



MEDIA RELEASE

Integrating Gender and Human Rights-based Approaches into the Pacific's Fisheries Sector

Suva, Fiji (7 June, 2019) – A workshop to integrate gender and human rights-based approaches and review performance indicators in the fisheries sector was held in Suva this week, coinciding with #WorldOceansDay and its “Oceans and Gender” theme, being celebrated around the world on 8 June.

The training workshop, held from 3-6 June, 2019, in partnership with the University of the South Pacific (USP), was organised by the Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP) programme. Funded by the European Union (EU) and the Government of Sweden, the EUR 45 million PEUMP programme promotes sustainable management and sound ocean governance to achieve food security and economic growth, while addressing climate change resilience and conservation of marine biodiversity. It follows a comprehensive approach, integrating issues related to oceanic fisheries, coastal fisheries, community development, marine conservation and capacity building under one single regional action.

The increasing depletion of coastal fisheries resources; threats to marine biodiversity, including negative impacts of climate change and disasters; the uneven contribution of oceanic fisheries to national economic development; the need for improved education and training in the sector; the need to mainstream a rights-based approach and to promote social inclusion and the greater recognition of gender issues within the sector are among issues being addressed through the PEUMP programme.

Oceans are the lungs of our planet, providing most of the oxygen we breathe. They are a major source of food and medicines and a critical part of the biosphere. This year's World Oceans Day theme of 'Oceans and Gender' provides an opportunity to explore the gender dimension of humankind's relationship with the ocean and to discover ways to promote gender equality in ocean-related activities such as marine scientific research, fisheries, labour at sea, migration by sea and human trafficking, as well as policy-making and management.

The Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation for the Pacific, Mr Christoph Wagner said, "Healthy oceans are key for the wellbeing of our planet and for the livelihoods of many people in the Pacific and around the world. Often, women's contributions, both towards ocean-based livelihoods and conservation efforts, are either overlooked or downplayed. In addition, women in the fisheries sector are largely concentrated in low-skilled, low-paid, seasonal jobs, often without health, safety and labour rights protections. Gender equality is a core value of the European Union, and a principle we will keep fighting for. The EU is therefore proud to be able to support the PEUMP programme, which utilises gender mainstreaming and a human rights based approach to promote direct opportunities and positive change for the Pacific island people, targeting in particular women, youth and vulnerable groups."

Åsa Hedén, Head of the Swedish Regional Development Cooperation for Asia and the Pacific explained, "A people-centred approach is necessary for long-term sustainable development and poverty reduction. Gender equality is key in sustainable management of the ocean and marine resources, because it highlights the realities for both men and women on the ground. It is important to understand how gender roles and norms as well as power structures could be either barriers to or drivers of change for men and women's equal access to natural resources, ecosystem services and

the larger benefits of the ocean. We are convinced that an inclusive process, which recognises the diversity of stakeholder's voices, needs and rights, is more likely to contribute to sustainable solutions. The PEUMP programme, with its multi-sectoral approach and commitment to integrate gender and a human-rights based approach across all its components, has a unique opportunity to bring sectors together to discuss the larger picture and the value of working together for the ocean, which we all are dependent on."

SPC Director-General, Dr Colin Tukuitonga said, "This year's theme of gender and oceans is a wake-up call for working towards achieving gender equality in oceans and marine spaces. Pacific Women's contributions to the sustainable management of marine resources and the conservation of marine biodiversity remain underestimated in research, management and policy. The PEUMP programme puts gender equality at the core of its design to ensure equal benefits for women and men in accessing marine resources, while acknowledging the different roles, needs and barriers faced by women and men in ocean-related sectors."

"The importance of gender equality for the effective conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources, is becoming increasingly recognised. However, very little data and research exists on this, and the USP recognises that concerted action towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is still needed in all ocean-related sectors to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5," said Dr Bibhya Sharma, Dean, Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment, USP.

Outcomes of the PEUMP training will guide the development of a Gender and Human Rights plan for the programme. The training workshop also provided an excellent opportunity to present relevant findings, lessons learnt, good practices and recommendations from existing gender and fisheries assessments to inform programming and enhance evidence-based approaches. (ENDS)

#WorldOceansDay #SaveOurOcean

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The University of the South Pacific (USP) is the premier institution of higher learning for the Pacific, uniquely placed in a region of extraordinary physical, social and economic diversity to serve the region's needs for high quality tertiary education, research and policy development. One of only two regional universities of its type in the world, USP has 12 member countries: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. USP is committed to achieving excellence and innovation for the sustainable development of Pacific Island Countries.



The PEUMP programme is a EUR 45M Pacific regional initiative funded by the European Union (EU) and the Government of Sweden, working in partnership with the Pacific Community (SPC), Secretariat of the Pacific Environment Programme (SPREP), Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the University of the South Pacific (USP) to implement activities across six key result areas in 15 Pacific countries.