

Press Release



United Nations Population Fund
Office for the Pacific

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is an international development agency that promotes the right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity.

UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programmes to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.

UNFPA – because everyone counts.

\$2million to address gender based violence



Mr. Najib Assifi, UNFPA Representative, Ms. Stephanie Campbell, Counsellor Development Cooperation, Australian High Commission, & Dr. Jimmie Rodgers SPC Director-General at the signing of the Gender Based Violence project.

12 July, UNFPA Suva – The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Government of Australia, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), today signed a jointly funded agreement committing close to US\$2 million towards a project aimed at addressing Gender Based Violence (GBV) in the Pacific. The project will be implemented by SPC in Kiribati and the Solomon Islands.

“Recognizing and addressing Gender Based Violence is an urgent challenge in the Pacific as many governments and people are still indifferent to the problem,” says Mr. Najib Assifi, the UNFPA Representative to the Pacific.

“A common view is that Gender Based Violence is a personal and private matter or even an acceptable tradition in Pacific island communities. This misconception needs to be challenged with good quality evidence, to bring attention to the considerable social, economic and health consequences of Gender Based Violence in Pacific island communities.”

Violence is a traumatic experience for any man or woman, but gender based violence is largely inflicted by men on women and girls. Worldwide, an estimated one in five women will be a victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime. Around the world, at least one in three women has been beaten, coerced into sex – most often by someone she knows.

The consequences of Gender Based Violence are devastating. Survivors often experience life-long emotional distress, mental health problems and poor reproductive health. According to the National Research on Domestic Violence and National Assault, conducted by the Fiji Women Crisis Center, domestic violence in Fiji is prevalent, with a large proportion, (44 percent in the survey) reported being hit or abused while pregnant. The magnitude and seriousness of Gender Based Violence can be better and fully understood through comprehensive research and analysis. Evidence-based information through research is crucial for developing culturally appropriate responses as well as policy and legislative responses to prevent Gender Based Violence.

Mr. Assifi, stated that “On a broader scale, information gathered through this project will help to implement and monitor CEDAW, the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention of the Rights of the Child, and meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly goals 3 (gender equality and the empowerment of women) and 5 (improved maternal health).”

“At the Pacific regional level the Project will help to address central aims of the Pacific Plan, namely to improve gender equality and other social and economic conditions for sustainable development. To these ends, the project will also complement and extend work that is underway by UNIFEM, the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre in its regional capacity as Secretariat for the Violence Against Women (VAW) Network, and through the joint efforts of the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat and the Women’s Bureau of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.”

The Gender Based Violence project supported by Australia, UNFPA and SPC aims to contribute to improved status and welfare of women and children through institutional mechanisms and socio cultural practices that promote and protect the rights of women, girls and children. The outcome of the project research and analysis is envisaged to reduce the incident and prevalence of gender based violence through effective policies; improved legislation, institutional systems, and public educational programs.

UNFPA was pleased to officially open its new conference room “Fish Pond” with the signing ceremony.

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For more information, please contact:

Mr. Najib Assifi, UNFPA Representative and Director CST

Phone: (679) 3308022, Fax: (679) 3312785, Email: assifi@unfpa.org