and Rationalisation, which focused on good governance for fiscal sustainability, transparency and accountability, and the Medium Term Development Strategy (2005-2010). The latter identified gender equality as one of its foci (Nelson 2008: 34). The ADB (2006b) argued that the PNG Public Expenditure Review and Rationalisation

has created the opportunity for civil society consultation and participation in the budget process and national planning. But women were less engaged and had limited knowledge and understanding about the budget process (ADB 2006b: 31).

UNIFEM (2010) observed that gender responsive budgeting can 'contribute to the development of a comprehensive monitoring framework - through a set of gender sensitive indicators - to assess results and progress towards national gender equality commitments'. There has been little progress towards this in the past with Nelson (2008: 35) observing that there has been a 'lack of gender analysis in high-level policy dialogues and an absence of gender responsive targets and indicators in the planning frameworks of major development projects'.

Similar to many other Pacific Island Countries, in PNG there is a lack of political and limited capacity within the Gender Unit (Nelson 2008: 34). While women's representation in local government is higher than at the national level, women have a negligible input in executing bodies - an example is the Budget Priorities Committees (ADB 2006b: 31). ADB has further noted that women and men and gender advocacy organizations need to be up-skilled to read and understand budgets (ADB 2006b: 32).

2.3 Samoa

Background. Samoa, formerly known as Western Samoa, in 1962 became the first independent Pacific Island Country. Samoa is a Polynesian country with a population of 0.2 million (see table), the majority of which are located on the two main islands of Savai'i and Upolu. Annual population growth has been estimated at 0% (DFAT 2010a; AusAID 2010a).

Samoa has been described by DFAT (2010a) as a 'stable parliament democracy' based on a 49 seats National Legislative Assembly, of which 47 are reserved to village chiefs and two are decided among non-Samoan citizens through a specific electoral process. This will change in 2011 with all 49 seats reserved to village chiefs. The government consists of 12 Ministers and a Prime Minister. However all members of parliament aligned with the government are considered as associate ministers and no formal opposition exists in the Assembly. Since 1982 the government has been led by the Human Rights Protection Party. Hon Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi, first elected in 1998, is the current Prime Minister (DFAT 2010a).

The Samoan economy has been dependent on foreign aid, remittances and agricultural exports. The agriculture sector engages more than 65% of the labour force and represents 90% of total exports (UNDP date unspecified b). Tourism is a sector in expansion and an important source of income, accounting for 16% of GDP (AusAID 2010a; UNDP date unspecified b). Real per capita GDP has been over 3% since major economic reforms took place in 1993 (World Bank date unspecified). There was a downturn in the economy in 2008 with the global financial crisis resulting in significant job cuts at the country's largest private sector employer, Yazaki, a reduction in remittances from Samoans residing the United States of America and a decrease in tourism (World Bank 2010; DFAT 2010a). In 2005 Samoa's per capita income at US\$ 6,170 is one of the highest in the region (see table). Yet 20% of the population live below the national poverty line (UNDP date unspecified c). Meanwhile the United Nations recommendation that Samoa would be considered a Developing Country from 2010 was deferred to 2012 as the result of impact of the September 2009 tsunami (DFAT 2010a).

Samoa's Human Development Index ranking is 77th out of 177 countries, with a value of 0.785 (see table). It has been classified as a medium human development country (UNDP 2007). AusAID (2010a) observes that 'Samoa is on track to meet most of the Millennium Development Goals', while registering setbacks in targets on infant mortality, poverty levels and an incidence

in non-communicable diseases. However the 2009 tsunami may hinder the progress achieved so far. Nelson (2008: 42) remarks that women's lower status is legislated with regards to land rights and is evident across the Samoan society, namely in women's poor representation in the formal workforce. Among the Pacific Islands Countries Samoa has one of the best performances with regards to women's participation in the political arena with 6.1% of seats in the Assembly held by women (see table). In 2005 female adult literacy rate was as high as 98.3% and the gross secondary enrolment rate for girls 85% is high within the Pacific (see table).

Gender responsive budgeting in Samoa. Since the Asian Development Bank pilot initiative, Youth and gender sensitive public expenditure management in the Pacific implemented in 2002-2003, there has been limited progress on gender responsive budgeting in Samoa.

Samoa's government has embraced, since the late 1990s, a broad program of public sector reforms, including output budgeting and strategic planning. While significant modernization has been achieved, resulting in improvements in government's accountability and transparency, the government acknowledged in 2003 in its CEDAW Report 'that much work remains to be done and further reform initiatives are being introduced' (Samoa Government 2003: 29).

The ADB pilot initiative was designed to locate gender responsive budgeting within the context of Samoa's policy and budgetary reforms. The pilot was resourced by a Regional Technical Assistance program provided by Professor Rhonda Sharp and her team to Samoa and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. In the Samoan case it had an innovative focus on the intersection between youth and gender, aiming to integrate youth/gender perspective in the budget systems and processes while drawing on gender responsive budgeting frameworks, tools and strategies (Sharp 2005: 277). At the time Samoa had produced its first detailed youth policy involving wide-ranging consultations, but a budget had not been allocated, nor had the extensive range of activities identified in the policy been prioritised. As part of the pilot initiative several ministries worked with a cross ministry coordinating team (headed by a senior Ministry of Finance official) in identifying what youth activities were already being undertaken, their resourcing arrangements and their potential gender impacts. In order to progress the youth policy budget the pilot coordinating team sought to promote the development of accountability mechanisms within the bureaucracy through the establishment of a high-level budget committee responsible for 'screening and prioritizing budget proposals with significant social impacts' (Sharp 2005: 278). Although the pilot provided insufficient time to reach significant and sustainable changes to the budget and policy decision-making processes, Sharp (2005: 277) draws attention to some of its achievements, namely awareness raising on gender and youth issues within the government, improved understanding on the role played by different ministries in promoting gender outcomes as well as the role of civil society in service delivery in this sector. The links between the national planning process and the budget were drawn and some changes to the performance targets of the Ministry for Women were undertaken.

Further work on gender responsive budgeting has not been undertaken in Samoa since the pilot. Nelson (2008: 45) highlights that while the government has well-built 'systems and management checks and balances', including a National Policy for Women, lack of technical capacity for gender analysis and planning and limited of resources in the national women's machinery pose challenges to policy and program implementation in this area (Nelson 2008: 45).

2.4 Solomon Islands

Background. The Solomon Islands is the third largest archipelago in the South Pacific with a population of 0.5 million (see table) and more than 900 islands (World Bank 2010). Ninety five

percent of the population is of Melanesian ancestry and sixty-three language groups have been identified in the country (DFAT 2010b).

The Solomon Islands became independent from Britain in 7 July 1978 and joined the Commonwealth of Nations with the British monarchy as head of state. During the late 1990s civil unrest fueled by ethnic tensions, government collapse and lawlessness led to direct regional military and police assistance under the leadership of the Australian government in 2003 through the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) (Mckibbin 2009: 442). While law and order have been restored, the domestic political context remains volatile (DFAT 2010b). In mid 2010 national elections resulted in the election of Danny Philip, leader of the Reformed Democratic Party of Solomon Islands, as Prime Minister (DFAT 2010b). As recently as late November 2010 a riot broke out as a result of jail sentence given to the Solomon Islands Fisheries Minister Jimmy Lusibaea, formerly known as Jimmy Rasta, a militant group leader in the 1990s civil unrest (Prestidge-King 2010).

The World Bank (2010) reports that an 'unsustainable logging boom and pro-cyclical fiscal policy' contributed to significant economic growth between 2003-2008, reaching in 2007 a 15-year high of 10.3 %. The impact of the global financial crisis was evident in Solomon Islands which recorded negative growth in 2009. With forest resources expected to be depleted as early as 2014 the medium and long term economic prospects of Solomon Islands are gloomy notwithstanding the beginning of commercial production of gold mining (World Bank 2010). GDP per capita at US \$2031 remains comparatively low in the region (see table). The majority of the population is engaged in subsistence and cash crop agriculture and less than 25% are in paid employment (DFAT 2010b).

Classified as a medium human development country, Solomon Islands' Human Development Index ranked 129 in 177 countries (see table) with a value of 0.602 (UNDP 2007). AusAID (2010b) observes that Solomon Islands is on the way to reach Millennium Development Goal 4 - reduce child mortality - and Goal 5 - improve maternal health. Basic service delivery remains a challenge to progress in other MDGs. Female gross secondary enrolment rate remains low at 27% (see table). There are no women elected to Parliament (see table). Some commentators highlight improvements in women's presence in decision-making positions in the public service (Liki 2010). Liki (2010) highlights that this progress in the public service should be understood in the context of the combined efforts of government, NGOs, women's organisations and international agencies evident in awareness raising programs that value women's contribution outside the home.

The role of donors in mobilizing support within the Solomon Islands bureaucracy for gender equality issues was well-summarized by Kere (1999: 127 in Wallace 2000: 23) in 1999:

the integration of gender in the government process has been determined largely by two major factors: government's response to national and global issues such as gender to ensure that its policies and plans are widely accepted ... and aid donor emphasis on gender issues as a requirement to be addressed in funded programs and projects.

Several donors have been engaged in the Solomon Islands in promoting better gender outcomes across a range of sectors such as education, political arena, and gender based violence – including Australian and New Zealand bilateral aid programs, United Nations Development Programme, Secretariat of the Pacific Community and UNIFEM. Nelson (2008: 50) argued that overall this aid assistance has not been informed by gender analysis. This was further supported by the 2007/2008 RAMSI Annual Performance Report which recommended the engagement of a gender adviser to mainstream gender across RAMSI and the Australian bilateral aid programs and practices, including assistance provided to Solomon Islands Treasury and Finance (GRM

International 2009). An international Gender Adviser was appointed in November 2009 (Emmott and Barcham 2010).

Gender responsive budgeting in the Solomon Islands. In the Solomon Islands no specific gender responsive budgeting initiative has been found. However there is a record of offer of support from donors for the implementation of activities to bring about more gender sensitive budgeting (Nelson 2008: 81). With significant international support in 2009 an equity principle was included in the amended Financial Instructions which set the framework for 'auditors to assess the extent to which the use of public funds benefits women and whether projects explicitly consider gender in their design' (Emmott and Barcham 2010: 17).

Since 2009 there has been significant focus on public expenditure reform resulting in a World Bank-led Public Expenditure Review (PER) and budget support from donors in 2010 (Emmott and Barcham 2010). Having re-established peace and security, the international mission RAMSI focused on addressing the root cause of conflict identified as corruption and weak governance. This led to numerous political, judicial and economic reforms including 'budget and foreign debt management procedures (which) were introduced and supervised by a range of expatriate personnel' (Mckibbin 2009: 442). In 2008 the Solomon Islands was attributed an average score of D+ a mere one score above the lowest level in the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) framework. Some commentators point to the slow progress of budgetary reforms. Mckibbin (2009: 443) has argued that there has been limited local leadership in these reforms and that the large role played by RAMSI has generated a culture of dependency in the Solomon Islands.

The Solomon Islands government has plans to approach gender responsive budgeting as part of their gender mainstreaming strategy (communication with a senior government official 29/12/2010). A gender mainstreaming strategy is outlined in the 2009 Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy (AusAID 2010b). This policy identified as a priority the establishment of a gender desk in several key Ministries including the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning and the Prime Minister's Office. The gender desk in the Ministry of Finance is described as focused on engendering the budget and its national statistics. These proposals have been described by the government as integral to mainstreaming gender in public policy and service delivery (Solomon Islands Government 2009).

Several issues contribute to explain the slow progress on gender mainstreaming in policy and budgeting. There is limited awareness and political commitment to gender equality, a non-supportive culture within the bureaucracy and a general lack of funding and technical capacity in the national women's machinery to design innovative gender responsive programs (Nelson 2008: 50). The national women's machinery is aware of the scale of the task and its difficulties given the marginalization of women's issues in government (communication with a senior government official 29/12/2010).

2.5 Republic of Vanuatu

Background. Vanuatu, formerly known as New Hebrides, consists of more than 80 islands approximately 2000 km northeast of Australia. Independence was achieved in 1980 following close to eight decades of joint British and French administrations. Vanuatu has a population of 0.2 million (see table) of which 60% is under 25 years and 70% resides in rural areas (DFAT 2010c). Nelson (2008: 72) observes that Vanuatu has '80 different language groups with different tribal affiliations and social structures'.

'Vanuatu has enjoyed relative political stability since 2004' (AusAID 2008b). However political competition is grounded on patronage leading to a fragmented and unstable political system

(Cox, Alatoa et al 2007). In 2008 Edward Natapei, from the Vanua'aku Party, was elected Prime Minister supported by a coalition of parties, several single-member parties and independent members. Since then this coalition government has survived several motions of no-confidence and has changed composition on various occasions (DFAT 2010c).

More than 75% of the population is engaged in agriculture sector, mainly in subsistence agriculture (AusAID 2010c). The national economy has been expanding since 2003 with an average growth rate of 6% of GDP, led by tourism and construction and including also beef, copra, kava and timber (DFAT 2010c; World Bank 2010). This growth has slowed in 2009 due to the global economic crisis. The World Bank (2010) estimated that growth would reach 5.5% in 2009 as a result of the expansion of tourism sector, telecommunications and agriculture. Remittances have emerged as the second strongest foreign exchange earner – a result of the success of the New Zealand seasonal work scheme (World Bank 2010). In 2005 GDP per capita was estimated at US\$3,225 (see table). According to the UNDP (2009) Vanuatu is heavily dependent on aid for funding development priorities and providing technical assistance and capacity building. In addition '[c]ash grants and aid in kind represented 26% of the 2004 government budget appropriation' (UNDP 2009). The World Bank (2010) observed that, between 2000 and 2007, aid per capita was on average US\$184. This economic growth is yet to translate into the lives of ni-Vanuatu (a demonym used to refer to all Melanesian ethnicities originating in Vanuatu but which also refers, more generally, to nationals and citizens of Vanuatu, whatever their ethnicity) as documented in low formal employment at 15% and overcrowding of micro-business sector (Cox, Alatoa et al 2007).

Vanuatu's Human Development Index rating is 120/181 with a value of 0.674 (see table) and is classified as a medium development country (UNDP 2007: 231). While some MDG targets are within Vanuatu's reach, including promoting gender equality (MDG 3) and reducing child mortality (MDG 4), others require targeted assistance (AusAID 2010c). In fact the government will most unlikely meet MDG Target 1 on reducing the population living below the national poverty line. In 1998 26% of the population was living below a dollar a day (see table) and the average income of the poor is 31% below the national poverty (UNDP 2005: 10). AusAID (2008b) observes that broadly 20% of the population lacks access to health services and 25% of children under five are underweight and infant mortality is still an important problem. Further, female's gross secondary enrolment rate is a mere 38% (see table). Nelson (2008: 72) observes that women's access to and control of political, economic, knowledge and time resources is limited. This is evident in women's poor representation in the political sphere with a mere 3.8% (see table) of seats in the Parliament held by women. The challenge to Vanuatu is to improve health and education service delivery to remote rural communities and bring about employment opportunities from economic growth (AusAID 2010c).

Gender responsive budgeting in Vanuatu. In Vanuatu gender responsive budgeting efforts have been concentrated on mobilizing support for its progress within the government and in civil society.

A preliminary report for the 2004 Commonwealth Finance Ministers meeting, noted that the government of Vanuatu 'is committed to and making progress on good governance issues which is a favourable element in an otherwise poor context for implementing Gender Responsive Budget activities' (Hardy 2004 in Piau-Lynch 2007: 13). Further, this report noted that no real progress in implementing gender responsive budgeting had been recorded at the time (Piau-Lynch 2007). With the UNDP's assistance, the Office of the Prime Minister has led two costings workshop in an effort to integrate MDG's guidelines and indicators in the 2011 National Budget (UNDP 2009).

The government acknowledged in its CEDAW report the limited capacity and lack of support for gender mainstreaming across policy and planning, including in the gender analysis of national budgets (Vanuatu Government 2005: 48). Commentators have recorded resistance to gender mainstreaming and poor political commitment for cross-sectoral gender analysis and establishment of sex and age-disaggregated, gender responsive targets and indicators (Nelson 2008: 75). In addition Nelson (2008: 75) draws attention to the CEDAW Committee's concluding comments, which highlight that the Department of Women lacks 'adequate authority, capacity and resources to mainstream gender across government and effectively support implementation of CEDAW'. In response to this state of affairs the Vanuatu Rural Development and Training Centers' Association (2007: 23), on behalf of the non-governmental organizations, demanded that the Department of Women's Affairs and the government ensure appropriate budgetary allocations for the implementation of the Women's National Plan of Action.

Vanuatu has engaged in significant reform of its public finance systems that potentially provides opportunities for introducing gender responsive budgeting. In 1998 a new program-budgeting format was introduced and now an integrated recurrent development budget, including domestic and external expenditure, is prepared. With significant international support, the government has produced budget surpluses and has implemented economic reforms with the aim of stimulating economic growth (DFAT 2010c).

Several donors have been engaged in supporting reforms in Vanuatu. AusAID (2008b) for example, has engaged in assisting financial management reforms which resulted in surplus or neutral budgets 2002-2006. Several donor agencies have been contributing to improve gender outcomes in Vanuatu, namely the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, UNIFEM, New Zealand and Australia bilateral assistance and UNFPA (Nelson 2008: 82).

2.6 Tuvalu

Background. This small country of 12,000 people of Polynesian ancestry was formerly known as the Ellice Islands. It is comprised of nine atoll islands and is located between Hawaii and Australia in the South Pacific Ocean (DFAT 2010d; World Bank 2010).

In 1978 Tuvalu became independent from Britain. Having integrated the Commonwealth of Nations, Tuvalu is a constitutional monarchy with a 15-member unicameral parliament. There are no structured political parties but there are informal groupings and elected members have close links with their constituencies. Representation of the different islands receives considerable attention in making-up the Cabinet. The current Prime Minister, and head of government, is Mr Apisai Ielemia (DFAT 2010d).

Tuvalu is a subsistence agriculture and fishing economy. However it is close to entirely dependent on imported fuel and food. Important sources of income are remittances from overseas employment (mainly seaman), fishing licenses, internet domain license fees (.tv) and the Tuvalu Trust Fund. Established in 1987 the Tuvalu Trust Fund is a publically owned investment fund that provides a safety net against fluctuations in the government's income. Its' major contributions come from the governments of Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. In 2009 this Trust Fund financed 15% of the recurrent budget. From 2005 to 2007 the real GDP per capita grew at an average annual rate of 2.5%. Economic growth was recorded at 1.5% in 2009 (DFAT 2010d; AusAID 2010d; World Bank 2010). While nearly 70% of paid employment is related to the government sector (AusAID 2010d), only 25% of the labour force is formally employed (UNDP date unspecified e).

UNDP (date unspecified e) reports that 'Tuvalu has a Human Development Index (HDI) ranking of 0.652 which places it in the medium human development category'. AusAID (2010d)

highlights that '[t]he rule of law is upheld, access to basic services is generally good and serious poverty is not a major problem'. Overall progress against the MDGs has been positive. However regression on key development indicators has been observed such as the increasing prevalence of non-communicable diseases (AusAID 2010d). Girls' secondary school enrolment remains low at two thirds of that of boys. Men's paid employment is nearly twice that of women's, with women being in the lower echelons in the public sector (UNDP date unspecified e). The World Bank (2010: 3) summarizes the challenge of the world's smallest nation:

Tuvalu faces significant development challenges and increased economic vulnerability due to its small population, geographical remoteness and extreme susceptibility to external shocks like natural disasters or food and fuel price hikes. As the world's second lowest-lying nation, it is particularly vulnerable to impacts from climate change.

Gender responsive budgeting in Tuvalu. The government announced its commitment to implement gender mainstreaming across budgeting and planning in the mid-2000s. These political commitments are yet to be translated into significant changes in the budget processes and systems.

The government's commitment has been outlined in the *Fifty-second Session of the Commission on the Status of Women* (on the 27/02/08) by the Tuvalu Minister for Home Affairs and Rural Development (Telavi 2008: 3). The Minister, Telavi (2008: 3), noted that gender responsive budgeting while 'a new concept in Tuvalu' it has been 'incorporated in the overall national budget process'. The Minister for Home Affairs and Rural Development (Telavi 2008) summarizes the approach:

the concept of gender-responsive budgeting has been introduced and reflected to some extent through the incorporation of specific gender equality programs with specific allocation of resources in the national budget. These programs are directly coordinated and implemented by the Department of Women Affairs in close collaboration with the Tuvalu National Council of Women and other Government's public corporations. (Telavi 2008: 3)

A significant advance has been the use of sex-disaggregated data by planning and budget department in analysis for the national MDG report, Social Data Report and other statistical reports (Budlender 2007: 14). However commentators have noted that the government is yet to describe how the budget process will integrate the gender commitment outlined in the government's development plan, *Te kakeega II: National strategy for sustainable development 2005-2011*, and the CEDAW legislative reform (Nelson 2008: 70). While in Tuvalu performance budget has been introduced, a large share of Ministries do not refer to women or gender. The only exceptions are the Departments of Women and Education (Budlender 2007: 12).

The lack of financial and human resources is identified by the Minister for Home Affairs and Rural Development (Telavi 2008: 3) as a challenge to the implementation of gender responsive budgeting. In addition, Nelson (2008: 70) draws attention to the lack of political support to improve gender equality outcomes, an institutional culture framed by traditional stereotypes and the lack of sex and age-disaggregated data (Nelson 2008: 70). Budget reforms, including programme and performance-based budgeting, are said to have created opportunities for the implementation of gender responsive budgeting (often articulated as gender targeted expenditure). However Budlender (2007: 28) observes '[i]t would take time for officials to understand that GRB did not involve the imposition of an even more complex budget system but would instead assist government to ensure that the allocation and distribution of resources benefits both men and women in the society'.

Several donors have been engaged in Tuvalu in supporting public management reform and in improving gender equality outcomes. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) has

supported the government with its efforts to improve gender outcomes, including training of government staff on gender, social and cultural indicators and analysis and gender responsive budgeting (Tuvalu Government and SPC 2008: 6). In 2007 gender responsive budgeting was introduced as part of a broader project involving the UNDP, Ministry of Finance and the Department of Women Affairs. This project focused on awareness raising and training (Budlender 2007: 30).

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