

Republic of the Fiji Islands



REPUBLIC OF THE FIJI ISLANDS

COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT

**Pacific Regional Department and
Regional and Sustainable Development Department
Asian Development Bank**

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This report is one of a series of country gender assessments (CGAs) prepared in conjunction with country strategies and programs. The primary purpose of the series is to provide information on gender and development in the Asian Development Bank's (ADB's) developing member countries to assist ADB staff in country strategy and program formulation and in project design and implementation. Preparation of the report was jointly undertaken by ADB's Pacific Regional Department (PARD) and the Gender, Social Development and Civil Society Division of the Regional and Sustainable Development Department (RSDD).

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It is hoped the report will also be useful to government and nongovernment organizations and to individuals working in the field of gender and development

CONTENTS

Abbreviations	viii
Executive Summary	xi
Chapter 1 Overview	
A. Key Developments	1
B. Demographic and Political Aspects.....	2
C. Gender and Culture.....	3
Chapter 2 Policy Environment of the Government of the Fiji Islands	
A. The Strategic Development Plan 2003–2005 and Mid-Term Review	7
B. The Women’s Plan of Action 1999–2008	10
C. The Government’s Poverty Reduction Strategy	11
D. Government Policy on Equal Employment Opportunity.....	12
E. International Commitments on Women and Gender	14
F. Report on the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	15
Chapter 3 Gender Dimensions of Economic Development and Growth	
A. Gender and Labor Force Participation.....	17
B. The Formal Sector	18
C. The Informal Sector.....	22
D. Credit and Enterprise Development.....	25
Chapter 4 Gender and Poverty Reduction	
A. Poverty Indicators.....	29
B. Unemployment and Gender.....	30
C. Rural Poverty	31
D. Income Support.....	33
E. Poverty and Informal Settlements	34
Chapter 5 Gender Dimensions of Human Development and the Millennium Development Goals	
A. Gender and Education	35
B. Gender and Public Health.....	37
C. Gender and HIV/AIDS	42
D. Gender and Decision Making	43
E. Gender and Violence	50

Chapter 6	Government, Donor, and Nongovernment Organization Support for Gender and Development and the Women’s Plan of Action	
A.	The Ministry of Women	55
B.	Institutional Strengthening Assistance for the Ministry of Women	58
C.	Asian Development Bank Technical Assistance to Implement the Women’s Plan of Action	58
D.	Other Donor and Civil Society Assistance	61
Chapter 7	Recommendations for the Asian Development Bank’s Gender Strategy	
A.	Introduction	65
B.	Recommendations for the Asian Development Bank’s Gender Strategy in the Fiji Islands	67
	Sources and References	79
Appendixes		
1.	The Asian Development Bank’s Country Program in the Fiji Islands	85
2.	List of Persons Consulted	87
3.	Report of the Consultation Workshop with Stakeholders	90
List of Tables		
Table 1.	Strategic Development Plan Gender Mainstreaming Objectives	9
Table 2.	Strategic Development Plan Policy Objectives on Gender Equality	13
Table 3.	Labor Force Participation Rates by Sex and Ethnicity	17
Table 4.	Employed Population by Occupation and Sex, 1996 and 2002	18
Table 5.	Men’s and Women’s Employment in the Ministry of Health	22
Table 6.	Total Capture Fishery Catch, 1997–2003	23
Table 7.	Work Force Engaged in Subsistence by Sex, Ethnic Group and Type of Activity, 1996	24
Table 8.	Strategic Development Plan Policy on Economic Assistance for Gender and Development	27
Table 9.	Urban Unemployment by Sex, 1996 and 2002	31
Table 10.	Distribution of Poverty Alleviation Grants, 2002	33
Table 11.	Squatter Households and Settlements by Locality and Ethnicity	34
Table 12.	Gender Indicators for Educational Attainment, Total Population of the Fiji Islands, 1996	35
Table 13.	Millennium Development Goals: Education Indicators	36
Table 14.	Millennium Development Goals: Gender Empowerment Education Indicators	36

Table 15.	Millennium Development Goals: Infant and Child Mortality.....	38
Table 16.	Percentage of Fiji Islands People with Diabetes and Obesity, by Sex and Urban/Rural Residence	39
Table 17.	HIV/AIDS Indicators and Rates.....	43
Table 18.	Strategic Development Policy Initiatives on Women and Decision Making.....	44
Table 19.	Membership in Fiji Islands Local Government, Planning and Development Bodies by Sex, 2003	46
Table 20.	Representation by Sex on Official Commissions, Tribunals, Boards, Councils and Committees	47
Table 21.	Senior Government Officials by Agency and Sex, 2003	48
Table 22.	Gender Representation among Officers of the Law.....	48
Table 23.	Summary of the Nongovernment Organization Plan of Action on Women in Shared Decision Making	49
Table 24.	Strategic Development Plan Objectives to Eliminate Violence Against Women	51
Table 25.	Sample Cases of Sexual Assault by Classification of Offense, 1993–1997.....	52
Table 26.	Summary of Policies and Issues for Gender and Development in the Private Sector	68
Table 27.	Summary of Entry Points to Promote Gender and Development in Private Sector Development	70
Table 28.	Summary of Policies and Issues for Gender and Development in Social Services.....	72
Table 29.	Summary of Key Policies and Issues for Social Services	73
Table 30.	Summary of Policies and Issues on Gender Mainstreaming and Participation	74
Table 31.	Summary of Key Policies and Issues for Law and Justice.....	76
Table 32.	Entry points for Promoting Gender and Development in Support of Good Governance.....	78

List of Boxes

Box 1.	Strategic Priorities, Fiji Islands Strategic Development Plan	7
Box 2.	Indicators of Poverty and Hardship.....	29

Abbreviations

ADB	—	Asian Development Bank
AIDS	—	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
CEDAW	—	United Nations Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEO	—	chief executive officer
CSO	—	civil society organization
EEO	—	equal employment opportunity
FDB	—	Fiji Development Bank
FIBOS	—	Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics
FLRC	—	Fiji Legal Rights Commission
FWCC	—	Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre
FWRM	—	Fiji Women’s Rights Movement
GAD	—	gender and development
HIES	—	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HIV	—	human immunodeficiency virus
ILO	—	International Labour Organization
IMC	—	Inter-Ministerial committee for women
KPI	—	key performance indicator
KRA	—	key result area
MDG	—	Millennium Development Goal
MLIRP	—	Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Productivity
MOW	—	Ministry of Women
MWSWPA	—	Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation
NCSMED	—	National Centre for Small and Microenterprise Development
NCWF	—	National Council of Women Fiji
NGO	—	Nongovernment organization
NLTB	—	Native Lands Trust Board
PSC	—	Public Service Commission
SDP	—	Strategic Development Plan 2003–2005
SDP-MTR	—	Mid-Term Review (of the SDP)
SMSLP	—	Social Mobilization for Sustainable Livelihoods Program
SPC	—	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
STI	—	sexually transmitted infection
UNDP	—	United Nations Development Programme
WIO	—	women’s interest officer
WOSED	—	Women’s Social and Economic Development [Programme]
WPA	—	Women’s Plan of Action 1998–2008

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US\$1.00 = F\$ 1.712

NOTE

In this report, "\$" refers to US dollars

Executive Summary

The Fiji Islands has made considerable progress in recognizing gender issues in relation to legal and human rights and gender and development (GAD), as reflected in legislative and policy progress since ADB published its *Women in Development* Country Briefing paper in 1988. The Fiji Islands has made commitments to eight major international agreements and programs for action on gender equality and the advancement of women. It has also made commitments to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including those associated directly or indirectly with the status of women and gender equality. In 1999 the government endorsed the national Women's Plan of Action (WPA) 1999–2008 which has five overall goals for advancing the economic, legal, and political status of women.

Another important development since 1988 has been growth of civil society organizations (CSOs), including gender advocacy groups, accompanied by increased effectiveness in their capacity to influence government policy.

The Government's mid-term Strategic Development Plan (SDP) was reviewed in 2004 and provides the basis of an updated SDP to be released in 2005. The first of the Government's five major goals for gender and development, which are closely linked to the WPA, is "to mainstream gender perspectives, issues and concerns in the planning process." However, the SDP and the 2004 mid-term review (SDP-MTR) do *not* mainstream gender as a cross-sector and crosscutting issue, and there are no specific sector gender goals, key result areas (KRAs), or key performance indicators (KPIs) outside those associated with goals for social development and social welfare. The 2004 SDP-MTR weakened rather than strengthened a number of the original SDP policy objectives for GAD.

Responsibility for the gender policy goals, KRAs, and KPIs in the SDP are assigned to the Ministry of Women (MOW), a department in the Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation (MWSWPA). The structural problem here is that the MOW is not a policy agency but a line department, providing community-based development services to mainly Fijian women. Despite this, the department had made determined efforts to implement the WPA, despite the constraints of weak intersector linkages at high levels to facilitate mainstreaming and other WPA goals. MOW currently lacks the financial and human resources to promote and effectively facilitate the implementation of government policy on gender mainstreaming.

The Government may wish to reconsider the institutional arrangements provided under the SDP to achieve more effective structural and macroeconomic strategies to address poverty and gender as cross-cutting and intersector policy and planning issues. For example, gender-specific policy objectives for "improved participation and empowerment" specified in the Government's proposed framework for poverty reduction are for "equal opportunities and gender" linked to micro-level programs to implement the WPA, including access to training and credit, to be implemented by the Ministries of WSWPA, Youth, and Education. Overall, gender mainstreaming processes to achieve the Government's commitments are still not well integrated into the government institutional structure, planning, and budgetary processes, despite ADB technical

assistance to support government policies and implementation of the WPA in two sectors. Further support is needed to strengthen government capacity to implement its policies on GAD.

As this Country Gender Assessment (CGA) indicates, despite the considerable progress made, the gaps in the implementation or achievement of government policy on gender are numerous, and need to be addressed in institutional arrangements and in the planning and budgeting process. These cross-sector issues are identified in the CGA and are linked to the overall ADB country strategy with recommendations for action.

Implications of Gender Gaps in Economic and Social Development

Equal Opportunity. The Government has adopted EEO policies for the civil service, but these have not yet been applied as envisaged, as appropriately reframed and extended to be incorporated into forthcoming industrial legislation. Although recent indicators show little difference in the educational levels and achievements of men and women, and despite government commitments to gender quality, occupational discrimination and gender segregation in the Fiji Islands labor markets are strong and persistent. Of the economically active population, women's share of formal employment is significantly lower than men's, and women are less often promoted and are concentrated at the low-pay end of the labor market in the public and private sector. Studies show that sexual harassment of women in the workplace is a problem. Of the economically active female population, only about 30% are engaged in the formal economy, and of these a large proportion work in semi-subsistence employment or self-employment. Few women own businesses, because the inheritance laws practiced by both major ethnic groups in the Fiji Islands usually exclude women from inheriting land or other fixed assets.

In government, women hold only about 16% of senior executive positions, mainly in the social sectors. In the education sector, for example, more men than women are primary and secondary teachers, but few women hold management positions. Nonetheless, the Ministry of Education decided, as a matter of policy in 2005, to increase the intake of males to primary teacher training by allotting 20 more places to men than women applicants, thereby contradicting the country's own policy commitments under the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Industrial development. Women predominate among workers in the shrinking manufacturing sector. The Fiji Islands' labor costs are internationally competitive, but imported raw materials add to the cost of production, making the country's products less competitive without subsidies or special terms for market entry. The Fiji Islands is a comparatively high-cost, import-dependent economy, due to its small size and relative isolation. Women process workers in most Asian economies can support a family on low, internationally competitive industrial wages, because the cost of living is very much lower than in the Fiji Islands. But only single women can get by on \$50 a week in the Fiji Islands. This raises the question as to whether development based on labor-intensive industry, female labor, and low wages is a socially and economically appropriate development strategy for the Fiji Islands, given government emphasis on poverty reduction.

Poverty. Women's higher risk of poverty and destitution is associated with labor force discrimination, increasing divorce and separation rates, and problems in collecting maintenance payments from departed spouses (for which legal requirements have recently been strengthened). Further, most Fiji Islands women lack inheritance rights to land and/or land rents and other major assets. Women constitute the majority of beneficiaries under the Social Welfare Department's Family Assistance Scheme. Female unemployment among the poor in the Fiji Islands is likely to rise sharply as a result of loss of jobs in the garment and footwear industries. These facts indicate the need for effective social safety nets for the unemployed and, in particular, training and investment to promote alternative livelihoods for women displaced from the manufacturing sector. New models are needed to provide women with microfinance for self-employment, as those currently in operation show limited viability.

Rural Development. Women in most rural regions of the Fiji Islands are the major subsistence producers and small-scale marketers of food and handicrafts. Fijian women do most of the day-to-day subsistence fishing (one of the two highest fisheries sector contributors to GDP) in most coastal and riverine areas. Women are also significant contributors to nonfinfish capture and marketing in the small-scale commercial fishing sector. Improvements planned for rural infrastructure will benefit women, but pressure on inshore marine resources due to overexploitation and destructive fishing methods threatens the sustainability of women's fisheries and, therefore, household food security. Most Fijian handicrafts, especially those produced by women, do not compete on price with imported or local factory-made souvenirs sold in tourism centers, depriving Fijian women of an important economic opportunity.

Public Health and Trade. Issues of public health and the fact that imported, low-quality foods are cheaper than most local produce should remain high on the agenda on the Fiji Islands' trade negotiations. Twice as many women as men have nutritionally-related diseases associated with poor diets and poverty. Far more women than men suffer from anemia and twice as many women than men suffer from diabetes, suggesting that the prevalence of diabetes should be included as a gender-significant MDG indicator for the Fiji Islands, under Goal #6. Increased efforts are needed to address food security and public health, and promote the supply, distribution and consumption of locally produced food.

Political Participation. The Government has endorsed MDG #3 for women's empowerment, for which a key indicator is the proportion of seats held by women in national parliament. In 2004, the Fiji Islands had five women parliamentarians and four women senators. Two of the 20 ministers are women. Their portfolios are in the traditionally "feminine" domains of education, and women and social welfare. Of seven assistant ministers, three are women. Of elected town and city councilors, women hold 11 seats, compared to 167 seats held by men.

Government policy requires that by 2005, 50% of those on government boards and other public bodies should be women; at present, however, women comprise only about 19% of the total appointments, and are concentrated on minor health and welfare boards and committees. The Government might consider transferring the responsibility for implementing the policy to the

agencies concerned, in accordance with its gender mainstreaming policy, rather than to MOW, as under the present arrangements.

Family and Sexual Violence. SDP Policy Objective No. 5 for gender and development is “to educate the community and law enforcement agencies to prevent and eliminate violence against women.” A recent study shows that 80.2% of those surveyed nationally reported having seen someone beaten in the home and police statistics demonstrate the prevalence of family and sexual violence. So far, however, responsibility for implementing the policy has been delegated to the MOW and NGOs. The Government might consider making this a KPA and KPI for the department of Police and the Ministry for Justice in accordance with its gender mainstreaming policy.

Reproductive Health. The fertility rate of 4.4 among rural Fijian women suggests the need for renewed efforts—with innovative programs targeting men as well as women—to promote rural family planning programs. This would be in keeping with the recommendations of the gender audit assisted by ADB, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, and in accordance with MDG #5 for improved maternal health endorsed by the Government, as well as the government’s gender mainstreaming policy.

HIV/AIDS. In 2004, for the first time, more women among new cases were confirmed HIV positive than men. Experts consider that the Fiji Islands may be moving towards an AIDS epidemic. A strong emphasis on gender issues is needed to reduce HIV transmission, in keeping with MDG goal #6 and in accordance with the government’s policy on gender mainstreaming.

Data. Statistical data needed for gender analysis is sparse, sometimes of poor quality, and often out of date. MOW needs to define its data requirements to support its role in advocating and advising on gender planning and mainstreaming across sectors, but in a mainstreaming environment, the collection and analysis of gender-sensitive data appropriately belongs to the Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics. The MOW might consider requesting gender analysis of the 2002 urban and rural Household Income and Expenditure Survey, and a gender-based intercensus study to be conducted as soon as the results of the 2006 census become available.

ADB Proposed Strategic Focus 2005–2008

ADB operations in the Fiji Islands will be guided by the Pacific Strategy 2005–2009, which establishes three strategic objectives: (i) enhanced cash income opportunities through private sector development, (ii) improved access and quality of basic social services, and (iii) effective development processes.

The overall strategy of the ADB for the Fiji Islands will aim to support the Government’s priorities to rebuild confidence for stability and growth, particularly through measures to (i) expedite structural and economic reforms, (ii) promote inclusive development, and (iii) maintain fiscal sustainability.

Accordingly, ADB's strategic focus will have the following objectives:

- Promote private sector-driven growth aimed at employment generation;
 - public enterprise reform,
 - public-private partnership, and
 - physical and social infrastructure.
- Support reliable and affordable basic social service provision;
 - water supply and sanitation, and
 - urban services.
- Develop effective development institutions and processes;
 - capacity building at all levels,
 - community participation,
 - public communications, and
 - fiscal and debt management.

Recommendations for ADB's Country Gender Strategy

1. Opportunities to Promote Women's Participation in the Private Sector

Devise alternative livelihoods for poor women. Current ADB assistance for alternative livelihoods has a focus on farmers and agricultural workers displaced by the decline in the sugar industry. ADB needs to consider developing an alternative livelihoods development program to focus on workers displaced from manufacturing industries, who are mainly poor women. The program should include assistance to develop and implement macroeconomic policy that will increase investment in labor-intensive industries in nontourist urban areas. It should also examine the potential to support employment skill training targeting poor women.

Empower the poor, especially poor women, with registered assets. At the micro level the poor need to be empowered so that they have assets and greater economic security that will encourage small enterprise development and investment in housing. Technical and financial assistance should be provided, within the proposed urban development program, to accelerate government initiatives to provide secure titles to squatters. This initiative would benefit women *if* it became government policy to register residential and agricultural leases jointly in the names of husbands and wives, and not excluding women heads of households from obtaining registered titles to property. Women would also benefit from improved basic services in settlement and other areas in which poor households predominate.

Target women in rural and outer island economic development. The Ministry of Agriculture needs further assistance to build policy and programs, utilizing the findings of the ADB-funded gender audit conducted by the Ministry in 2003. Greater efforts should be made to develop women's skills in agricultural enterprises directed to export markets and the domestic hotel, restaurant, and other tourism industries. A review of the MOW is also needed to identify how the department can more effectively utilize its field services to women to support private enterprise development.

Develop more attractive products for the tourist market. In rural areas, there is a need to develop handicraft and souvenir products for the tourism market that draw on traditional skills of women and men, are competitively priced, and are designed to appeal to popular tastes. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) pilot projects for sustainable livelihoods have demonstrated the potential for such ventures and beneficiaries have been mainly women. At the policy level, the Government might consider requiring imported handicrafts and souvenirs sold as Fiji Islands products to be clearly labeled showing their country of origin.

Support microfinance linked to financial literacy and skill training programs for women and men. Explore project linkages and other opportunities to assist the Australia-New Zealand (ANZ) Bank’s rural banking service and its linkages with the UNDP-Equitable and Sustainable Human Development Programme and UNDP-Social Mobilization for Sustainable Livelihoods Program. At present, the ANZ rural banking program offers a number of accessible, user-friendly savings products to its 15,000 predominantly female customers and it is considering microfinance products in the near future.

Table ES1. Summary of Entry points to promote Gender and Development in Private Sector Development

Proposed Technical Assistance	
Strengthening Commercialization of Agriculture Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women make up currently 50% of agriculture students and graduates. Review the current curriculum of FCA to ensure that appropriate subject emphasis enable graduates to succeed in the private sector. • Develop a strategy that will enable rural women to upgrade their existing subsistence skills and increase their participation in commercial horticulture and small livestock management; and to develop their technical, financial, and marketing expertise in commercial agriculture. • On land tenure matters, examine the potential to give preference to applicants willing to take joint husband and wife tenancy on agricultural leases.
Rural and Outer Islands Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include women’s NGO and the MOW in the process of identifying women’s needs. • Review and recommend improvement in accessibility and standards of service in health care and education, with an emphasis on services addressing the needs of women and girls. • Examine the means of livelihood, in rural and outer island households, with attention to the different productive roles of women and men, especially the poor. Recommend developments that directly include women. • Review the potential to extend the UNDP model of tourist-oriented handicraft/souvenir product development to women and men. Examine market opportunities and propose strategies to enable rural craftswomen to benefit from growth in tourism.
Fisheries Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze and make recommendations on opportunities for women self-employment and wage employment and opportunities in inshore capture fisheries, onshore commercial and industrial fisheries and aquaculture. • Recommend strategies to improve women’s skills and increase their participation in all forms of fisheries development. • Plan Programs for inshore marine resource conservation that directly involve women, who are the major users of the resources in most coastal areas.

Proposed Loans	
Alternative Livelihoods and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In policy dialogue with the Government, explore opportunities for a phase II program to assist women displaced from employment in the garment and footwear manufacturing sector.
Urban Sector Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address issues of land tenure and housing for the urban poor, among whom women are the majority. Develop policies and mechanisms to accelerate provisions of affordable residential leaseholds for the poor. Recommend policies that give preference to applicants who are willing to register leases jointly in the names of husbands and wives. • Develop strategies to meet the needs of women in poor urban communities, particularly in informal settlements, for water, sanitation, power, health care, education, law and justice, and other basic services.
Rural and Outer Islands Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and recommend improvement in accessibility and standards of service in health care and education, with an emphasis on services to women and girls. • Examine the means of livelihood in rural and Outer Island households, with attention to the different productive roles of women and men, especially the poor. Recommend development that directly includes women. • Review the potential to extend the UNDP model of tourist-oriented handicraft product development to women and men. Examine market opportunities and propose strategies to enable rural women to participate.

FCA = Fiji College of Agriculture; MOW = Ministry of Women; NGO = nongovernment organization; UNDP = United Nations Development Programme.

Source: ADB country and program and other documents.

2. Gender and Access to Good Quality Social Services

Address gender and social services issues in the proposed ADB Technical Assistance to Strengthen Development Planning. ADB has no projects in the pipeline directly targeting social services. However, the proposed technical assistance (TA) on Strengthening Development Planning and Public Sector Reforms could address these issues and challenges, and ADB could include them in its policy dialog with the Government.

3. Building the Government's Capacity to meet its Commitments to Gender and Development and Women in Development

Design a follow-up TA for the previous TA on WPA for gender mainstreaming. The TA should assist the Ministry of Finance and National Planning to mainstream gender and development in the planning and policy development process. It should include consideration of how to implement the recommendations of the gender audits carried out under the previous TA, and include new components, which should include gender budgeting, gender analysis of the SDP, and establishment of a gender desk.

Strengthen MWSWPA capacity for effective antipoverty services to poor women. A comprehensive review of the MOW is needed to integrate its programs more firmly with measures to reduce poverty within the overall poverty reduction strategy of the MWSWPA, and to

mainstream its program more directly with other economic development agencies. The MOW needs to build its capacity to address the needs of poor and disadvantaged women in all ethnic communities. The review should assist the Ministry to develop a set of goals and objectives reflecting relevant government policies, assess the existing capacity of the MOW, and make recommendations and provide assistance to strengthen its capacity for poverty reduction.

Table ES2. Entry Points to Promote Gender and Development in Support of Good Governance

Proposed TA	Entry Points for Strengthening Gender Integration
Strengthening Development Planning and Public Sector Reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend means of implementing government policy for 50% women on boards of SOEs. • Develop more government support for measures to eliminate family and sexual violence, especially for building capacity in the police. • Address implementation strategies for EEO and gender provisions in industrial relations legislation. • Study gender and property rights and make recommendations for reforms. • Support civil society initiatives for public awareness of family law reforms, other legal rights of women, and EEO policy. • Strengthen EEO provisions in public and private employment. • Develop national sexual harassment policies to cover workplace and non-workplaces. • Advocate strategies to increase women’s participation in decision-making processes • Provide TA for a review of the MOW to strengthen its advocacy and advisory role in Government on the implementation of government policies on gender mainstreaming and the status of women. • Assist the MOW to define the gender-sensitive data requirements for planning and monitoring the implementation of government policies on gender mainstreaming and the status of women for collection and analysis by the FIBOS and each ministry.
Strengthening Local Government Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve women’s NGOs in reviewing issues of women’s participation and recommendations for action. • Recommend strategies to ensure the effective implementation of government commitment to MDG Goal 3 for the empowerment of women and the WPA goal to increase women’s role in decision-making.
Follow-up TA for WPA	Design a follow-up TA to assist the Ministry of Finance and National Planning to mainstream gender and development in the planning and policy development process.

EEO = equal employment opportunity; FIBOS = Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics; MDG = Millennium Development Goal; MOW = Ministry of Women; NGO = nongovernment organization; TA = technical assistance; WPA = Women’s Plan of Action.

Source: Author’s researches.

A. Key Developments

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) produced a country briefing paper on women and development in the Fiji Islands in 1988 (Shoeffel 1988). Much of the descriptive material in this paper is still relevant, as are the gender and development issues it highlights. Major policy developments have occurred since 1988, however. In particular, the Fiji Islands has made considerable progress in recognizing gender issues in legal and human rights reflected in legislative and policy progress. Steps forward since 1988 include the following:

- gender and development (GAD) policies in the objectives and key performance indicators of the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for 2003–2005 and Midterm Review of the SDP (November 2004), to be carried forward to 2008;
- a Bill of Rights within the Constitution establishing an equal employment opportunity policy;
- the Family Law Act of March 2003, which established a Family Court and more equitable gender legislation;
- a Human Rights Commission, employing an officer specializing in gender equity cases; and
- a Law Reform Commission, which is currently reviewing legislation relating to sexual and family violence, based on a broad national consultative process.

The 1997 Constitution, replacing the 1990 Constitution, recognized equal rights to citizenship for both women and men and equal status to spouses of Fiji Islands citizens, whether male or female. This reversed earlier citizenship restrictions placed on male spouses of female Fiji Islands citizens. Representations to the constitutional committee on the issue came from civil society, notably the Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) (Jalal 1998). The Bill of Rights in the Constitution forbids unfair discrimination on the basis of gender and allows any law or administrative action based on gender to be challenged or cited as discriminatory. It also allows for affirmative action programs in favor of women.

An important development has been growth of civil society organizations (CSOs), including gender advocacy groups, accompanied by increased effectiveness in their capacity to influence government policy. Much of the progress on gender and development policy since 1988 has been the result of CSO advocacy.

In 1997, the Government enunciated its development strategies (Huffer 2004) which listed the following policies and strategies for GAD:

- ensuring a gender-balanced partnership at all levels of decision-making;
- striving for equal partnership in political, economic, and social development;
- promoting equal opportunity in employment;

- assisting disadvantaged women and young women in their economic activities;
- examining legislation with the view to safeguarding women’s human rights; and
- integrating women's concerns into all planning processes and policy areas.

In 1999, the Government endorsed the Women’s Plan of Action 1999–2008 (WPA), which was developed in partnership with CSOs. Its major goals have been incorporated into the SDP goals for social development, discussed in the following chapter.

In its Corporate Plan 2004, the Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation (MWSWPA) affirmed its Vision: “the Fiji Islands, a society that enhances human dignity, social well-being and gender equality for peace, prosperity and stability.” Its Mission Statement reads: “To protect families, especially children and women at risk, promote gender equality and strengthen communities to improve quality of life and eradicate poverty.” (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2004b).

B. Demographic and Political Aspects

The Fiji Islands comprise 320 islands, which are divided into four administrative areas. More than two thirds of the population lives in the Central and Western divisions on the island of Viti Levu. The 1996 census recorded the citizen population of the Fiji Islands at 775,077 (Republic of the Fiji Islands 1996a).

According to the Census of 1996, Fijians and Rotumans, the indigenous people of the Fiji Islands, made up 52% of the population. Indo-Fijians, whose ancestors migrated to the Fiji Islands in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, made up 44% of the population. The remaining 4% consisted of other minority communities, including people of mixed ethnic origin and settlers from various Pacific island countries, Australia, New Zealand, the People’s Republic of China, and Europe.

A major demographic shift has taken place in the Fiji Islands since 1987. In 1986, Indo-Fijians made up slightly more than 50% of the population. In 1987, military coups created political instability and increasing interethnic conflict, which encouraged large-scale emigration, particularly by Indo-Fijians. The population growth rate of 0.8% in the intercensus period 1986–1996 was the lowest recorded for the Fiji Islands in the 20th century (Secretariat of the Pacific Community [SPC] 1999). An attempted civilian coup d’état in May 2000 led to further political instability, which lasted until 2002, and has probably encouraged a further increase in Indo-Fijian emigration. This will not be confirmed until the census planned for 2006 is completed and analyzed.

Fijian citizens lack special terms for migration as granted by the former administering powers to the people of the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and Republic of Marshall Islands, and to a limited extent, Samoa. Accordingly, migrants must meet the criteria of favored destination countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States (US),

which prefer skilled people in younger age groups, or business migrants. Indo-Fijians, along with other smaller minority ethnic groups, are the most likely to emigrate.

While in the past Indo-Fijians and other ethnic groups were most likely to emigrate, since the 1980s increasing numbers of skilled and professional Fijian women and men have settled abroad¹. Further, many Fijian men from rural areas are employed in military service abroad and increasing numbers are going to work on short-term contracts in the Middle East as drivers and guards. More recently, Fijian women have also been going abroad on employment contracts as maids and nurses.

C. Gender and Culture

1. Fijian Society

Fijian society tends to be culturally homogenous, although there are some differences between and within the major traditional confederacies, particularly between eastern and western, and upland and lowland peoples. Social differences are based on traditional rank and, increasingly, on socioeconomic status. Most Fijians are Christians, predominantly of the Methodist denomination. Fijian culture places considerable emphasis on communal values and respect for traditional cultural norms and for chiefs.

Gender relations are influenced by traditional values that emphasize the authority of chiefs, who are predominantly male, and the precedence of men before women. Traditional institutions allow women few if any rights to inherit land or formally own property, or to take part in public decision making.

However, Fijian cultural norms do not place restrictions on women's mobility or on most types of economic participation. Fijian women are active in informal small-scale fisheries, food production, and produce marketing, and also in formal commercial agriculture and agricultural processing, the hospitality and tourism sector, and other occupations in the paid labor force. Increasingly, Fijians value secondary and higher education for both girls and boys as a means of social and economic mobility. As greater numbers of Fijians move into the urban middle class, gender values are becoming more liberal.

In urban areas, few noteworthy differences can be observed in the lifestyle of Fijians and other ethnic communities, among the poor as well as among the middle classes. However, differences are very pronounced in rural areas. Most Fijians live in kin-based nucleated settlements under semitraditional local government and cultivate subsistence and cash crops on small plots of land held according to customary tenure.

¹ A study of the social impact of economic reforms in New Zealand (Krishnan, Schoeffel, and Warren 1994) found that presumably because they had to qualify as migrants without special terms; on the basis of socioeconomic criteria, the Fijians were the most successful of all ethnic Pacific islands' migrant populations.

2. Indo-Fijian Society

Indo-Fijian societies are more culturally diverse than Fijian societies, as Indo-Fijians originate from many different parts of the Indian subcontinent. Most belong to various Hindu denominations, but there is also a minority of Muslims and Christians of various denominations, and Sikhs.

Gender relations are influenced by various traditional cultural values originating from South Asia. All of these emphasize formal male authority in decision making and over property. Parents have a special duty to see that their children marry, preferably within their own community, and the cultural status of women is influenced by considerations of their manageability.

Education and employment for women have become increasingly valued, especially in acceptable occupations, such as professional and clerical work. Some Indo-Fijian communities place restrictions on women's mobility and some, particularly rural, communities consider it more socially acceptable or prestigious for women to work only in the home and family compound. Among the urban middle class, gender values have become more liberal.

3. Land Tenure

Land tenure in the Fiji Islands is described in this section to provide a context for the discussion of the economic status of women. Most land is classified as "native land," which accounts for 82.38% of all land; 8.17% of land is freehold, and 9.45% is government owned. Of the native land, 36% is reserve land, and 63.37% unreserved land (Ward 1995).

Fijians control reserve land directly. Reserve land is owned collectively by the members of *mataqali* (clans in which membership is based on patrilineal descent)² under the custodianship of their senior male heads. *Mataqali* land is apportioned in plots among its individual members, who have personal use rights over the plots allocated to them. Individual holdings vary considerably in size and quality; many are too small for commercial agricultural use, or the land is of unsuitable quality for commercial farming. Although all persons registered as Fijians are members of *mataqali*, not all Fijians have access to land, and women rarely inherit rights to use customary or native land. In some areas, population growth has exceeded the amount of land available for distribution to all members of the landowning group. Reserve land is inalienable, may only be leased within the landowning group, and may only be used legally by the customary owners. However, extralegal arrangements such as sharecropping or informal lending and renting of land are common (Ward 1995).

² *Mataqali* are divided into *tokatoka*, or subclans. Groups of *mataqali* form *yavusa*, which are headed by chiefs in most parts of the Fiji Islands. Groups of *yavusa* form *vanua*, which are headed by the highest-ranking chiefs.

Mataqali also have customary fishing rights (*qoliqoli*) over inshore and riverine areas and their resources. A bill has been introduced to transfer legal rights over inshore areas, including beaches and lagoons, from the state to the customary landowners. Currently the state owns the marine zone from the high water mark out to 12 miles of territorial waters. Concerns have been raised about the effects of this proposed legislation on tourism, conservation, and the ownership of nonmarine resources in the zone.

Unreserved Fijian land is administered by a statutory authority, the Native Lands Trust Board (NLTB). Most Fijian land under NLTB is leased for residential, commercial, or agricultural purposes. In 1993, 40.61% of land in this category was leased for agricultural, residential, and business purposes. NLTB takes a management fee of up to 25% from the rents for nonreserve land, and the balance is distributed among the traditional owners: about 25% is distributed to the highest-ranking chiefs of the land-*mataqali*; the proportion of rents allocated to the various chiefs depends on their traditional rank. Ordinary members of the *mataqali* share the balance and in most areas of the Fiji Islands, the Fijians receive very little income from rents (Ward 1995).

Most native land rents are fixed for the duration of the lease, with the result that although Fijian land has appreciated considerably in value, the rents paid for it tend to be below market rates. This has created resentment among landowners, who have in many cases declined to allow tenants, mainly Indo-Fijians, to renew agricultural leases when they expire.

A. The Strategic Development Plan 2003–2005 and Mid-Term Review

The Government’s medium-term development strategy is a response to the Fiji Islands’ political crises and ethnic divisions. Titled “Rebuilding Confidence for Stability and Growth for a Peaceful, Prosperous Fiji,” the SDP 2003–2005 is oriented toward rebuilding a cohesive and prosperous society (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2002). Five of the 12 SDP strategic priorities (Box 1) are oriented to the rebuilding of confidence for growth: maintaining macroeconomic stability, raising investment levels for jobs and growth, reforming the public sector to reduce the cost of doing business, developing rural areas and the Outer Islands, and implementing structural reforms to promote competition and efficiency. The remaining seven strategic priorities are oriented toward rebuilding confidence for stability, enhancing security and law and order, promoting national reconciliation and unity, alleviating poverty, strengthening good governance, reviewing the 1998 Constitution, resolving the agricultural land issue, and implementing affirmative action. Sector and cross-sector policies are established to meet these strategic priorities.

**Box 1. Strategic Priorities, Fiji Islands
Strategic Development Plan**

1. Mainstream economic stability.
2. Raise investment levels for jobs and growth.
3. Reform the public sector to reduce the cost of doing business.
4. Develop the rural areas and outer islands.
5. Implement structural reforms to promote competition and efficiency.
6. Enhance security and law and order.
7. Promote national reconciliation and unity.
8. Alleviate poverty.
9. Strengthen good governance.
10. Review the Constitution.
11. Resolve the agricultural land lease issue.
12. Implement affirmative action.

Source: Republic of the Fiji Islands 2002.

Of the 12 strategic priorities, those for rural and Outer Island development; enhancement of law and order; alleviating poverty; strengthening good governance; and, affirmative action offer significant opportunities for both the Government and the ADB Country Strategy and Program (ADB 2004a) to address the gender issues identified in this paper.

Chapter 5 of the SDP identifies policy objectives on cross-sector issues: (i) social justice and affirmative action; (ii) rural and Outer Island development; (iii) poverty alleviation; (iv) law and order; (v) employment and the labor market; (vi) land resources and management; (vii) environment; (viii) small and microenterprises; (ix) housing and urban development; (x) reform of state institutions; and, (xi) foreign affairs and external trade. The policy objective “to increase participation of women in socioeconomic development” is included among objectives for social justice and affirmative action.

The key performance indicators (KPIs) listed for the policy objective on gender and development are included in the SDP’s Chapter 6, which addresses social and community development. This chapter specifies government policies and KPIs for (i) health, (ii) education and

training, (iii) gender and development, (iv) youth and protection of children, (v) culture and heritage, (vi) sports development, and (vii) disaster mitigation and management.

Chapter 7 sets out the policy objectives for economic development sectors: (i) sugar, (ii) nonsugar crops and livestock, (iii) forestry, (iv) marine resources, (v) tourism, (vi) manufacturing and commerce, (vii) mineral and groundwater resources, (viii) financial services, (ix) information and technology services, (x) transport, (xi) energy, and (xii) water and sewerage.

The SDP was reviewed in 2004 and a comprehensive report was produced in November of that year. Government now intends to roll the SDP over to 2008, with stronger linkages between the key result areas (KRA) in the SDP and the Corporate Plans of each ministry. Under new civil service regulations, the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of each ministry are required to deliver on the KPIs defined in the SDP, thus each KPI has major budgetary implications.

The SDP does not include gender as a separate cross-sector issue, nor does the report and recommendations of the mid-term review (SDP-MTR) (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2004d), but as a policy objective associated with social justice and affirmative action. The SDP policy objective for gender is specifically to “develop, address and promote gender-sensitive policies, issues and concerns” and is a subset of policy objectives for social and community development. These policy objectives are linked to the five overall goals of the Women’s Plan of Action (WPA).

The most comprehensive policy objective for gender and development in the SDP is for gender mainstreaming. This SDP policy objective, KPI, and the recommendations for mainstreaming in the SDP-MTR are summarized in Table 1, which shows that only three of the original six KPIs are recommended for retention.

Other SDP gender policy objectives, KPIs, and the achievements relating to gender equality, violence against women, and participation in decision-making will be discussed in the relevant sections and chapters below.

Although the Government’s first goal for gender and development is “to mainstream gender perspectives, issues, and concerns in the planning process” the SDP does not mainstream gender and the SDP-MTR does not recommend that gender be mainstreamed in the SDP. Gender is not treated as a cross-sector and crosscutting issue and there are no sector gender goals, KRAs, or KPIs. Gender is addressed only as a social and community development and welfare concern. The deletion of KPI 2 (see Table 1), which specifies the fundamental purpose of gender mainstreaming, suggests that gender mainstreaming is still not well understood within the government planning process.

The SDP and SDP-MTR assign the implementation of the gender mainstreaming policy to the MWSWPA. However, the Ministry of Women (MOW), which while called a Ministry, is a department within the MWSWPA, is not a policy agency, nor does it have a major focus on GAD. It is a line department providing community-based services to women; at present, it lacks the financial and human resources to promote the implementation of government policy on GAD and the status of women.

Table 1. Strategic Development Plan Gender Mainstreaming Objectives

Policy Objective 1: To mainstream gender perspectives, issues, and concerns in the planning process		
SDP 2003–2005: Policy Objectives and KPIs	SDP-MTR: Achievement of KPIs	SDP-MTR 2004: Recommendations on revised Policy Objectives and KPIs
KPI 1: Gender mainstreaming institutions strengthened by 2005.	Ministry of Women budget increased from F\$976,200 in 2001 to F\$2,188,700 in 2004.	Retained
KPI 2: National policies, plans, and programs engendered by 2005.	Too broad to be achievable and restates KPIs 5 and 6.	Deleted
KPI 3: Gender audits conducted in five ministries by 2005.	Conducted in Ministry of Health (HIV/AIDS policy) and Ministry of Agriculture (food security policy).	Retained
KPI 4: Gender sensitization workshops conducted in each division annually.	Partly achieved, but need for feedback, and for “way forward” issues to be addressed.	Deleted
KPI 5: Inclusion of gender impact assessments in project appraisals within government by 2003.	Gender impact required in template for project appraisal for submissions for inclusion in the Public Sector Investment Program.	Deleted
KPI 6: WPA reviewed by 2003.	Poor government participation in WPA taskforces has hindered achievement of WPA goals.	Retained. Extend time frame for review to 2005.

KPI = key performance indicator; MTR = midterm review; SDP = Strategic Development Plan; WPA = Women’s Plan of Action.

Source: Republic of the Fiji Islands 2004d.

The SDP-MTR recommends the deletion of KPI 5: “Inclusion of gender impact assessments in project appraisals within government by 2003” (see Table 1), asserting that “this KPI has been achieved in that the National Planning Office requires the inclusion of gender impact in ministry project appraisal submissions for inclusion in the Public Sector Investment Program.” The action on this KPI was to include the question, “How will this program affect women and girls?” in the template used to appraise budget submissions. The question has now been removed, however, due to the difficulties experienced by senior officials in making such an assessment. Accordingly, this KPI cannot be said to have been achieved. The question might have been better phrased as “How will this program affect the relative situation of women and men?” To implement gender mainstreaming, each ministry should identify the key gender issues in the sector or sectors for which it is responsible, and to maintain relevant databases on the relative situation of men and women in the sectors for monitoring achievements.

The key issue here is that gender is a cross-cutting and multi-sector development issue. If gender mainstreaming were applied to the SDP, gender goals, KRAs, and KPIs would have been included for all sectors covered by the Plan. However, despite the stated policy, the SDP and SDP-MTR do not mainstream gender considerations. This suggests that support is needed to strengthen the Government’s capacity to implement the policy. Confusion is continuing between a “women in

development” (WID) policy orientation, which aims to provide special services and programs for women to improve their welfare; and a GAD policy, which examines the relative situation of women and men and addresses inequities, sector by sector.

The goals and policy objectives for GAD and gender equality in the SDP were closely based on the government-endorsed WPA 1999–2008, and it seems likely that despite the sound and appropriate goals of the WPA, weaknesses in the associated strategies and actions may have unintentionally encouraged the assumption that MOW should be the key implementing agency.

B. The Women’s Plan of Action 1999–2008

1. Goals

In 1999, a National Women's Congress organized by the Ministry of Women and Culture adopted the WPA, which was endorsed by the Government (Republic of the Fiji Islands 1998). Through the plan, the Government selected five areas of focus from its commitments made in Beijing.

- Mainstream women’s and gender concerns in the planning process and all policy areas.
- Review laws that are disadvantageous to women.
- Allocate additional resources to develop women's microenterprises and encourage financial institutions to review lending policies to disadvantaged women and young women who lack traditional sources of collateral.
- Work toward achieving a gender balance partnership at all levels of decision-making, assign 50% of representation, participation, training, appointments, and promotions at all levels of government to women on merit, and encourage the same in the private sector.
- Campaign to promote a sound and stable environment that is free of violence, especially domestic violence, sexual harassment, and child abuse.

The plan is set out in two volumes. Volume 1 provides a framework of strategic objectives for each area of focus, with directions for action and indications of responsible agencies. The framework does not include indicators for monitoring or consideration of budgetary implications. Volume 2 provides an overview of issues for each area of focus.

The SDP (gender mainstreaming KPI 6) requires the WPA to be reviewed by 2003, but the SDP-MTR amends the SDP to delay assessment until 2005.

2. Implementation Strategy

In 1998, the MOW established two implementation mechanisms for the WPA.

- An Inter-Ministerial Committee for Women (IMC)³ composed of the deputy permanent secretaries of government departments and ministries.
- Five task forces composed of representatives of key government departments and civil society organizations to make suggestions to the Minister in the respective areas of focus and to foster collaboration between the Government and civil society. The task forces were expected to meet every month, convened by the MOW.

It is generally conceded and noted in the SDP-MTR (see Table 1, KPI 6) that the implementation mechanisms have not been as successful as was hoped. The IMC has not met since 2003 and when it did meet, the deputy secretaries rarely attended.

Some task forces have met more regularly than others. However, senior officials in the relevant ministries tended to delegate attendance at task force meetings downward, to staff who often lacked interest in the issues or the authority to promote policy changes. All the task forces are coordinated by one senior MOW official in addition to her other administrative and managerial responsibilities (Huffer 2004).

The MOW has also tried to provide data on women in each sector to assist in the implementation of the WPA and to monitor progress on government commitments and policies; it provided a small grant to an expert in statistical analyst at the University of the South Pacific, who, working with the social statistician from the Bureau of Statistics, has produced the first draft of a statistical analysis of the status of women in the Fiji Islands. (Chandra and Lewai 2005). This is mainly based on data from the 1996 census and will require updating when the results of the 2006 census become available.

The task forces on “violence against women” and “women and the law” have been most successful so far. The chief executive officer (CEO) for Justice chairs both the violence and law task forces, and has been supportive of their objectives, even when he is unable to attend meetings (Huffer 2004). These task forces have managed to formulate clear objectives for action and their achievements are discussed in Chapter 5. The achievements of the WPA goals against violence and for law reform owe much to the efforts of CSOs, particularly the Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre (FWCC) and the FWRM.

C. The Government’s Poverty Reduction Strategy

Government policy, as stated in the SDP and in the SDP-MTR recommendations, includes a sharper focus on poverty alleviation, including the establishment of a poverty alleviation unit in MWSWPA. The location of the unit indicates that poverty is seen primarily as a welfare issue rather

³ At its inception, the Inter-Ministerial Committee was made up of the following ministries/departments: Education, Health, Planning, Finance, Regional Development, Justice and Social Welfare, Agriculture, Fisheries and Forests, Labour and Industrial Relations, Commerce, Industry and Cooperatives, Communication, Work and Energy, Local Government, Housing and Environment, Home Affairs, and Youth and Sports; the Public Service Commission; and the Fiji Islands Law Reform Commission and Bureau of Statistics (Huffer 2004).

than a structural issue to be addressed across sectors. As is the case with gender, the Ministry of Finance and National Planning does not oversee integration of poverty reduction as an overarching policy issue that cuts across the sector and budgetary planning processes.

Policy development, as well as programs for action (administration of a special poverty fund) has been assigned to MWSWPA, a line department. MWSWPA recently proposed a framework for an integrated national poverty eradication program to the Cabinet. The core policy areas proposed are economic growth, increasing basic social services, improving participation and empowerment, and targeted services for the disadvantaged and poor. Under each of these core policy areas, macro-level policy objectives and micro-level programs are specified, along with the implementing agencies and KPIs. The Government needs to address gender and poverty more specifically in the overall planning process, as discussed in Chapter 6.⁴

Gender-specific macro policy objectives for improved participation and empowerment specified in the proposed framework for poverty alleviation are “equal opportunities and gender” linked to micro-level programs to implement the WPA and access to training and credit. The implementing agencies are specified as the ministries of women, youth, sports, and education, and NGOs. The KPI is for a “5% increase in women’s employment each year.”

The basic social service strategy in the 2004 SDP-MTR includes a KPI for a “5% increase in women’s enrollment each year.” It is not clear why the Government has included this KPI, or what level of education it refers to, as gender equity in primary and secondary educational enrollments is generally satisfactory, as shown in the Fiji Islands MDG report (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2004a).

D. Government Policy on Equal Employment Opportunity

The SDP addresses gender equality and nondiscrimination in its policy objectives for gender and development. The KPIs and recommendations from the 2004 SDP-MTR are summarized in Table 2.

⁴ In 2003, ADB assisted the government to conduct a participatory assessment on poverty and hardship in the Fiji Islands, and to formulate strategies for equitable growth and hardship alleviation (ADB 2003). The Fiji Islands will also receive ongoing assistance to improve data collection and analysis for policy development from the ADB Pacific Regional Poverty Reduction program.

Table 2. Strategic Development Plan Policy Objectives on Gender Equality

Policy objective 2: to ensure gender equality and nondiscrimination before the law.		
SDP 2003–2005: Policy Objectives and KPIs	SDP-MTR: Achievement of KPIs	SDP-MTR 2004: Recommendations on revised Policy Objectives and KPIs
KPI 7: Review of laws in relation to UN CEDAW by 2004.	Submissions made on domestic violence, the Mental Health Act, the Criminal Procedure Code, and the Penal Code. Better coordination is needed between MWSWPA and other agencies.	Retained, time frame extended.
KPI 8: Gender issues integrated into the legal system by 2005.	No action by MWSWPA. Ministry feels this KPI is beyond its mandate.	Deleted
KPI 9: Increased collaboration and partnership with NGOs.	Too general to assess progress although MWSWPA works with many NGOs.	Amend KPI to “increased collaboration and partnership with NGOs to conduct legal literacy training and community awareness.”
Added KPI on MDG Goal #3	Share of women’s wage employment in the nonagricultural sector.	

CEDAW = Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; KPI = key performance indicator; MSWSPA = Ministry for Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation; MTR = midterm review; NGO = nongovernment organization; SDP = Strategic Development Plan; UN = United Nations; WPA = Women’s Plan of Action.

Source: Republic of the Fiji Islands 2004d.

The proposed deletion of KPI 8 in the SDP-MTR further underscores the lack of appropriate gender mainstreaming mechanisms and institutional arrangements in the SDP. In line with government policy, KPI 8, along with KPI 7, should be included in the policy objectives for the Ministry of Justice.

The Fiji Islands’ Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policy is linked to the Bill of Rights in the 1997 Constitution, which requires equality for all, and a prohibition on discriminating against a person directly or indirectly on the grounds of, among other things, race, ethnic origin, or gender (Republic of the Fiji Islands n.d.).

The relevant provisions are in Constitution (Amendment) Act 1997. Section 140 provides for recruitment, promotion, training and advancement to be made on merit with the principle that “men and women equally and the members of all ethnic groups should have adequate and equal opportunities for training and advancement.” Chapter 2, Section 6 (k) provides for “affirmative action and social justice programs to secure effective quality of access to opportunities, amenities and services for the Fijian and Rotuman people as well as other communities, for women as well as men, and for all disadvantaged citizens or groups, based on an allocation of resources broadly acceptable to all communities.” Section 33 (3) states that: “Every person has the right to fair labour practices, including humane treatment and proper working conditions.”

The policy is based on the principles of merit, impartiality, and cultural diversity (the public service should at all levels reflect the ethnic composition of the population, “taking into account its

occupational preferences where appropriate”). At the time the policy was drafted, the civil service comprised 60% Fijians, 37% Indo-Fijians, 2% others, and 1% expatriates. Men made up 53% of the public service and women 46%, but women held only 14% of senior executive positions.

The policy directs each ministry and department to apply the policy as specified, including the encouragement of role models, the use of gender-neutral language, and the inclusion of EEO information in advertisements encouraging qualified women to apply. Senior officials of the Public Service Commission acknowledge that the policy has not been vigorously applied. They suggest that the appropriate mechanism for applying the policy might be to include responsibility for the application of the policy in the contracts of all CEOs in the civil service. In other words, each ministry should be made responsible for applying the EEO policy.

FWRM, a well-established nongovernment organization (NGO), notes that current legislation and associated policies on EEO issues exist independently of each other. For example, the Public Services Commission Act 1995 addresses issues of EEO for public servants. The Fiji Islands Human Rights Commission Act addresses EEO as an issues relating to breaches of human rights. The proposed Industrial Relations Bill (in preparation by the Ministry of Labor since 1999) addresses EEO as a trade dispute issue between unions and employers. FWRM also notes that although EEO is a right enshrined in the Constitution of the Fiji Islands, most employers and women workers do not understand its provisions or avenues for recourse, and more effort is needed raise public awareness.

E. International Commitments on Women and Gender

The Fiji Islands has made eight international commitments to GAD, gender equality, and the advancement of women, as follows:

- 1993: endorsement of the Pacific platform for action for women and sustainable development (SPC 1995).
- 1994: endorsement of the Jakarta Declaration for the Advancement of Women in Asia and the Pacific.
- 1994: Ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Endorsement of Beijing Platform for Action.
- 2000: Endorsement of the Beijing + 5 outcome. The Fiji Islands withdrew its reservations on Articles 5(a) and 9. It presented its initial report to the CEDAW Committee, i.e., the Committee examined the report, in 2002. The text of CEDAW was translated into the Fijian and Hindi.
- 2002: Endorsement of item 45 of the Nadi Declaration (pledging commitment to work for the full participation of women at all levels of the decision-making process) arising from the 3rd Summit of African, Caribbean and Pacific states (held in the Fiji Islands).
- 2004: Endorsement of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015 arising from the 7th meeting of Commonwealth Ministers responsible for Women’s Affairs (held in the Fiji Islands).

- 2004: Endorsement of the Declaration and revised Pacific Plan of Action on gender equality and the advancement of women, arising from the 3rd conference of Pacific Ministers responsible for women, and the 9th Triennial Conference on Pacific Women.
- 2005: Reaffirmation of commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action.

In addition, the Fiji Islands has endorsed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in November 2004 the government produced a comprehensive report on the country's achievements (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2004a).

F. Report on the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

1. The Government's Initial Report

The CEDAW Committee considered the initial Report of the Republic of the Fiji Islands at its 530th and 531st meetings, on January 17, and at its 538th meeting on January 22, 2002 (United Nations 2002).

The Government's Report affirmed its continuing commitment to CEDAW and noted the participation of civil society in preparing its report to the Committee. It highlighted the socioeconomic and political context of the Fiji Islands, including its smallness, isolation, and vulnerability to global economic forces, and the political instability arising from the events of 2000. It noted concerns that cultural values tended to prescribe gender roles, the prevalence of domestic violence, and increasing family breakdown, and the need for improvements in the access of rural women to education. The representative of the Government indicated that the work of rural women was rarely acknowledged in national statistics, and that gender-sensitive data were inadequate in most sectors.

The Report noted that a government priority was to address the needs of the rural population and the rising prevalence of poverty. Accordingly, the Government had increased the allocation for poverty alleviation and rural development by F\$56 million in its 2002 budget.

The Report noted the Government's efforts to promote gender mainstreaming approaches, especially through the partnership between the MWSWPA and civil society to implement the WPA. Progress had been made on a number of issues: legislation on offenses against children had been amended to address pedophilia, commercial law reform included considerations of intellectual property rights related to indigenous and cultural knowledge, campaigns had been undertaken to eliminate violence against women by civil society with government support, and progress on women's access to education at all levels was described.

2. The Response by the CEDAW Committee

The Committee received the Government's report and also considered the shadow report submitted by civil society. It welcomed the introduction of a specific provision on gender equality in the Constitution of 1997, the establishment in the Fiji Islands of the first Human Rights Commission

in the Pacific region, and the removal of the citizenship provision that discriminated against Fijian women. It noted the active participation of civil society and recommended that this “rich resource continue to be used for sustainable development and the promotion of gender equality in the Fiji Islands.”

It noted that the linking of the portfolios for women, social welfare, and poverty alleviation gave recognition to the linkage between gender and poverty. This, the Committee considered, indicated that the Fiji Islands had recognized that alleviation of poverty would advance women’s rights and bring the country closer to its goal of social equity.

It noted that women’s health was well covered by the Report, but that women’s mental health was a neglected area. It noted that the out-migration of health professionals was having an adverse effect on Ministry of Health capacity for dealing with its priorities and programs to address the rising incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, HIV prevention and testing, and care and support of people living with HIV/AIDS.

Other major areas of concern and recommendation by the Committee addressed these needs:

- that human rights in relation to gender and ethnicity be upheld and monitored within the Social Justice Act in conformity with the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution, contributing to the elimination of discrimination against all Fiji Islands women;
- that EEO provisions in law govern both public and private sectors, considering the lack of equal wages for work of equal value;
- that employment relations legislation address the employment and working conditions of women;
- that the significant gains in education made by Fiji Islands women be reflected in increased participation by women in political and decision-making roles;
- that women be recognized as shared heads of households, and the concept of shared economic contribution and household responsibilities be promoted;
- that legislation that criminalizes prostitutes, and those who profit from their earnings—but not their clients—be reconsidered;
- that stronger initiatives be undertaken to address violence against women and sexual abuse and harassment of girls and women, especially to confront attitudes that confer social legitimacy on such acts;
- that the needs of women in remote rural areas for services, including health care and education, be addressed; and
- that information on CEDAW and the Government’s plans to achieve its commitments to the Convention be disseminated to the public.

Chapter 3

Gender Dimensions of Economic Development and Growth

A. Gender and Labor Force Participation

Increasing access to formal employment is noted by the SDP as a major challenge for the Government. Only about one third of the Fiji Islands' labor force is engaged in formal sector paid employment and women's share is smaller than that of men (Tables 3 and 4). While male labor force participation rates declined slightly 1986–1996, female participation increased, particularly among Fijian women. The economically active population of the Fiji Islands makes up 59% of the population aged 15 years and over, of whom almost three quarters (74%) were engaged in money-earning activity.

Table 3. Labor Force Participation Rates by Sex and Ethnicity

Sex	Percent of Economically Active Population, 1996		Change 1986–1996 (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Fijians	79	48	(6.6)	21.1
Indo-Fijians	80	27	(5.7)	10.7
Subsistence Workers	12	38	—	—
Cash workers	83	54	—	—
Total Economically Active	79	39	(6.2)	16.0

Parentheses = negative figures; — = data not available.

Source: Chandra and Lewai 2005, based on 1996 and 1986 census data.

The 1996 census shows that about 24% of economically active women work for cash and that women's share of formal employment is significantly lower than that of men; women exceed men only in clerical occupations, and the margin of difference is quite small (Republic of the Fiji Islands 1996a). The disparities recorded in the 1996 census were confirmed by data from the 2002 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2003c).

The SDP gender policy objective 2 is to ensure gender equality and nondiscrimination before the law. However, as of now, no laws in the Fiji Islands require equal pay for equal work, nor do they mandate a national basic minimum wage (ILO-UNDP 1996). On average, women earned the equivalent of 88% of men's wages.

The latest HIES found that urban women make up 35.5% of the economically active population, but only 31% of these are engaged in the cash economy. This figure includes both waged women and those who were self-employed full or part-time. The design of the 2006 census

should aim to clarify the classification of those engaged in the cash economy.⁵ The SDP-MTR recommends the inclusion of an additional KPI based on the indicator “women’s share of wage employment in the nonagricultural sector” (an indicator for MDG Goal #3), under SDP gender policy objective 2: “to ensure gender equality and non discrimination before the law.” Women’s share of nonagricultural employment increased in the 1990s, largely due to jobs in the garment industry.

Table 4. Employed Population by Occupation and Sex, 1996 and 2002

Occupational category	Female (%)		Male (%)	
	Census 1996	Urban HIES 2002	Census 1996	Urban HIES 2002
Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers	17.8	17.2	82.2	82.8
Professionals	42.2	41.6	57.8	58.4
Technicians and Associated Occupations	27.9	32.3	72.1	67.7
Clerks	54.9	59.0	45.1	41.0
Service Workers	34.9	35.8	65.1	64.2
Skilled Agriculture and Fisheries	11.9	5.1	88.1	94.9
Crafts and Related Trades	11.8	7.1	88.2	92.9
Plant and Machine Operators	28.0	27.2	72.0	72.8
Elementary Occupations	19.8	36.2	80.2	63.8

HIES = Household Income and Expenditure Survey.

Source: Chandra and Lewai 2005, based on the 1996 census and 2002 Urban Household Income and Expenditure Survey (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2003c).

B. The Formal Sector

While the proportion of women in the economically active population has increased since 1988, employment opportunities for women are concentrated in a small part of the labor market, with one quarter of all paid jobs for women in clerical, teaching, nursing, factory, and sales work. Women predominate in all lower-paid occupations except manual labor. In the private formal sector, women’s employment is concentrated in manufacturing, particularly in the fish processing and garment industries, and in hotel and related hospitality services.

Women are generally lower paid, lower ranked and less often promoted, and employment growth for women has been at the lowest end of wage employment (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2004a).

⁵ The design of the 2002 census for the Federated States of Micronesia provides an excellent model for capturing data reflecting the situation of the labor force working for cash, including semisubsistence employment.

A study by the International Labour Organization and United Nations Development Programme (ILO-UNDP 1996) on the conditions of women workers in the formal sector confirmed the findings of a 1995 study by Emberson Bain and Slatter, reporting that women workers faced discrimination and unsatisfactory employment and working conditions in contravention of CEDAW Article 11 and the government's constitutional commitments to EEO (Emberson Bain and Slatter 1995). The ILO report made the following recommendations to the Government:

- Apply gender impact assessments to selected programs and policies in the field of labor and employment.
- Incorporate gender analysis into economic planning.
- Improve wages and working conditions in the garment industry.
- Consider a training-related tax to enhance women's participation in private sector training programs.
- Strengthen and broaden EEO policy and implementation.
- Consider ratification of ILO conventions relevant to women, especially Convention 111 on discrimination and Convention 100 on Equal Remuneration; and review employment legislation in the light of Article 11 of CEDAW.
- Revise employment legislation and strengthen enforcement procedures, with attention to the elimination of gender bias in wages, the safety of women workers, ILO principles on maternity protection, and provision of child care services.
- Disseminate information to employers and to women workers on workers' rights.
- Encourage research on the enforcement of employment legislation and measures to improve the equality and protection of women workers.

Efforts are being made by the FWRM to address these and associated issues, in consultation and partnership with the MOW and the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Productivity (MLIRP).

1. The Manufacturing Sector

The fish processing industry employs approximately 1,000 women workers at a tuna processing factory operated at Levuka by the mainly government-owned Pacific Fishing Company (PAFCO). According to studies by Emberson Bain (1995, 1997), 27% of all the women of child-bearing age on Ovalau Island are employed by PAFCO. The study by Emerson-Bain and Slatter (1995) describes poor employment terms and working conditions. However, the CEO for the Ministry of Fisheries and Forests (MFF) notes a strong demand for jobs in the plant and that more women than men on the island earn cash incomes, which increase their social status.

The garment industry has grown since 1986, when only 6% of women were employed in manufacturing industries. A survey by the ministry of Industry and Industrial Relations (Chandra and Lewai 2005), indicated that the garment industry employed 10,105 workers, of whom 76% were women. Other estimates indicate that approximately 18,000 people were employed in the garment industry in the Fiji Islands in 2004 (cited in Chandra and Lewai 2005).

Wages paid to garment industry workers are very low: a 2002 survey sponsored by Oxfam New Zealand (Storey n.d.) found that wages ranged from \$50.00 to \$68.00 per week and that the average weekly wage was \$50.00. One third of respondents surveyed had no dependents, but among those with dependents, the average number of dependents was four. Indo-Fijian dependency rates were highest. All respondents said their wages were used for basic needs.

Employment in the clothing and footwear industries is likely to decline sharply in 2005–2006 due to the loss of the quota for garment exports to the US that expired at the beginning of 2005. Accordingly, it is expected that the industry will have shrunk by about a third—losing 6,000 jobs—during 2005. One Asian investor has already closed a number of its factories, although not all. A further contraction of about 20% may occur in 2006, with the loss of approximately 2,400 jobs. From 2006, further contraction of the clothing and footwear industry is likely. Continued downward pressure on wages is likely.

2. Other Private Sector Employment

Women have a slightly higher share of employment in retail and wholesale trade, hotels, and restaurants than men do, mainly in low-wage jobs. However, employment is likely to grow in tourism-related industries in the immediate future, unlike manufacturing, following increased investment in the tourism sector.

Sugar has long been the backbone of the economy, occupying over 50% of arable land, directly employing 13% of the labor force, and contributing around 9% of GDP. Nonsugar crops have a relatively minor role in the economy, but with the phasing out of European Union (EU) price supports for sugar and other constraints facing the sugar industry, agricultural diversification will be essential element of future development (ADB 2005). Government plans for agricultural diversification will open up new opportunities to involve women directly in production activities.

Only 12.0% of women have paid work in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries in 2001, according to the Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics (Chandra and Lewai 2005). At present, women predominate among paid workers in minor agricultural industries such as ginger processing and export floriculture. According to senior officials, the Ministry of Agriculture intends to encourage commercial self-employment among women in the promotion of new horticultural industries such as production of fruit, flowers, and ornamental plants. Commercial self-employment on family farms (sugar, rice, vegetables, and dairy products) and fisheries is highest among Indo-Fijians and other minority ethnic groups.

3. Civil service Employment

Of all women in paid employment, almost half work in the civil service, especially in the Ministries of Health and Education, and at the lower levels. Women in the private sector are likely to be on wages rather than salaries, in junior positions and nonunionized. In the civil service, more men (27%) earned less than F\$10,000 per annum than women (15%), but 56% of women

employees were on the second-lowest pay scale (F\$10–15,000) compared to 38.0% of men; 19.0% of women were paid salaries of more than F\$15,000 per annum, compared to 33% of men.

In 1998, women's share of central government employment was 27.6%, an increase of 2.7% since 1989, but only 38% of these employees were paid on the basis of an annual salary, as against 12% who were paid on an hourly, daily, or weekly wage basis. This reflects the different terms of employment in the civil service. In comparison, in private limited companies, women comprised 35% of all employees, 27.8% of those on salaries, and 37.3% of those on wages (Chandra and Lewai 2005).

As noted in Chapter 2, the civil service has an EEO policy, but at present it is weakly implemented. Figures provided by the Fiji Islands Public Service Commission for 2004 and the Annual Employment Survey of 1997–1998 show that women are a minority in all public sector occupations except nursing, clerical work, and primary teaching (Chandra and Lewai 2005). However, according to Ministry of Education statistics for 2003, women were a minority in the teaching profession at both primary and secondary levels (Chandra and Lewai 2005).

Although a large proportion of women are employed in the teaching profession, as a proportion of total women in formal employment, they make up slightly less than half of all teachers. Of primary teachers, 43.4% are women (Ministry of Education 2004); only 22.4% of head teachers are women, and about one third more men than women were assistant head teachers (Ministry of Education 2004).

Despite these facts, the Ministry of Education decided, as a matter of policy in 2005, to increase the intake of males over females in primary teacher training, by allotting 20 more places to male than female applicants. The reason for the decision is said to be a perception that men primary teachers are better than women at maintaining discipline in schools. This policy will not advance the Fiji Islands' policy commitments under CEDAW and the MDGs, and will reinforce gender stereotypes of female subordination.

Women made up 49% of secondary school teachers in 2003, but approximately equal numbers of men and women are in training for careers in secondary teaching, and more women than men are enrolled in degree-level courses in education. Overall, more women teachers than men teachers are trained at bachelor's-degree level or higher; in government schools, however, slightly more men than women have tertiary qualifications. More men teachers than women are untrained at most levels of qualification (Ministry of Education 2004). Nevertheless, as in primary school management, management levels show a major gender imbalance: only 11.4% of secondary school principals are women (Ministry of Education 2004). Further, twice as many men than women are vice principals. Men also predominate among assistant principals and heads of departments (Chandra and Lewai 2005).

As the gender audit of the Ministry of Health shows (Table 5), women are the majority of employees in the health sector, and predominate in nursing and administrative support, but are under-represented in the occupations classified as 'medical cadre' and in senior executive

positions, although women hold 44% of these positions. The same source shows that more men than women have bachelors- (138: 97) and masters-level (32: 14) qualifications (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2003b).

Table 5. Men’s and Women’s Employment in the Ministry of Health

Level	Men	% of total	Women	% of total	Total
Full staff	565	22.7	1,915	77.3	2,480
Medical Cadre	219	61.0	140	39.0	359
Nursing Cadre (2002)	86	5.5	1516	94.5	1,605
Senior Executive service	5	55.5	12	44.5	27
Administrative support	0	0	51	100.0	51

Source: Republic of the Fiji Islands 2003b: 29.

The Gender Audit of the Ministry of Agriculture (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2003a) shows similar occupational segregation; women hold almost twice as many of the administrative and support positions, but less than a quarter of technical staff, and only one third of the senior executive positions.

C. The Informal Sector

According to the 1989–1990 HIES (Republic of the Fiji Islands 1990), 78% of all informal economic activity was in agriculture, forestry, and fishing, with further 18% classified as manufacturing. Typical informal activities are town market and roadside stalls selling fish, fruit, vegetables, cooked food, handicrafts, and second-hand clothes. Thirty-six percent of those engaged in informal activities were women (Booth 1999). A study of 150 informal businesses conducted in 2003 (cited by Chandra and Lewai 2005), indicated that 28% of those directly involved were women. According to Chandra and Lewai’s analysis of urban employment statistics, however, many more women are engaged in informal economic activities as unpaid family workers.

1. Fisheries

The fish harvesting sector—incorporating offshore, inshore (artisanal and subsistence), aquaculture, and collection fisheries (coral and live rock collection, beche-de-mer and trochus)—(Table 6) contributes an estimated F\$78.4 million to the economy. Annual consumption of fish is estimated at more than 44 kg per capita (ADB 2002). An estimated 6,847 people are engaged in either commercial or subsistence fishing. The annual fish harvest, particularly from inshore waters, represents an important source of nutrition, with more than 28,000 metric tons (mt) of locally caught fish consumed by the population (ADB 2005b).

Table 6. Total Capture Fishery Catch, 1997–2003 (metric tons)

Category	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Offshore	4,256	4,801	5,025	11,441	12,219	16,472	12,205
Artisanal-Finfish	3,494	4,183	4,711	4,047	4,329	4,040	4,439
Artisanal Nonfinfish	2,326	2,630	2,679	2,634	2,757	2,832	2,232
Subsistence ^a	17,400	17,600	21,600	21,600	21,600	21,600	21,600
Total Catch	33,296	36,028	41,405	46,403	47,991	51,814	47,146

^a Subsistence catch data for 1999–2003 revised.

Source: Department of Fisheries, ADB 2002b.

Subsistence fisheries were one of the two highest fisheries contributors to GDP in 2003, being approximately equal to that of offshore fisheries. Subsistence fishing in Fijian communities is based on a gendered division of labor, with the exception of occasional community fish drives in some areas. Women do most of the day-to-day subsistence fishing in most coastal and riverine areas, using hand-lines, traps, and other collecting and harvesting methods, but rarely using boats. Men are more likely to fish using boats or canoes but more infrequently for subsistence purposes, when a larger catch is needed for a special occasion.

In the artisanal (small-scale commercial) fishing sector, women are significant contributors to non-fish capture and marketing. In some regions of the Fiji Islands, women specialize in harvesting shellfish and crabs and selling them in municipal markets. Unlike the situation in some other Pacific Developing Member Countries (PDMCs), however, women are less active participants in the sale of finfish in markets, although they often sell finfish from the roadside. Where markets are accessible, Fijian men are likely to be involved in artisanal fishing. Indo-Fijian men traditionally engaged in seasonal commercial fishing in the farming off-season and were once the majority of small-scale commercial fishers, but with the stronger assertion of exclusive Fijian rights over traditional fishing grounds (*qoliqoli*), Indo-Fijian participation is likely to have declined. Indo-Fijians continue to play an important role as middlemen, buying fish and other produce from growers and fishers, and reselling in markets, roadside stalls, and door-to-door businesses.

Pressure on inshore marine resources due to overexploitation and destructive fishing methods, even in isolated Fijian villages, is a gender issue, threatening the sustainability of women's fisheries and therefore household food security. Many regional and national agencies and environmental NGOs consider that the fisheries extension role needs to be altered so as to be much more closely aligned with conservation and management objectives (ADB 2005b).

2. Agriculture

Women in most rural regions of the Fiji Islands are the major subsistence agricultural producers. Subsistence and semisubsistence agriculture continues to be vital to the well-being of

rural and also many urban households in the Fiji Islands, as well as to national food security. Women’s overall participation in agriculture was marginally higher than that of men, according to the 1996 census (Republic of Fiji Islands 1996a).

Men are more likely than women to specialize in commercial or semicommercial production than women, but these are mainly household enterprises and women contribute labor, although they rarely control income from commercial enterprises. Indo-Fijian men and women are more likely to be engaged in mixed cash and subsistence activities than Fijians (Table 7), but Indo-Fijian women are slightly less likely than Fijian women to grow crops for sale as well as subsistence. A survey in the Sigatoka Valley, conducted in June 2005 as part of preparations for the Fourth Fiji Islands Road Upgrading Project, found that Fijian women do more routine agricultural work than men; their workloads included subsistence cultivation and market gardening, and collecting and selling shellfish from the river. Women provided most of the intermittent and seasonal agricultural daily wage labor on nearby commercial farms. In addition, women in this area were responsible for all household duties and as few owned modern stoves, their daily chores including collecting firewood. Men assisted women’s agriculture by preparing the land, and some men grew commercial crops, such as papaya and tobacco, but women provided labor for these ventures (Schoeffel, Moce, and Makasiale 2005).

Table 7. Work Force Engaged in Subsistence by Sex, Ethnic Group and Type of Activity, 1996

Sex	Subsistence with Cash		Subsistence without Cash	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Fijians	68.6	31.4	31.4	68.6
Indo-Fijians	89.2	26.7	10.4	73.3

Source: Chandra and Lewai 2005, based on Republic of Fiji Islands (1996a).

Where markets are available, Fiji Islands women of all ethnic groups grow food crops for the market, or sell their surplus produce. In many markets, women are the majority of vendors. Women of all ethnic groups are active in produce marketing, and growing numbers of women have become small-scale entrepreneurs, buying *dalo* (taro), cassava, and other vegetables from the growers to resell at municipal markets and roadside stalls.

3. Handicrafts

Rural Fijian women also make mats, baskets, decorated bark cloth, and other traditional handicrafts for household and ceremonial use, and for sale. Although the opportunities seem obvious for women to earn income from the growing tourist market for souvenirs and handicraft production, the majority of women do not access these markets successfully. At present, a large proportion of the handicrafts and souvenirs, including baskets, printed sarongs, and shell jewelry sold in tourism canters are imported from Asia, although purporting to be from the Fiji Islands. Others are made in factories in the Fiji Islands and purport to be “traditional,” although they are not (masks, swords, etc.). Artifacts from other Pacific islands (such as carvings from Papua New Guinea) are also sold in the Fiji Islands’ souvenir shops.

The reason why authentic Fijian handicrafts constitute a small volume of sales in tourist outlets is related to supply and demand. Good quality, authentic Fijian handicrafts, such as those sold through the Government Handicraft Corporation, cost more than most tourists want to pay for holiday souvenirs. Further, many tourists are not interested in traditional items. The challenge is how to engage more rural and disadvantaged women in handicraft production that can compete with imports.

The need is to develop handicraft products for the tourism market that draw on traditional skills, are competitively priced, but that are designed to appeal to modern tastes. The UNDP sustainable livelihoods program has pioneered this approach in the Fiji Islands with its “Fiji Islands Retail Enterprise Engine” (FREE) shop, demonstrating the potential for further development. The Government should also consider placing import barriers on products purporting to be the Fijian handicrafts and souvenirs.

D. Credit and Enterprise Development

1. Gender and Property Rights

Gender and property rights is an issue relating not just to overall government objectives for social justice and equal opportunity, but also to SDP Gender policy objective #3: providing disadvantaged women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and to advisory and marketing assistance. The reason why relatively few women own formal businesses that require more than a microloan for start-up capital is that very few women own any assets, especially land, houses, or businesses. This is partly due to the prevailing system of land and property inheritance practiced by both major ethnic groups in the Fiji Islands (see Chapter 1). Women tend to be discriminated against by lending institutions because of their lack of assets, and some businesswoman reported that even when they have assets, lending agencies are likely to require a male guarantor.

Although few ethnic Fijians of either sex own land individually, Fijian women in most parts of the Fiji Islands are excluded from inheritance rights in customary land, and have no rights in land other than those permitted them by their fathers or husbands. Nor do they normally receive land rents. Most Indo-Fijians with land also practice father-to-son inheritance. Although male owners of customary land also face obstacles in securing credit, due to lack of collateral, there are various special assistance programs for Fijian landowners.

One example is the Fiji Development Bank (FDB) program established to provide risk investment and seasonal working capital at minimum interest rates with simplified procedures, for people unable to provide full security. The interest rate of 8% is subsidized by the Government. The loan portfolio is \$12,736,949, comprising 1,013 loans (of which almost half are currently in arrears). Most of the loans were larger than those provided by microfinance programs, and unlike the microfinance and rural savings programs described below, most loans (887) were to men; only 126 borrowers were women (FDB 2005).

Leases are in most cases issued to men as the designated heads of households, or as the registered farmer or business proprietor, and very rarely to women. If the various authorities associated with issuing leases were to require joint husband and wife registration, this would contribute significantly to the economic empowerment of Fiji Islands women.

2. Gender and Business

Data on women in business are scarce and some ambiguity exists in the statistical information as to what constitutes a “business.” The Small and Micro-Enterprises (SME) Business Survey (Chandra and Lewai 2005) indicated that of 14,560 registered businesses, 19.2% were operated by women. Of these, 44% were operated by Indo-Fijian women, 34% by Fijian women, and 22% by women of other ethnic origins. According to unpublished data by the Suva City Council, only 12% of registered businesses are owned by women, but the SME Survey recorded a higher number (19%). The Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics recorded that in 1999, 19.4% of the managers of private and publicly owned business were women (Chandra and Lewai 2005).

Businesses registered under the Cooperative Societies Act include 250 semiformal consumer cooperatives, of which 20, representing 8% of all cooperatives, are run by women. Women-run cooperatives tend to be extensions of women’s traditional roles and involve baking, tailoring, and agricultural production. The number of women-run cooperatives has diminished since the early 1990s, and the number of cooperatives with male and female members has declined overall since 1996.

Women in Business, an NGO, aims to provide a network of mutual support among Fiji Islands businesswomen and assists in organizing the annual “Businesswoman of the Year” awards.

3. Gender and Credit

Government policy objectives for GAD in the SDP 2003–2005 include credit and enterprise, with a policy objective and four KPIs emphasizing credit provision, but emphasizing microcredit, which is usually only sufficient to capitalize very small enterprises in very crowded areas of activity such as baking, tailoring, handicrafts, and growing and selling produce. The SDP policy on gender includes the objective “providing disadvantaged women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and to advisory and marketing assistance.” The SDP-MTR recommends retention of two of the four KPIs, noting that KPI 10, improving women’s access to formal credit through affirmative action, is beyond the authority of MWSWPA.

Table 8. Strategic Development Plan Policy on Economic Assistance for Gender and Development

SDP Policy Objective 3: To provide disadvantaged women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and to advisory and marketing assistance.		
SDP 2003–2005: Policy Objectives and KPIs	SDP-MTR 2004: Achievements of KPIs	SDP-MTR 2004: Recommendations on revised Policy Objectives and KPIs
KPI 10: Women's access to microcredit assistance improved by 50% by 2004.	Growth in microfinance services with high female participation noted.	Retained
KPI 11: Access to formal credit through affirmative action programs improved by 2004.	MWSWPA has no authority to implement this KRI. The Government believes that the best avenue to assist women with no collateral is through microfinance programs.	Deleted
KPI 12: Review of WOSAD microcredit finance scheme by 2005.	Preliminary review conducted by UNDP in 2004. MWSWPA now discussing options with NCSMED.	Retained
KPI 13: Policy framework for increased collaboration and partnership with NGOs by 2004.	Overlaps with KPI 9 and other KRI requiring partnerships with NGOs.	Deleted

KPI = key performance indicator; MTR = midterm review; MWSWPA = Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation; NCSMED = National Centre for Small and Micro-enterprise Development; NGO = nongovernment organization; SDP = Strategic Development Plan; UNDP = United Nations Development Programme; WOSAD = Women's Social and Economic Development Programme.

Source: Republic of the Fiji Islands 2004d.

Various microfinance projects have been undertaken in the Fiji Islands over the past 15 years. One of the longest in operation is the Women's Social and Economic Development Programme (WOSED) established by the MOW in 1993. WOSED is based on the well-known Grameen model, but unlike this model, it has no savings component; interest rates are below market rates, and the Government subsidizes its management costs by building it into the operations of the MOW. In 1999, the total WOSED portfolio amounted to around F\$124,000. No more recent financial data is available but growth is reportedly low. Proposals made in 1998 to convert WOSED to an NGO have not been realized. WOSED is currently in abeyance pending a review in 2005.

Despite an increase in access to credit, problems have endured, especially for rural women and men and the urban poor, in identifying business opportunities, obtaining adequate loans, and managing money. In 2002, the Government established NCSMED, which began operations in 2003 with a mandate to focus efforts on socially disadvantaged groups, including women and youth. NCSMED has five divisions, two of which provide services to the public, the training division and the microfinance division. The former provides training for existing and prospective small businesses. In 2004, it adopted the "competency-based economies through formation of enterprise" training system pioneered in the Philippines, which will supplement other training programs used

in the Fiji Islands such as the ILO Start Your Business program. Figures on the number of men and women trained so far were not available.

The microfinance division is managed by a woman. It was transferred to the NCSMED from the ministry of commerce. It operates as an apex organization for nine microfinance institutions (MFIs). These include three NGO programs targeting women, four district-based MFIs targeting Fijian men and women, a cooperative with male and female members, and a government indirect loan program directed to men and women. The total portfolio in December 2004 was a little over F\$2 million. Overall, about 85% of borrowers are women and loans have been made to about 3,000 women for microenterprises of various kinds.

In October 2004, the Australia and New Zealand Banking group (ANZ) established a rural banking service (Tabureguci 2005). The Government encouraged the project with tax incentives and the UNDP Pacific Regional Equitable and Sustainable Human Development Program (ESHDP) and Social Mobilization for Sustainable Livelihoods Program (SMSLP) provided training support. The program attracted 12,000 customers in the first 5 months of operation. Women make up over half of those using the service. Six mobile banks serve rural areas where no other banking services exist. For a low fee, customers may open an operating account and savings accounts for different purposes. The use of special accounts through the rural banking service (e.g. for savings, for living expenses, and for community obligations) is encouraged by UNDP-SMSLP which developed and provides financial literacy training courses through established rural organizations, including women's groups.

A. Poverty Indicators

Poverty is a severe and entrenched problem in the Fiji Islands, and women are most numerous among the poor, and more vulnerable to poverty than men. The UNDP Fiji Islands Poverty report for 1997 (cited in Chandra and Lewai 2005) found women's higher risk of poverty and destitution was associated with labor force discrimination and increasing divorce and separation rates with low or no maintenance payments.⁶ Accordingly, single mothers, deserted wives, divorcées and widows are more likely to be poor. As shown in previous chapters, women have only one third of all wage and salary positions and virtually no property rights—a further structural cause of female poverty.

The results of the still-unreleased 2003–2004 urban HIES and the 2004 rural HIES are still being analyzed. Officially endorsed national poverty statistics or baseline indicators such as income or purchasing parity poverty lines derived from this data have not been released.

No gender analysis has so far been applied to HIES data. Further analysis is needed to show how many poor households have female breadwinners and the occupations of these women. Provisional figures show that 32% are living below the poverty line and 30% are at risk of poverty. Ongoing analysis of the latest HIES data is expected to show far higher levels of both income and consumption poverty. Recent provisional figures showed that 39.5% of all urban households have expenditures less than the basic needs poverty level. These provisional figures indicate that in settlement and housing authority areas the number of households with expenditures below the poverty line is higher (47.8%) than the overall urban rate, as is the rate for households in squatter and urban villages (48.8%).

The Fiji Islands Poverty report (cited in Chandra and Lewai [2005]), based on 1990–1991 HIES data, reported lower poverty levels: 27.6% of the urban population and 24.3% of the rural population were recorded as being below the basic cost of living poverty line. The report considered that low wages in relation to high costs of living were a key factor in poverty and hardship. Accordingly, it concluded that the creation of more employment will not reduce poverty unless the wages paid are above the poverty line.

Box 2. Indicators of Poverty and Hardship

- Insufficient food
- Malnourished children
- No money
- Landlessness
- Inability to afford basic needs
- No water supply
- Low level of education
- Lack of easy access to services
- Poor roads and access to transport
- Irregular and expensive transport
- “Always in debt”
- Social and family problems
- Inability to contribute to family and church obligations
- Vulnerability to natural calamities (cyclones, floods, etc.)

Source: ADB 2003.

⁶ Stronger maintenance laws have recently come into force under the Family Law Act (2004) and should help to address this problem.

A qualitative, participatory analysis by ADB (2003) showed that it was widely accepted throughout the Fiji Islands that many people, rural as well as urban, faced hardship and poverty. Hardship was defined as poor living conditions, including inadequate access to water and sanitation, health services, roads and transport, markets, and the means of earning money. The reality of increasing dependence on cash and difficulties in meeting basic needs was emphasized as typical of hardship.

Those identified as most likely to experience hardship were single mothers and widows, elderly people neglected by their families, handicapped people, orphans, unemployed people, people who only had one full meal a day, and beggars. The causes of poverty were identified by the study as lack of land or other productive assets and lack of opportunity to earn money and/or access services. Many people thought hardship was leading to increased crime and prostitution.

B. Unemployment and Gender

The SDP notes that “securing decent jobs for the estimated 17,000 job seekers is one of the major challenges for government.” The proportion of women and men unemployed and seeking work rose between 1996 and 2002 and the total unemployment rate was only slightly higher among men than among women. The rate was highest among Fijian women in 1996 and increased slightly by 2002, whereas the rate rose sharply for Fijian men and both male and female Indo-Fijians (Table 9). As noted in the previous chapter, female unemployment in the Fiji Islands is likely to rise sharply in the near future as a result of loss of jobs in the garment industry.

Widely expressed concerns about gender and poverty have tended to focus on unemployment among young men rather than on women of any age group. This is because in rural areas and among the urban poor, young men tend to be underemployed and are not expected to be involved in home duties. Public perceptions connect unemployment in urban areas with the absence of traditional authority, and with increased crime rates and participation in youth gangs. Unemployed young Fijian men and boys (“street kids”) tend to be more visible in towns than the unemployed belonging to other ethnic groups, or unemployed women.

It is widely perceived, though not supported by recent statistical evidence, that crimes against property and against the person have risen considerably over the past decade, and that the perpetrators are most likely to be young Fijian men. Approximately half of all recorded crimes in 2001 were committed by men under the age of 24 years, and most of these crimes were against persons and property. (Chapter 5 contains further discussion of gender and violence). Police data for 2001 cited by Chandra and Lewai (2005) shows that 50% of all offenses were committed by Fijians (an approximately demographically representative proportion). In comparison, 37% of offenses were committed by Indo-Fijians, a rate slightly lower than their proportion in the overall population. Only 19% of all offenders were women. Further analysis is needed to show ethnic and gender differences in crime patterns.

The 2004 SDP-MTR notes that achieving government policies for youth are impeded by lack of funds and the fact that responsibility for youth issues is currently spread among a number of government agencies, including the Department of Social Welfare, the Ministry of Education, the Department of Youth and Sports, and the Police Force.

Table 9. Urban Unemployment by Sex, 1996 and 2002

Ethnic group	Fijians (%)		Indo-Fijians (%)		Total (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Census 1996	6.5	10.8	3.4	3.0	4.8	3.9
Unemployed HIES 2002	16.1	13.3	10.4	10.4	14.6	13.3

HIES = Household Income and Employment Survey.

Source: Chandra and Lewai and Lewai, 2005, based on Republic of the Fiji Islands (1996a and 2002b).

The majority of the urban unemployed (77%) have secondary education, indicating that lack of opportunity rather than the quality of human resources is the major factor in unemployment. Unemployed people's vulnerability to poverty is indicated by the fact that the majority lacked subsistence resources (Chandra and Lewai 2005). The lack of social security in the Fiji Islands is a serious problem and both the promotion of investment in labor-intensive industries and the development of effective social safety nets for the unemployed are much needed.

C. Rural Poverty

The Fiji Islands has no recent agreed-upon rural poverty indicators. It is hoped that these will eventually be derived from analysis of the HIES 2002–2003 (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2002c). In the absence of this data, a social impact survey of two sample subproject localities conducted for ADB's Fourth Rural Roads upgrading Project, Ba district and the Sigatoka Valley (Schoeffel, Moce, and Makasiale 2005), defined poverty as a total household cash income of less than US\$1.00 a day per capita for significant periods of time during the year. Hardship was defined as having an irregular household cash income of between \$50–\$80 per week. The survey found that the minimum weekly expenditure on food and household necessities to meet basic needs, in households that were able to grow most of their own staple foods, was F\$20 per household.

Most householders of both ethnic groups interviewed said that they grew about three quarters of the food consumed by the household. Although all households use wood fires for some cooking, very few Fijian women had gas stoves, compared to Indo-Fijian women; some had small kerosene stoves, but most relied on wood fires for daily cooking. This added firewood collection to their daily chores of cultivating crops, caring for their houses, cooking, and attending to their community obligations.

Differences in consumption of home grown food among Fijians and Indo-Fijians may be explained partly by the difference in diets. The Fijians grow their staple foods—cassava, taro and yams—as well as traditional vegetables such as *rourou* and *bele*, and catch some fish and shellfish from the river. Indo-Fijians, unless they grow rice, must buy their staple foods such as rice or flour

and cooking oil (for *roti*), but if they have enough land-grown vegetables they can provide a significant part of the household diet from their farms. Both ethnic groups need cash to buy tea, sugar, salt, meat, poultry, fish, fuel, soap, kerosene, and other basic items.

Fijians believe that because every villager has the basic necessities of life—food, shelter and family support—there is no poverty among the rural Fijian population. The term hardship is preferred. Hardship was defined as lack of sufficient cash income for improving standards of living and housing and household amenities, for paying for water and electricity, to afford to consume highly regarded, nutritious food such as meat and fish regularly, and to pay for travel to access urban services.

In the Sigatoka Valley subproject area, an estimated 50% of the Fijian villagers experience hardship (although there are variations among villages), based on their limited access to cash. These disadvantaged households live a hand-to-mouth existence, selling produce and working as casual labor on commercial farms to obtain money, as it is needed, for food, clothing, water and electricity bills, school, and church and ceremonial contributions (Schoeffel, Moce, and Makasiale 2005).

These disadvantaged Fijian households also depend on selling mainly root crops along with shellfish, taro leaves, and other minor vegetable crops, at municipal markets. Women did most of this income-generating work. In one village, women had to transport sacks of cassava several miles to the roadside when they went to market; a group would put their money together to rent a carrier to carry their crops to the road, and then to the market to sell.

Poor Indo-Fijian households are those who have no land, or not enough land to farm for a living (one hectare or less) and no regular wages; at times during the year they have household incomes of less than US\$1.00 per capita per day. By this definition the Indo-Fijian poor were estimated to comprise about 15% of the population in the two sample localities. They lived on plots of land under informal arrangements with landowners and in some cases were squatters on government land. Some occupied leased land, as in cases when a farm is shared between two or more brothers (of whom one is the lessee). In such cases, the shared farm income was insufficient to support two or more households, so farmers in this situation work in the district as farm laborers.

Indo-Fijians surveyed in the Sigatoka valley experience poverty differently from the Fijian villagers, having no land, or not enough land to farm for a living, and no regular wages. The nurse at the Loma health center reported that the only cases she had of low birth weight and severe anemia were among women and children from poor Indo-Fijian families.

In poor Indo-Fijian households, and those which are not well off by local standards, women grow vegetables around their houses for subsistence and sale at the market. In poor households, women also work as laborers for other farmers in the locality.

D. Income Support

Prior to 1988, income support for the poor was given only to the destitute, and recipients were mainly Indo-Fijians. The eligibility criteria and selection process have been somewhat broadened since that time and considerably more funds have been made available. At present, women are the majority of those receiving income support, and Fijians are the majority recipients overall. Table 10 provides a breakdown of categories of assistance and recipients by sex and ethnicity.

The number of the Social Welfare Department's (DSW) family assistance scheme (FAS) beneficiaries increased sharply 2001–2003. In 2001, 13,433 were beneficiaries. By the end of 2003, due to increased budgetary allocations, 20,333 were FAS recipients: 11,471 Fijians, 8,411 Indo-Fijians, and 451 others; 13,655 women and 6,678 men. It is currently estimated by the DSW that around 23,000

are beneficiaries, with increasing numbers of applicants seeking assistance from the FAS. As to eligibility criteria, the elderly are the largest group of recipients (28%), followed by those with chronic illness (21%), widows (20%), the physically handicapped (16%), and deserted spouses (11%).

FAS payments range from F\$30 to F\$110 per month, and although modest, those who are FAS beneficiaries have access to other government services such as remission of school fees and free medical treatment and medication at government hospitals (including spectacles and dentures). They may also be eligible for grants from the Poverty Alleviation Fund for housing or income-generating projects. FAS recipients may also obtain help from charitable organizations in the form of food rations and other services. No breakdown of beneficiaries by sex and ethnicity is currently available, but it is likely that women (unmarried mothers, deserted wives, divorcées and widows) account for more than half. The DSW also provides other small grants for the poor, for emergency assistance and house-building and improvement.

Table 10. Distribution of Poverty Alleviation Grants, 2002

Category of Recipients	Value	Number	Fijians	Indo-Fijians	Others
FAS	825,755	183	139	42	2
After Care Fund	25,000	5	5	0	0
Care and protection allowance	5,000	1	1	0	0
Fire Victims	62,000	31	16	14	1
Group Project for Youths	36,320	3	3	0	0
Ex-Prisoners	729,044	181	175	3	3
Total	1,683,049	404	339	59	6

FAS = family assistance scheme.

Source: MSWSPA 2004.

E. Poverty and Informal Settlements

A large majority of workers in the garment industry are women from poor and squatter households. Chandra and Lewai (2005) cite a study by Poonan in 2004 asserting that more than 80,000 people depend on garment industry wages, the majority of whom live in urban settlements, most below the poverty line. As noted in Chapter 3, as many as 8,000 mainly female jobs may be lost in the clothing and footwear industries in the next 5 years. This is likely to hit poor families very hard, especially those dependent on a woman breadwinner. Poor families living in the Central/Eastern division, particularly on the Suva-Nausori corridor, where most settlements in these divisions are located, will not benefit from the expected growth in tourism, which will be in the Western and Northern divisions.

The number of squatters rose by 75% in 1996–2003 according to a survey in June 2003 by the Squatter Settlement Unit in the Ministry of Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlement and Environment (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2003d). The survey found 182 squatter settlements in the Fiji Islands occupying all classes of land. In these settlements are 13,725 households with an estimated population of 82,350. Of all these households, almost half (46.0%) are Fijians, 53.5% are Indo-Fijians, and 0.5% are other ethnic groups.

Although Indo-Fijian squatter households are slightly more numerous overall, Fijian squatter households are more numerous in the Eastern and Central divisions, particularly in the Suva-Nausori corridor (Table 11). Indo-Fijian squatter households are more numerous in the Western and Northern divisions. The number of Indo-Fijian squatter households has grown due to the expiry and nonrenewal of agricultural leases, which has displaced many farming families. The increase in Fijian squatters is due to movement from rural to periurban areas for employment and the search for better access to education or to other services and amenities. Further, not all Fijians have access to productive customary land, as discussed in Chapter 1.

Table 11. Squatter Households and Settlements by Locality and Ethnicity

Division	Fijian Households	Indo-Fijian Households	Others	Total	Total Settlements
Northern	177	655	38	870	30
Western	837	3,316	15	4,168	80
Central/Eastern	5,295	3,377	15	8,687	72
Total	6,309	7,348	68	13,725	182

Source: Lingam 2004.

Most squatters are low-income families living in substandard conditions; most settlements are poorly serviced and squatter housing is of very poor quality. However not all squatters are poor. Many have jobs but cannot afford to buy freehold land or secure residential leases. Lack of secure tenure among the poor in the Fiji Islands provides a disincentive to improving the quality of dwellings and denies the poor assets for economic advancement (De Soto 2000). Women are particularly disadvantaged by the conditions and poor quality of accessible services in most informal settlements.

Chapter 5 Gender Dimensions of Human Development and the Millennium Development Goals

A. Gender and Education

1. Primary and Secondary Education

Education is a major spending priority for the Government of the Fiji Islands, according to the SDP-MTR. Almost all children in the Fiji Islands attend primary school and over half the women and men in population have attended secondary school (Republic of the Fiji Islands 1996a). Gender disparity in the literacy rates of the total population (Table 12) mainly reflects the situation of older men and women, at a time when fewer girls than boys were sent to school.

Table 12. Gender Indicators for Educational Attainment, Total Population of the Fiji Islands, 1996

Proportion of the total population:	All Fiji Islands		Urban		Rural	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
With no education	3.1	5.1	2.7	4.7	3.5	5.5
With primary education	30.2	29.5	24.0	24.0	35.5	34.5
With secondary education	58.5	59.0	60.0	61.3	57.1	57.0
With tertiary education	8.1	6.3	13.2	10.1	3.8	3.0

Source: Youth database derived from Republic of the Fiji Islands 1996a, SPC 1999.

Based on MDG indicators for literacy, primary school participation rates, and gender parity in primary school, the Fiji Islands' performance in education is high compared to the other larger PDMCs (Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu) and many other DMCs.

Enrollment ratios show no significant inequality between boys and girls aged 6–19. However, a higher number of the Fijian boys leave school after age 14 compared to Fijian girls, or girls and boys of other ethnic groups. More rural Fijian boys aged 14–17 were not attending school than compared to urban Fijian boys (Chandra and Lewai 2005).

Although, as shown in Tables 13 and 14, more girls than boys are enrolled in senior secondary school, slightly fewer girls than boys complete the penultimate year of high school, Form 7, according to senior officials in the Ministry of Education. They noted that women are also less likely than men to enroll in tertiary education programs leading to qualifications in high demand in the labor market, such as commerce, economics, science and technology. Moreover, women and men with these qualifications are most likely to emigrate.

Table 13. Millennium Development Goals: Education Indicators

MDG #2: Achieve Universal Primary Education.	Indicators	Girls	Boys	Total
Target 3: Ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a course of primary education.	Net enrollment ratio in primary school, 1990	92.4	91.7	92.0
	Net enrollment ratio in primary school, 2000	94.6	94.9	94.7
	Net enrollment ratio in secondary education, 1986	44.2	44.1	44.2
	Net enrollment ratio in secondary education, 2000	74.0	67.7	71.0
	Proportion of pupils starting grade who reach grade 5, 2000	89.5	87.4	88.4
	Primary completion ratio 2003	-	-	64.3
	Literacy rate for 15–24-year-olds, 1986	97.4	97.6	97.5
	Literacy rate for 15–24-year-olds, 2002	—	—	99.2

MDG = Millennium Development Goal; — = data not available.

Source: Republic of the Fiji Islands 2004d.

Ministry of Education data for 2001 on subjects taken in Form 6 show a slightly higher proportion of girls study mathematics, chemistry, biology, economics, accounting, computer science, and agricultural science. Significantly fewer girls than boys take physics, engineering technology, metalwork; and technical drawing. However pass rates in the Fiji Islands Form 7 examination in 2001 showed that a slightly lower proportion of girls than boys passed in all subjects except English, history, food technology, and computer studies (Chandra and Lewai 2005).

Table 14. Millennium Development Goals: Gender Empowerment Education Indicators

Goal 3 Promote gender equality and empower women.	Indicators	ratio
Target 4. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education no later than 2015.	Ratio of girls to boys in primary school	0.930
	Ratio of girls to boys in secondary school	1.000
	Ratio of girls to boys in tertiary (USP)	0.990
	Ratio of literate females to males ^a	1.003

USP = University of the South Pacific

Note: ^a 1995 data.

Source: Fiji Islands National Report on the Millennium Development Goals, 2004.

3. Tertiary Education

The 1996 census showed that significantly fewer women than men had tertiary qualifications, although the gender gap was somewhat narrower among students still enrolled in

tertiary institutions in 1996. Men have received only marginally higher numbers of scholarship awards than women over the past decade.

Fiji Islands students make up a large majority of those enrolled at the regional University of the South Pacific (USP), which offers external and internal (on-campus) programs. USP enrolment figures for 2001 show that of full-time equivalent enrolments, more women (55%) were enrolled as external students but fewer (48%) as internal students. Women students predominated in enrollments for degree and diploma courses in Education (62.8%) and also in undergraduate business studies (59.0%), but women constituted a minority of enrollments in postgraduate business studies (31%) and in undergraduate programs in science (36%) and technology (8.3%). Analysis of science majors showed that of those female students studying science, 5.8% majored in physics, 25.9% in computing sciences, and 32.1% in information systems (Chandra and Lewai 2005).

At the Fiji School of Medicine, men only slightly outnumbered women in 2000. More women were enrolled for the undergraduate degree in medicine, and in medical technology courses, but slightly more men were enrolled in dentistry and twice as many men were enrolled in postgraduate studies than women. In the School of Nursing, 92% of students entering in 2003 were women.

At the Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT), only 30% of students in 2002 were women, a slight increase since 1992. Most women at FIT study business, secretarial, hotel and catering courses. Most men study automotive, mechanical, electrical and civil engineering, and maritime courses. The Fiji College of Agriculture has achieved gender parity and no differences in fields of study chosen by men and women are to be seen (Chandra and Lewai 2005, Booth 1999).

B. Gender and Public Health

The Fiji Islands has good health care services by developing country standards and most people have easy access to health care providers. The four major hospitals are located in the main population centers. The Fiji Islands has good health indicators by developing country standards. Life expectancy is relatively high, and women have higher life expectancy than men (68.7: 64.5) (Republic of the Fiji Islands 1996a).

The 2004 SDP-MTR (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2004d) concluded that the health care system delivers adequate primary and preventive health care services, but curative health services need to be improved. About 10% of total government expenditure is allocated to health care spending, which has been fairly constant over the past 5 years. The quality of health care services is affected by the migration of health professionals.

1. Infant and Maternal Mortality

Maternal and infant mortality rates (Table 15) are relatively low by developing country standards. Almost all Fiji Islands women have access to antenatal care. In 2003, 99.6% of births

were attended by skilled health personnel. The Government has equipped most health care centers with delivery suites so that women in rural areas do not have to travel far to give birth. Most mothers have access to regular child health care services, which include monitoring of infant growth and development and immunization.

However, the social assessment survey conducted for ADB's Fourth Road Upgrading Project (Schoeffel, Moce, and Makasiale 2005), found that poor and disadvantaged women in the Sigatoka Valley survey were concerned about health care services, particularly in medical emergencies and when women went into labor. In that locale, one nurse, without midwifery qualifications, attends a population of 2,800 people. She has no telephone (except for her privately owned and paid for mobile phone) and no transport. She lives in a room beside the clinic. As well as conducting antenatal and child health clinics at the health centre, she takes the bus and walks the often very long distances to reach her list of patients needing regular follow-up, mainly diabetics, and a few mentally ill people.

The poor rely on her services if they have no money to travel to the hospital in Sigatoka. Pregnant women who have no relatives with whom they can stay in town said that they were afraid that they might go into labor without assistance, and said they had heard of women giving birth on the roadside trying to reach town.

2. Noncommunicable Diseases and Nutrition

Most gender differences in morbidity and mortality trends favor women. The Ministry of Health aims to increase its efforts to encourage men to become more health conscious.

Table 15. Millenium Development Goals: Infant and Child Mortality

MDG #4: Reduce child mortality.	Indicators	Rate/ Proportion
Target 5: Reduce the under-5 mortality rate by two thirds between 1990 and 2015.	Under-5 mortality rate per 1,000 live births, 1990	27.8
	Under-5 mortality rate per 1,000 live births, 2002	22.35
	Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births, 1990	16.8
	Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births, 2002	17.8
	Proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles, 1991	86.0
	Proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles, 2002	76.4
MDG #5 Improve maternal health.		
Target 6: Reduce the maternal mortality rate by three quarters between 1990 and 2015.	Maternal mortality per 100,000 live births, 1990	41.1
	Maternal mortality per 100,000 live births, 2002	35.3

Source: Republic of the Fiji Islands 2004d.

Infectious and parasitic diseases account for a very small proportion of mortality in the Fiji Islands, in line with worldwide historical health transition trends in modern and modernizing

countries. Morbidity classified as “infectious and parasitic diseases” accounts for a very small proportion of hospital admissions, but these are slightly higher for males than females. (Ministry of Health 2001, cited in Chandra and Lewai 2005).

Chronic diseases are the main cause of morbidity and mortality. Heart diseases are the leading cause of illness and death. Approximately twice as many men as women die from heart disease (Ministry of Health statistics, 1998–2002 cited in Chandra and Lewai 2005). Rates are slightly higher among Indo-Fijian than among Fijian men, and slightly lower among Indo-Fijian women than Fijian women.

However, some chronic disease rates are higher among women than men. Anemia, particularly iron-deficiency anemia, is an increasing health problem in the Fiji Islands associated with poor diet, various medical conditions, and hookworm. Indo-Fijian women are far more likely than Fijian women to suffer from anemia. In 2001, twice as many women as men were admitted to the main national hospital in Suva with anemia (Ministry of Health 1999, cited in Chandra and Lewai 2005). Cancers are also far higher among women than men (Ministry of Health, 2001, cited in Chandra and Lewai 2005).

Of all cancer cases recorded for women in 2000, 14.4% were breast cancer and 37% were cancers of the reproductive organs. Regular screening is usually sought only by women in higher socioeconomic groups who consult private medical practitioners, as most public health facilities do not provide these services; public health education encourages self-examination for breast cancer, however (Ministry of Health, 2001, cited in Chandra and Lewai 2005).

Twice as many women as men suffer from diabetes, a preventable condition. Diabetes and obesity combine alarmingly in the Fiji Islands (Table 16). The two often result in limb amputations, usually of legs, these being 10% of all surgical procedures performed in the country. Analysis of health care expenditure in the Western Pacific region by WHO (2001, cited in Chandra and Lewai 2005) shows that overall, 16% of hospital expenditure in the region was on people with diabetes. In the Fiji Islands, 20% of expenditure on overseas treatment was for diabetes-related complications.

Table 16. Percentage of Fiji Islands People with Diabetes and Obesity, by Sex and Urban/Rural Residence

Condition	Women %		Men %	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Diabetes	18.8	12.0	8.6	7.4
Obesity	40.8	—	17.8	—

— = data unavailable.

Source: World Health Organization 1998, cited by Chandra and Lewai (2005).

Diabetes is associated with obesity, although genetic predisposition appears to be a factor. The Fiji Islands National Nutrition Survey (1993) showed that obesity was highest overall among Fijian women in the age group 35–64, but much lower in men and women of all ethnic groups in these age groups. It should be noted that the diets of the two major ethnic groups of the Fiji Islands

differ considerably, due to cultural preferences. No recent ethnic breakdown on diabetes is available.

The prevalence of diabetes should be included as a gender-significant MDG indicator for the Fiji Islands, under Goal #6. Diabetes and obesity in the Fiji Islands are mainly diseases of poverty. The rise in chronic diseases in the Fiji Islands, especially diabetes, has been attributed to dietary change, and changes in patterns of activity, associated particularly with urbanization (Lako 2001, Lako and Nguyen 2001). Imported foods such as rice, flour, tinned fish, corned beef, mutton flaps, and turkey tails are generally cheaper than locally grown food and the latter are high in saturated fats and additives.

The issue of cheap imported food and public health has implications for the Fiji Islands' international trade negotiations. In 2002, the Government banned the import of mutton ribs on health grounds, but New Zealand, the major exporter of the product, threatened a complaint to the World Trade Organization (*The British Medical Journal* 2003).

Prices of traditional staples (cassava, yams, bananas, and taro) are influenced by the prices of imported goods: growers must earn enough from the sale of their local produce to buy the imported goods they need. Due to the small size of markets, domestic manufacturers cannot economically produce essential goods, including clothing, sugar, salt, oil and kerosene. Accordingly, as urbanization or urbanizing influences increase, the poor consume more imported rather than locally produced food.

3. Reproductive Health

A demographic analysis of the 1996 census (SPC 1999) notes that the total fertility rate of 3.3 (3.9 for Fijians and 2.6 for Indo-Fijians) is high, and drew attention to the fertility rate of 4.4 among rural Fijian women. It recommended renewed efforts to decrease fertility rates to improve the health status of rural Fijian women. Indo-Fijian fertility rates have fallen; but studies cited by Chandra and Lewai (2005) suggest that Fijians are more resistant than other ethnic groups to the use of modern contraceptive methods. One of the studies (by the Reproductive and Family Health Association of the Fiji Islands, cited in Chandra and Lewai 2005) suggests the Fijians hold pro-natalist attitudes, encouraged by concerns about ensuring Fijian demographic dominance.

Adolescent fertility rates declined in 1986–1996 to 53/1,000 and are low in comparison to most PDMCs. About 10%–15% of all live births recorded in hospitals are to teenage mothers; approximately 30 of these are to single mothers (Chandra and Lewai 2005).

Most women have access to family planning services through rural maternal and child health care services and urban clinics. Government policy encourages family planning and coverage increased from 31% in 1994 to 43% in 2000, but decreased to 35% in 2002 (Ministry of Health, cited in Chandra and Lewai 2005). The preferred method is female sterilization, chosen by

women who have achieved their desired family size (32% of clients). Injections (18%) and pills (16%) are other preferred methods. Contraceptive implants have yet to win acceptance (0.2%).

Abortion is illegal in the Fiji Islands, except to preserve the life of the mother, but abortion is thought to be widely practiced among both major ethnic groups. No reliable figures are available, but Chandra and Lewai 2005 cite a “snapshot” study indicating that over 2 weeks in 1996, 283 women received counseling on termination of pregnancy; of these clients, 25% had more than one child, 28% were single, and 38% were under 24 years of age.

Government policy aims to increase the participation and sharing of responsibility by men in the practice of family planning, but this is said to be difficult to implement. Male methods have low acceptance: condom use is 13%, vasectomies a mere 0.2%. It is not clear to what extent condoms are used routinely as a means of family planning. Data on the uses of condoms is unreliable and underreported, as condoms are widely available from retail outlets. The use of condoms by young people is believed to be increasing, due to campaigns against HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

4. Suicide and Mental Health

While recent mental health statistics disaggregated by sex and ethnicity are not available, of psychiatric hospital admissions for 1985–1990, less than half were women, and the majority of women admitted were Indo-Fijians. Suicide or attempted suicide is treated as a mental health problem. Suicide rates among Indo-Fijians are high, particularly among women, whereas they are low among Fijians of both sexes (Department of Women and Culture, 1995 cited in Chandra and Lewai 2005).

According to a comparative analysis by Booth (1999), the suicide rate among Indo-Fijian women is high on a world scale and among the highest among women in Pacific Island countries. While recent figures disaggregated by sex and ethnicity are not available, Booth cites the statistical evidence available to 1995 in the context of various interpretive studies to explain the underlying causes. These are mainly familial disputes and tensions concerning proposed marriages and problems related to pre-marital relationships. Pressures to succeed at school are also connected to tension surrounding marriage, as education is both likely to improve the chances of making a “good marriage,” arranged or not, and may also enable girls to avoid an arranged marriage.

Suicide is also linked to the psychological and physical abuse of women among Indo-Fijians, as demonstrated by Lateef’s study of wife abuse among Indo-Fijians (Lateef 1992). Her study shows that the abuse of married women is a widespread social issue, and women abused by their husbands and in-laws may resort to suicide. Violence against women is discussed further in section E below.

C. Gender and HIV/AIDS

Historically, higher numbers of males than females have been diagnosed with sexually transmitted infections. This was also the trend with confirmed HIV infections until 2004, when for the first time more women were confirmed HIV-positive than men (13 men to 16 women).

Currently 171 cases have been confirmed, 101 male and 70 female. In 147 cases, the mode of transmission was heterosexual. In 13 cases, the infected person is under 9 years of age. Ethnic Fijians make up 85% of known cases and 52% of those infected are in the 20–29 years age group (Ministry of Health 2004).

Factors in the spread of HIV include most of the well-known social preconditions, including cultural resistance to sex education and the discussion of sexual matters, short-term labor migration among single men, and social tolerance of male promiscuity, bisexuality, and illegal prostitution. The latter is perceived to have increased in recent years, though this cannot be quantified. Sex work is closely linked to poverty and unemployment, and the sex trade is visible in major towns. Streetwalking is said to be more commonly practiced by Indo-Fijian women and night club solicitation by Fijian women. Homosexual prostitution is also said to be common. A significant client base for sex workers are Asians employed on fishing vessels, potentially spreading infection from Asia to Pacific ports.

The prevalence of female and male prostitution is likely to contribute to the spread of HIV, as sex workers must necessarily be very secretive about their occupation and cannot easily be identified as an “at-risk” group for HIV/AIDS education. Social and cultural intolerance of those infected with HIV also deters those at risk from being tested, and stigmatizes those known to be infected. These are grounds for the Government to consider legalizing and registering sex workers.

The growing numbers of single men working overseas is an HIV infection risk. This includes soldiers posted overseas as peacekeepers and men undertaking contract work in conflict areas abroad as security guards and drivers.

The Fiji Islands national report on the MDGs (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2004d) rates achievement of MDG #6, combating HIV/AIDS and other major diseases, as “unlikely.” This is the only MDG with such a pessimistic prognosis. Surveillance of HIV/AIDS in the Fiji Islands is limited. Testing is limited to persons presenting themselves at STI clinics and voluntary testing among at-risk groups, including persons with Tuberculosis and women attending antenatal clinics. The HIV/AIDS specialist in the Ministry of Health believes the actual number of HIV-positive people in the Fiji Islands could be as many as 5,000, which would bring the Fiji Islands close to the 1% rate indicating an epidemic (Table 17).

Table 17. HIV/AIDS Indicators and Rates

Goal 6 Combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases	Indicator	Rate
Target 7: Have halted and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015.	HIV prevalence among 15–24 year old pregnant women	<0.1
	Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate, 2002	14.8
	Contraceptive prevalence rate	35.0
Target 8: Have halted and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria ^a and other diseases by 2015.	TB prevalence per 100,000, 2001	22.0
	Death rate per 100,000 associated with TB, 2001	0.73
	Proportion of TB cases detected and cured under DOTS 2001.	80.0

DOTS = directly observed treatment short course; HIV/AIDS = human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome; TB = tuberculosis.

Note: ^a There is no malaria in the Fiji Islands.

Source: Republic of the Fiji Islands 2004d.

Hope lies in the implementation of the national HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan for 2004–2006, which aims to involve a variety of partners in government and civil society to address the challenge. The plan seeks to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS by keeping the blood supply safe, targeting vulnerable groups, educating the public, raising public awareness, caring for people living with HIV and AIDS, carrying out voluntary testing and counseling, conducting clinical management and treatment, surveillance and research, and addressing issues of human rights and HIV/AIDS. ADB technical assistance (TA) to implement the WPA 1999–2008 (TA 3360) included a gender audit in the Ministry of Health with a program focus on gender and HIV/AIDS (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2003a). This assisted the Ministry in formulating the national HIV/AIDS plan. The plan seeks to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS by keeping the blood supply safe, targeting vulnerable groups, educating the public, raising public awareness, caring for people living with HIV and AIDS, carrying out voluntary testing and counseling, conducting clinical management and treatment, surveillance and research, and addressing issues of human rights and HIV/AIDS.

D. Gender and Decision Making

1. Government Policy and Commitments

MDG #3 emphasizes educational parity as a major indicator of women’s empowerment, but in the Fiji Islands the major factors disempowering women are their minimal participation in political and other forms of decision making, their lack of property rights, and the prevalence of family violence against women.

As an indicator of women’s empowerment MDG #3 includes the proportion of seats held by women in the national Parliament. The link between women’s empowerment and participation in decision making is recognized in the government-endorsed WPA (see Chapter 6), which defines one of its five overall goals as “working toward achieving a gender balance partnership at all levels of decision-making, [achieving] 50% representation, participation, training, appointments and

promotions at all levels of government to women on merit, and [encouraging] the same in the private sector.”

Women and decision making is addressed in the government policy objectives for GAD in the SDP 2003–2005. The KPIs and recommendations from the 2004 SDP-MTR are summarized in Table 18.

Table 18. Strategic Development Policy Initiatives on Women and Decision Making

Policy Objective 4: to ensure women’s accessibility and full participation in power structures and decision-making structures.		
SDP 2003–2005: Policy Objectives and KPIs	SDP-MTR 2004: Achievements of KPIs	SDP-MTR 2004: Recommendations on revised Policy Objectives and KPIs
KPI 14: 50% representation of women in government boards, committees, tribunals, councils, commissions, etc. by 2005.	22% representation achieved. MWSWPA works with PSC to upgrade data base on the KPIs.	Retained
KPI 15: Equal training opportunities at all levels in government.	Need for more commitment to gender equity in government scholarship programs.	Retained
Added KPI on MDG #3	Increased proportion of seats held by women in national Parliament.	

Source: Republic of the Fiji Islands 2004d.

2. Women in Parliament

In 1999–2000, the Fiji Islands had a record number of 15 women in Parliament out of a total of 109 seats in the lower and upper houses. In the 1999 election, 27 women ran for office. Eight won seats in the 71-member Parliament and of these, three became Ministers: of Women and Culture; Tourism, and Fijian Affairs. The latter was also Deputy Prime Minister. Two women were assistant ministers, for the Prime Minister's Office and for Agriculture. Of 38 senators (appointed), seven women were named and one was Vice President of the Senate (Huffer 2004).

A Fiji Islands Women and Politics (WIP) project was active from 1994 to 1999. According to a review by Siwatibau et al. (2004) for UNIFEM, the project was initiated through the National Council of Women of Fiji (NCWF) but administered under a board set up outside the NCWF to direct the project. It established a network of WIP committees in centers outside Suva and a Women’s Caucus to help women candidates and women politicians support each other. During its life the Fiji Islands WIP ran workshops, media campaigns, training activities, public meetings, and seminars, and lobbied political parties with the aim of getting more women into elected positions in both local and national governments. The WIP project played an important role in encouraging women to stand for election and in getting more of them into political positions in both local municipal governments and national parliament.

In 2004, women's participation declined. Five women parliamentarians were elected and four women senators appointed. Two of 20 ministers are women. Their portfolios are Education and Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation. Of seven assistant ministers, three are women. The UNIFEM review notes that this downturn in women's participation is likely to have been influenced by the political disturbances of 2000–2002, which brought in an almost exclusively male Government. However, many women interviewed during the UNIFEM review (Siwatibau et al. 2005) also identified voter attitudes as an important factor. Women still vote as their menfolk advise them to, and men still favor male candidates. The traditional value system in which women are considered of lower status than men is deeply entrenched and needs to be addressed seriously by any activity that seeks to promote increased sharing of decision making between men and women.

The review concluded that:

The experience of the the Fiji Islands WIP provided valuable lessons learned to guide future attempts to promote shared decision making between men and women. However, such a process should not only aim to get the numbers balanced. It must also work to get better quality women candidates to stand and must equip them with understanding and commitment to critical issues of development that will result in the transformation of Fiji's society. Women's leadership will only be worth supporting if it aims to become a truly transformational leadership (Siwatibau et al. 2005).

The review also found that in 2004, the NCWF had no policy on the important issue of promoting women's greater participation in decision making. It recommended that the NCWF and other NGOs involved should develop long-term policies and strategies and build their capacity to sustain their programs for the long run. UNIFEM's current assistance for a new WIP program and NCWF Plan of Action for WIP is outlined in Chapter 6 below.

As part of its Women and Decision making program, UNIFEM Pacific also commissioned a study on developing a more facilitating environment for women's political participation in the Fiji Islands (Siwatibau et al. 2005). The conclusions of the study suggest that the Fiji Islands' electoral system is too complicated for many voters to understand. Despite the minimal role of women in Fiji Islands politics at all levels, the study found that most people interviewed saw the benefit to the country of increased political participation of women. It was generally agreed that women bring different values and priorities to decision making that complements and improves the quality of decisions made. The study suggested that a review of the electoral system is needed, and that changing to a system of proportional representation should be considered. It asserted that the change would accelerate the greater political participation, not only of women, but also of other minority groups in the Fiji Islands. Noting the very high proportion of invalid votes cast due to misunderstanding of the ballot paper, the study recommended that the electoral system needs to be simple and clear for the majority of the Fiji Islands' citizens to understand and to participate meaningfully in it (Siwatibau et al. 2005).

3. Representation of Women in Local Government and on Development Planning and Advisory Bodies

Not only is representation of women in national parliament minimal, but women are also massively underrepresented in local government and development planning bodies.

A tally of the Public Service Commission (PSC) directory, 2003 (Table 19) indicates that women hold only 8% of seats on local government, planning, and development bodies. Of these, only city and town councilors elect their members. The Great Council of Chiefs is a Fijian hereditary institution established in the early 20th century. Provincial councils also include members holding hereditary positions, as well as nominees of the Fijian communities. In some areas of the Fiji Islands, even if women are chiefs, they are not nominated or otherwise permitted to participate in traditional decision-making councils. Other planning and development authorities are made up of nominated persons and government representatives who in some cases are women's interest officers (WIOs) but since sex-disaggregated figures are not available for official members, they are not included in the tallies shown in Tables 19 and 20.

Table 19. Membership in Fiji Islands Local Government, Planning and Development Bodies by Sex, 2003

Bodies (number)	Women	Men
Bose Levu Vakaturaga (Great Council of Chiefs)	5	48
Provincial councils (17)	23	524
City and town councils (12)	11	167
District advisory councils (17)	41	305
Rural local authorities (16) ^a	21	122
District development committees (16)	11	123
National Advisory Council and Community Advisory Councils (11)	5	37
Total women and men	117	1,326
Gender distribution (%)	8.0	92.0

Note: ^a Figures for rural local authorities and district development committees do not include official members.

Source: Tally based on Public Service Commission 2003.

4. Representation of Women on Official Commissions, Tribunals, Boards, Councils and Committees

In 2003, women comprised 19% of the total appointments to other government boards, committees, tribunals, councils, commissions, etc. (Table 20). Women were most equitably represented on health and welfare boards, and only achieved the 50% target on one type of body, the boards of homes for the aged.

The Government's policy on GAD (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2002c, 2004d) is to allocate 50% of seats on such bodies by 2005. The Department of Women (DOW) has been given the responsibility to compile a database of eligible women whose names could be put forward to

comply with government policy. Although well-intentioned, giving responsibility to DOW is not in keeping with the Government's commitment to mainstreaming; the responsibility for implementing the policy should be returned to the various agencies concerned.

Table 20. Representation by Sex on Official Commissions, Tribunals, Boards, Councils and Committees

Bodies (number)	Women	Men
Commissions (15)	20	82
Tribunals (9)	3	40
Boards and committees (106) ^a	120	640
Wages councils (10)	10	97
School boards (14)	34	102
Hospital and Health Centre boards (46) ^b	125	414
Prison committees (10)	11	47
Boards of old people's homes (3)	16	15
Indo-Fijian cultural councils (5)	15	36
Sugar mill area committees (4)	4	32
Drainage boards (3)	0	20
Total members	358	1,525
Gender distribution (%)	19.0	81.0

Notes: ^a Figures exclude members representing government and other agencies; ^b Includes the board of the Fiji Islands School of Medicine.

Source: Tally based on Public Service Commission 2003.

5. Representation of Women in Senior Official Positions in the Civil Service and as Officers of the Law

Chapter 3 showed that women are underrepresented in executive, managerial, and other decision-making roles in formal sector civil service employment, providing examples from the ministries of Education, Health and Agriculture. As Table 21 shows, women made up only 16.02% of all senior government officials in 2003. A very slight increase has occurred in the number of women appointed to executive positions since the information used to compile Table 21 was released.

Further, women are significantly under-represented among officers of the law, with a total representation of 7.85 % (Table 22). Commissioners for Oaths are appointed by the Chief Justice and are usually, though not always solicitors. Justices of the Peace are appointed from among persons of good standing in the community by the Attorney General, but are not required to have legal qualifications. They are empowered to administer oath declarations or affidavits, and taking statutory declarations and affirmations, to witness signatures; and to attest to and certify documents.

Table 21. Senior Government Officials by Agency and Sex, 2003

Agency	Women	Men
Office of the President	0	3
Office of the Prime Minister	6	16
Attorney General and Ministry of Justice	0	11
Ministry of Finance and National Planning	4	21
Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Culture and Heritage	0	5
Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration	0	6
Ministry of Labour Industrial Relations and Productivity	0	5
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade	2	21
Ministry of Regional Development	1	8
Ministry of Information and Media Relations	2	3
Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation	3	1
Ministry of Multi-ethnic Affairs	0	3
Ministry of Education	4	9
Ministry of Health	21	50
Ministry of Local Government, Housing, Squatter settlement	1	7
Ministry of Youth, Employment and Sport	0	3
Ministry of Agriculture, Sugar and Land Resettlement	2	18
Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources	0	2
Ministry of Commerce, Business Development and Investment	0	6
Ministry of Tourism	0	3
Ministry of Transport, Civil Aviation and Meteorological Services	0	10
Ministry of Works and Energy	1	15
Ministry of Public Enterprise and Public Sector Reform	1	3
Office of the Auditor General	0	5
Office of Elections	0	2
Judiciary	1	12
Office of Public Prosecutions	0	3
Office of the Ombudsman	0	2
Fiji Islands representatives overseas	1	9
Total Senior Officials	50	262
Gender distribution (%)	16.02	83.98

Source: Tally based on Public Service Commission 2003.

Table 22. Gender Representation among Officers of the Law

Officers of the law	Women	Men
Commissioners of Oaths	38	244
Justices of The Peace	23	474
Total	61	718
Gender distribution (%)	7.85	92.15

Source: Tally based on Public Service Commission 2003.

6. The NGO Plan of Action on Women in Shared Decision Making

UNIFEM Pacific is supporting the NCWF in conducting a program of advocacy and public education and awareness to increase women’s participation in decision making. The NCWF held a consultation with stakeholders in November 2004, which produced a draft National NGO Plan of Action on Women in Shared Decision Making (WISDM), which was adopted in December 2004 and is summarized in Table 23. Each objective and strategy is accompanied by specified actions to be undertaken, the agencies and organizations that will be responsible, the time frame for implementation, and the indicators for achievement.

Table 23. Summary of the Nongovernment Organization Plan of Action on Women in Shared Decision Making

Goal: 50% women’s representation in at all levels of decision-making by 2015.	
Objective 1: Increase the number of women/young women elected or appointed to national and local levels of decision-making.	Strategy 1.1: Enactment of appropriate legislation securing 50% of women representation in parliament and on public and statutory boards and committees.
	Strategy 1.2: Development of policies for gender equity but the Fijian Administration and the Fijian Affairs Board.
	Strategy 1.3: The PSC should widely publicize vacancies on boards and committees and other statutory bodies.
	Strategy 1.4: Increase women’s participation in national and municipal elections.
	Strategy 1.5: Raise funds to assist women candidates contesting national and municipal elections.
Objective 2: Increase the number of women, including young women at leadership levels in all political parties.	Strategy: Achieve firm commitments by political parties to advance women’s rights and gender issues.
Objective 3: Increase awareness of women leaders on gender equity, human rights and the law.	Strategy: Initiate concerted awareness-raising activities on gender equity, human rights, and the law.
Objective 4: Improve the electoral system so that it is more conducive to increasing the number of valid votes and women voters.	Strategy: Review the current electoral system, and conduct a gender analysis of the electoral system.
Objective 5: Create an enabling environment for government sectors to achieve gender equity.	Strategy: Strengthen networks of CEOs within government to advance gender equity and women’s rights.

Goal: 50% women’s representation in at all levels of decision-making by 2015.	
Objective 6: Secure, consolidate, and validate the MWSWPA.	Strategy 6.1: Define the functions and provide the appropriate legal authority for MWSWPA to address and promote gender mainstreaming and gender equity within its programs.
	Strategy 6.2: Lobby for increased resources to set up a resource centre and database in the MWSWPA.
Objective 7: To set up a CSO taskforce to monitor the effective implementation of the NGO plan on WISDM.	Strategy: Establish task force and review National NGO WISDM Plan every three years.

CEO = chief executive officer; MWSWPA = Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation; NGO = nongovernment organization; PSC = Public Service commission; WISDM = Women in Shared Decision Making.

Source: NGO Plan of Action on WISDM (2004) cited in Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre (n.d.).

E. Gender and Violence

The minimal voice of women in decision making at all levels, combined with women’s generally lower earning capacity and lack of assets and economic security, contributes significantly to the physical abuse of women. Women who have been beaten or otherwise abused lack the formal power in society and the economic means to escape from violent situations; thus, a major factor in the disempowerment of women is family violence.

The elimination of violence against women is included in the government policy objectives for GAD in the SDP 2003–2005. The KPIs and recommendations from the 2004 SDP-MTR are summarized in Table 24.

1. Domestic Violence

The Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre (FWCC), a nongovernment counseling and advocacy center for women victims of violence, conducted a comprehensive study, based on survey data, police records, and crime statistics, on the incidence and prevalence of domestic violence in the Fiji Islands. The report (Fiji Women’s Crisis Center n.d.) made recommendations for action by the Government and civil society.⁷ The study found that 80.2% of those surveyed nationally reported having seen someone beaten in the home. It shows that Fiji Islands women have little recourse against abuse, partly because most lack property or economic bargaining power, but also because of societal attitudes that men have the right to violently punish their wives or partners, and parents their children.

⁷ The study was funded by MOW, UNIFEM, and the Asia Foundation.

Table 24. Strategic Development Plan Objectives to Eliminate Violence Against Women

Policy Objective 5: To educate the community and law enforcement agencies to prevent and eliminate violence against women.		
SDP 2003–2005: Policy Objectives and KPIs	SDP- 2003-2005: Achievements of KPIs	SDP-MTR 2004: Recommendations on revised Policy Objectives and KPIs
KPI 16: Appropriate sentencing policies, including counseling, for [perpetrators of] violent crimes against women and children by 2003.	The WPA task force addressing this issue has made progress. The Law Reform Commission is currently reviewing legislation. The FWCC (NGO) has been active in awareness and counseling, including some joint efforts with MWSWPA on male advocacy.	KPI retained and amended to “Maintain appropriate sentencing penalties, including counseling, for violent crimes against women and children.”
KPI 17: Enactment of Family Law Act by 2004.	Family Law Act passed in 2003 after extensive interagency cooperation.	KPI retained and amended to “Aware-ness training on the Family Law Act.”
KPI 18: Concerted efforts and public awareness programs against domestic violence and sexual harassment conducted by 2005.	Overlaps with KPI 16. Considerable action has been taken.	KPI retained and amended to “Public awareness programs against domestic violence and sexual harassment are conducted annually.”

Source: Republic of the Fiji Islands 2004d.

Cultural acceptance of the use of violence by husbands against wives and by parents against children is widely accepted: 16.2% of women and 33% of men surveyed by FWCC said that it is permissible for a man to hit a woman with his hands (20% of all those surveyed). A much smaller proportion (10% of men, 4% of women) condoned the use of an object, but FWCC councilors think the number of women who condone violence or believe men have the right to physically punish their wives is higher than reported in the survey. Of those surveyed, a smaller proportion (6.3% of women, 13.9% of men) believe that is acceptable for a woman to hit a man with her hands, or with an object (6% of women, 7% of men). Clearly, considerable effort is needed by the churches and religious groups, government, the media, and civil society to change public attitudes toward violence.

Police records represent only the tip of the iceberg: few women report assault because of acceptance of violence, or because of family pressure and fear of reprisals if a complaint is made. According to police records for 1993–1997, assaults on women by family members resulted in 12 deaths, one attempted murder, and 2,163 violent assaults. Of these, 186 were classified as “acting with intent to cause grievous bodily harm,” 1,548 were “assaults occasioning actual bodily harm,” and 429 were “common assaults” (Police Crime Statistic Report 1998, cited in Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre [n.d.]). Of perpetrators, police records show that 95% were male and 5% female. In 1992–1997, 1,704 clients of FWCC reported violent assaults.

As a result of advocacy by civil society organizations in 1995, the police force adopted a “no drop policy” in cases of domestic violence. The policy directs police to ensure that, once a formal complaint is laid by a victim of domestic violence, the case goes through the legal process. The aim is to protect complainants from subsequent coercion by family members to drop charges.

2. Sexual assault

Sexual offenses are classified as offenses against public morality, despite the personal nature of sexual attacks. The great majority of victims are women and girls. The FWCC report cited above points out that this classification tends to diminish the seriousness of the crime and the damage to the victim. Moreover, fear of sexual assault disempowers women by restricting their freedom of movement.

Table 25. Sample Cases of Sexual Assault by Classification of Offense, 1993–1997

Offence	Number	%
Defilement	64	17.5
Rape	80	21.9
Sodomy	8	2.2
Attempted Rape	49	13.4
Indecent Assault	114	31.2
Indecently Annoying	28	7.7
Indecent Exposure	22	6.0
Total	365	100

Source: Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre n.d.

In 1993–1997, FWCC saw 205 sexual assault victims (including 80 cases involving children), and recorded 28 reported gang rapes, 1984–2000. Their research into police records showed 365 cases of sexual assault (Table 25). Rape and other types of sexual assault are also greatly underreported crimes. The FWCC survey suggested far higher prevalence: 13% of married women interviewed had been forced to engage in sexual activity by men other than their husbands, and 30.4% reported attacks of a sexual nature by men other than their husbands. Forty-seven percent of all respondents knew of someone who had been raped. Women and girls fear to report rape and other sexual assaults due to their fear, or that of their family, that they will lose their personal reputation, and in the case of sexual assaults on children, there is a fear of loss of family reputation. Public attitudes are also disempowering, since it is widely believed that sexual attacks are in some way provoked by the victim.

A sexual offenses unit was established in Suva in May 1995 to handle cases from Southern and Northern Divisions and to make referrals to the Department of Social Welfare or FWCC. A separate center is to be established in Northern division following an almost threefold increase in sexual offenses reported for 2000 by FWCC, based on police crime statistics.

3. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment also subjects women to severe disadvantage in the workforce and the offense has been shown to be common in the Fiji Islands. Current industrial legislation does not address this offense. A survey of sexual harassment (based on ILO definitions) was commissioned by the Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM), an NGO, with funding from ADB within its TA 3360 to implement the Women's Plan of Action in the Fiji Islands (Tebbut Research Pty. Ltd. 2002).

The survey found that 33% of women workers interviewed reported they had been sexually harassed in the workplace, and of these 20% reported the harassment had occurred within the past 12 months, and 14% reported that the harassment was ongoing. Sexual harassment was identified in all types of workplaces and women of all socioeconomic status groups were affected. Twenty percent of victims reported that harassment had occurred "countless times" and a further 39% reported frequent harassment. The most common type of harassment overall was of a verbal nature. Offenders were mainly young men of all ethnic groups.

Of the sample, 22% made formal complaints about sexual harassment in the workplace, because they were angry and offended and wanted to stop the harassment. Action against offenders was rarely taken and in the form of a warning to the offender. The 77% of women interviewed who did not make a formal complaint, said that although objecting to the harassment, they feared they would look foolish complaining, because the harassment was presented by the offenders as "a joke".

The survey assisted the FWRM program to promote gender equity in the proposed industrial relations bill, and contributed to the design of FWRM training programs on sexual harassment complaints, and other grievance handling procedures, as well as policy guidelines on sexual harassment.

Chapter 6 Government, Donor, and Nongovernment Organization Support for Gender and Development and the Women's Plan of Action

A. The Ministry of Women

1. Operational Framework

A Department of Women grew out of the long-established Women's Interest Office established in colonial times as an arm of Department of Native [Fijian] Affairs and later under the Regional Development Ministry. It was established with the aim of encouraging Fijian social development and family welfare, and its women's interest officers (WIOs) worked mainly at divisional and district levels to encourage the development of rural women's skills in cooking, sewing, child care, health, hygiene, nutrition, and handicrafts. Its major NGO partner was the *Sogosogo Vaka Marama* (SVM), a nongovernment national Fijian women's organization, with branches in most Fijian villages, led by women from the Fiji Islands' chiefly ranks.

The first ministerial representation of women commenced in 1987 and the Department of Women became known as the Ministry of Women (MOW). Since then, the MOW portfolio has moved administratively five times. The Government initially created a Ministry for Women and Social Welfare in 1987. In 1994, it was relocated to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. In 1997 it was again relocated in the Ministry of Information and again in 1998, in a new Ministry for Women and Culture. In 1999, the Ministry of Women was returned to coadministration with the Department of Social Welfare under a Ministry for Women, Culture and Social Welfare. Recently the Culture portfolio was moved to another ministry and a poverty alleviation unit added to the Minister's portfolio. It is now known as the Ministry for Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation (MWSWPA). It is headed by a Minister, Assistant Minister and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), all of whom are women.

The MOW has a Director, two Principal Administration Officers and 46 established and nine unestablished staff, who are mainly Fijian, spread across three sections; field services (24 WIOs), research, communication, and training (two professional staff), and corporate services, which is shared with the other departments in the Ministry. It is located in separate offices from the headquarters of the MWSWPA, adjacent to the Ministry's Poverty Alleviation Unit.

The budget for the MOW was approximately F\$1.5 million in 2004–2005. Of this budget F\$150,000 is allocated for implementing the Women's Plan of Action. One hundred thousand Fijian dollars is allocated as grants to women's organizations though the NCWF and F\$50,000 goes to the SVM as part of the Government's affirmative action plan for Fijians. In 2004, the Government allocated an additional F\$600,000 to cover hosting expenses for the Commonwealth 7th Women's/Gender Affairs Ministers' Meeting and for the 9th Pacific Regional Women's Triennial Conference organized by the South Pacific Committee Women's Bureau.

2. Mandate of the Ministry of Women and the MWSWPA Corporate Plan

The MWSWPA Corporate Plan of 2004 states that it is charged with key responsibilities for addressing (i) rising poverty levels, (ii) improving rural livelihoods and living standards, (iii) including disadvantaged groups into the development process, (iv) improving service delivery, and (v) facilitating civil service reforms in the Ministry (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2004b).

The Plan identifies four areas of activity for the MOW.

a. Field Programs and projects

The MOW implements programs and projects that improve women's lives, and those of their families and communities. Field officers attend and participate in development forums (provincial, district and division; advisory and community development). They provide training and awareness for the practical and strategic needs of women at community level in the following areas:

- Government policies for the development of women,
- Legal literacy,
- Nutrition and reproductive health,
- Home management,
- Environmental management,
- Microenterprise development,
- Leadership development,
- Handicraft development,
- Agricultural production,
- Business and management skills, and
- Early childhood intervention and virtues and awareness, etc.

b. Gender Training

The MOW provides gender training within ministries and departments, with the aim of improving the understanding and gender sensitivity of planners and decision makers to incorporate gender perspectives in their programs and focus on benefits for women.

c. Research, Communications, Training and Information Services

The MOW researches relevant information on women and gender issues, monitoring media publicity on women and gender concerns and the Ministry of Women, and provides appropriate responses. It also prepares papers and press releases, and undertakes associated tasks.

d. Grants to women's organizations

The MOW provides administration and project grants to women's groups complementing government actions in the implementation of the WPA. The department appraises project proposals, monitoring, and reporting on projects funded.

3. Institutional Issues and Proposed Reviews

As the Corporate Plan suggests, the MOW has varying responsibilities and programs. First, it is responsible, through the MWSWPA, for GAD, and implementation of all the Government's international, regional, and national commitments on the status of women and GAD. This includes leading and coordinating the implementation of the WPA, and, in particular, implementing the mainstreaming goal in the SDP.

At present, the MOW needs more staff, expertise, and resources to adequately fulfill this mandate, which requires planning and policy development skills. Although the MOW has made determined and commendable efforts to put the WPA implementation strategy into practice through the task forces, it has been constrained in its efforts by a lack of necessary high-level interdepartmental linkages at the national level to make the WPA task forces work effectively. Further, since the task forces are not institutionally integrated into national planning, policy making, and budgetary processes, MOW can do little to make the implementation strategy work more effectively.

Second, the MOW has the responsibility for WID, to work with women in communities, a program in strong demand from Fijian women who comprise the majority of MOW clients. Most of MOW resources are directed to the fulfillment of this responsibility, and most of the MOW staff are trained in practical fields of interest to rural Fijian women such as home economics, community development, and agriculture. The Ministry aims to achieve gender mainstreaming at the community level, encouraging the WIOs to work closely with other government departments at the provincial and district levels in collaborative programs for fisheries, piggeries, and beekeeping and other rural enterprises (Huffer 2004). MOW WIOs seem to be well qualified for this role; but they may need to give greater emphasis in their programs to the needs of poor and disadvantaged women. This suggests that MOW should do some retraining of its field officers, and possibly recruit new and appropriately qualified staff.

The Ministry plans to review the WPA, and when the review is completed, it may request technical assistance for a review of the MOW, to consider whether it should redefine its core business and objectives for serving women. The key tasks will be, first, to examine the institutional arrangements and the financial and human resources needed to achieve implementation of government policies on GAD and the status of women. Second, the review should address the question of how MOW might most effectively provide services to poor women in their communities.

B. Institutional Strengthening Assistance for the Ministry of Women

Shortly after the WPA was finalized in late 1998, the Ministry for Women and Culture employed a volunteer from Australian Volunteers International, through the Pacific Technical Assistance Facility, funded by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). The volunteer had expertise in organization and management and was appointed to assist the Ministry in the implementation of its own institutional strengthening initiatives. Her role was to lead a review of organizational arrangements and staffing in order to efficiently merge the management of the department of women and the department of culture under the new ministry. Efforts were made to strengthen the Ministry's capacity to contribute to the policy process, especially in gender policy.

The program came to a premature conclusion due to the events of 2000, when the volunteer left the Fiji Islands. Some of the strategic plans for the future of the Ministry changed due to the relocation of MOW into the Ministry of Social Welfare.

C. Asian Development Bank Technical Assistance to Implement the Women's Plan of Action

1. Gender Mainstreaming Objectives

In December 1999, ADB approved technical assistance (TA) to implement the WPA in the Fiji Islands following its endorsement by the Government in 1998. The TA was designed to assist the Government in implementing two of the five objectives of the WPA: gender mainstreaming and the review of legislation (discussed in the following section). The design of the TA recognized the need for broad-based commitment and support from various stakeholders, including NGOs, employer groups, trade unions, parliamentarians, and civil society. The TA aimed to assist the MOW to realign and strengthen its capacity to advise and coordinate the implementation of the WPA. The overall objective for mainstreaming was "to build the capacity for gender-responsive planning, programming, and mainstreaming in the sector ministries that have the primary responsibility for implementing the WPA, so that the WPA would be translated into concrete programs."

The TA aimed to assist the Ministry and the Task Force on Mainstreaming Gender to assess and analyze the GAD responsiveness of national and sector policies and programs in health and agriculture. The activities planned included

- gender audits of two selected ministries;
- formulating appropriate mechanisms, systems, and strategies for institutionalizing gender-responsive planning, programming, and activities;
- preparing action plans for two ministries to implement gender-responsive planning and program implementation; and
- GAD capacity building of sector planning units and gender focal points in the two ministries to utilize the GAD framework.

The TA was also negatively affected by the destabilizing political events of 2000. First, ministers and some of the senior officials who had endorsed and “owned” the assistance in 1999 were no longer in office when the project commenced in 2002. The project was led by a team of consultants from Canada and was coordinated by the former Director of the Ministry of Women and Culture, but due to lack of suitable and available staff; a local consultant was employed as the assistant coordinator with responsibility for day-to-day operations, temporarily based in the MOW. The current CEO was a consultant to the project. The long-serving Principal Administration Officer for field services (at present acting Director of MOW) was closely involved. However, there was no consistent follow-up with line agencies on the actions recommended under the audits, possibly due to lack of capacity in the MOW.

Gender Audits were carried out within the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture; other relevant government departments, particularly the Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Finance, were involved. The aim was to demonstrate the process of gender analysis, planning, and mainstreaming in a practical way. The project established working groups in each ministry that were trained in gender analysis and auditing, and who identified a single policy issue for a gender audit. Food security was chosen as a focus in Agriculture and HIV/AIDS as a focus in Health.

The ADB project published an excellent manual *A Practical Guide for Gender Mainstreaming* (ADB 2002). The manual is user-friendly and comprehensive, but appears to have been little used, and senior planning officials appeared to have no knowledge of its existence. The project also produced two informative technical publications on the gender audits in Agriculture and Health (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2003a, 2003b), but these appear to be little read or used by the respective ministries.

The lack of project sustainability so far is related to the operational focus and human resources in the MOW, which is program and not policy oriented. The project encountered similar obstacles to those affecting the implementation of government policy on gender, which, as noted in the discussion of the policy, are institutional in nature.

2. Legislative reviews

The second overall objective of the ADB TA was to encourage the associated legislative and policy changes needed to implement the WPA. This component focused on the review of laws and policies affecting women, with associated advocacy activities. The MOW contracted the FWRM to conduct various promotional activities on behalf of the legislative reform, which included the Family Law Act, the draft Industrial Relations Bill, and antisexual harassment policies.

a. The Family Law Act

The ADB TA provided assistance to the FWRM for lobbying and education workshops in support of public awareness of the Family Law Act.

Several the Fiji Islands CSOs have worked since the 1980s for the reform of discriminatory legislation and the formulation of laws that address gender concerns. The 1973 Matrimonial Causes Act and the Maintenance Law (based on British legislation of 1953) permitted several forms of discrimination against women. Although these actions predate the WPA, the official endorsement of the WPA helped this agenda to progress. The processes leading to family law reform took 11 years but the law is now effective and provides a good model for other PDMCs.

The process began in 1992, when the FWRM was assisted by the United Nations Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the United Kingdom's Overseas Development Administration (ODA) [now Department for International Development (DFID)] to conduct a public education campaign on the family law via the mass media, public consultations, and lobbying of decision makers. After government endorsement of the WPA, the Cabinet, through the Attorney General, instructed the Fiji Law Reform Commission (FLRC) to conduct a major review of existing legislation. FLRC also conducted extensive national and expert consultations leading to the drafting of the new legislation.⁸

The Family Law Act was passed in October 2003 and became effective on January 1, 2005. It establishes a Family Court and new laws under the Act covering marriage, divorce, maintenance, custody, and affiliation. The laws include provisions for no-fault divorce, recognition of the role of both parents in the family, and the protection of the interests of children. The new legislation is the result of civil society determination to advance women's rights, and strong cooperation between the Government and nongovernment agencies (Jalal 1998, 2004).

b. Labor laws and industrial relations legislation

The ADB TA for the WPA provided support to the existing program of FWRM to identify and review laws that discriminate against women, and to advocate legislative changes, especially in the area of women's employment and economic rights. FWRM was an active member of the WPA task force on women and the law. The TA aimed to assist FWRM action on the recommendation of studies by ILO/UNDP (see Chapter 2) and other recent academic research on women's employment in the Fiji Islands.

FWRM has provided drafts of appropriate laws, policies, and regulations, in close cooperation with the Law Reform Commission and MLIRP. FWRM has expertise in the legal review and reform process, including community-based training in legal literacy and poverty alleviation.⁹

⁸ The drafting work was done by Deputy Chief Justice of the Australian Family Court.

⁹ FWRM, funded by various international donors on a project-by-project basis, has also had some government support (F\$38,000 in 2002) through MOW. It actively promotes action through the WPA

FWRM has been working closely with the MLIRP and the Law Reform Commission since 1998 to revise discriminatory legislation and to promote just labor laws. Assisted by the ADB TA forwarding the government-endorsed Women's Plan of Action, FWRM has lobbied and provided technical inputs toward integrated EEO legislation and policy, modeled on the framework provided by the draft Industrial Relations Bill. FWRM hopes that an Employment Court may be provided under the draft Industrial Relations Bill to rule on all matters pertaining to employment, which will enable all working women and disadvantaged minorities to access the grievance and resolution system.

In 2003, FWRM held training workshops on gender issues in the proposed industrial relations Bill in various regions of the Fiji Islands where gender and labor issues have been recognized. These workshops were attended by representatives of community-based organizations and NGOs. In 2004, it produced a lobbying kit for the gender issues in the employment relations bill. The bill has been deferred and revised several times due to political changes.

As part of its work on labor legislation, FWRM, assisted by the ADB TA, also prepared and published brochures on EEO and drafted a national EEO policy. In addition, it assisted FWRM to provide training to private sector organizations on sexual harassment complaints and grievance handling procedures.

ADB funded a study of sexual harassment in the workplace through FWRM. The South Australian Equal Employment Opportunities Commission facilitated the sexual harassment training in conjunction with the FWRM staff and FWRM was subsequently contracted as a consultant to provide sexual harassment training to the private and public sector. Clients have included organizations such as banks and other private sector organizations and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, who implemented its policy in 2003. In 2004, FWRM produced national policy guidelines on "sexual harassment in the workplace" that have been widely disseminated.

D. Other Donor and Civil Society Assistance

1. Women's Microenterprises

The MOW has managed WOSED since 1993. Seed funds were provided by the Pacific Community and New Zealand ODA. The program is currently in abeyance, pending a review in 2005. The background study for the WPA (Republic of the Fiji Islands 1998: Vol. 2) noted WOSED's problems, but was optimistic that they could be overcome by increasing its scope and perhaps making the program into an NGO. Since its inception, the program has been administered by the MOW divisional and district WIOs, who found that their debt collection and banking assistance duties took up most of their time and conflicted with their other programs for community development training and other mainstreamed intersector program work.

task force on women and law. FWRM also provides advocacy and advisory services, and conducts public campaigns and advocacy on legislative changes, especially in relation to the industrial relations bill.

WIOs have no specialized expertise in business development, being mainly trained in home economics and agriculture. Few successful enterprises have resulted from the commercial application of the borrowers' skills—sewing and traditional handicrafts, cooking, horticulture, fishing, and livestock husbandry. Although WOSD aimed to target disadvantaged women, most of the borrowers are not poor (Republic of the Fiji Islands 1998: Vol. 2). A further limitation of WOSD is that WIOs work mainly with Fijian women, so women from Indo-Fijian and other communities have had very limited access to it.

WOSD will be reviewed in 2005, and options include shifting its operations to NCSMED or to an NGO, or integrating it into the Australia-New Zealand rural banking and UNDP financial literacy programs.

2. Women and Decision Making

Issues associated with the WPA goal for women and decision making are discussed in relation to government policy and the MDG for women's empowerment in Chapter 5. UNIFEM Pacific is currently the only donor supporting this goal of the WPA. It is providing assistance to the NCWF, an umbrella organization for 46 Fiji Islands women's associations. The assistance will focus on increasing women's political participation and will follow up on an earlier WIP program that was active from 1994 to 1999, funded by NZODA (now NZAID), Asia Foundation, AusAID, British AID, and CARITAS (TIDE Foundation) (Siwatibau, 2004).

UNIFEM's program of assistance includes assessment of existing Women in Politics organizations and a plan to assist in strengthening their capacity to support women's political participation at different levels of government, the collection of data on women's political participation, monitoring of progress in achieving a gender balance in politics, and donor coordination activities and advocacy.

Within UNIFEM's Women and Decision Making program is also a gender-responsive and people-centered governance component, which includes gender mainstreaming training through the PSC's in-service training program, in cooperation with the MOW. UNIFEM has published the first of four training modules, with the other three in draft form, and has conducted the first of a planned series of training programs on gender mainstreaming.

The NCWF, with support from UNIFEM Pacific, in November 2004 conducted a consultation with stakeholders on women and decision making that produced a draft National NGO Plan of Action on WISDM, which was adopted in December 2004. Its goals are described in Chapter 5.

3. Violence Against Women

Over the past 15 years the FWRM and FWCC have lobbied for changes to domestic violence and sexual offences legislation. They have done this since 1998 through their own

initiatives as well as in partnership with the MOW within the WPA task force. Although this WPA goal has its own task force, it overlaps with the concerns of the task force working on women and the law, and FWCC has played an important role in achieving progress toward this goal.

The FWCC pioneered organized action and programs against family and sexual violence in the Fiji Islands and throughout the Pacific Islands region. It has received support from AusAID and other donors for the past 10 years, and recently received nearly F\$5 million from AusAID for its core operations over the next 5 years. This assistance will allow FWCC to construct a new building for offices and a training center, and will fund its national and regional work on training, advocacy, and research and publications, working with women and men, the judiciary, policy makers, and a wide range of women's and development CSOs.

In 2004, the Cabinet approved a review of laws relating to domestic violence. Assistance has been provided by the government of New Zealand (NZAID). The Attorney General gave the FLRC the following terms of reference: The review was to be holistic and was to include consideration of the following:

- the nature and extent of domestic violence as a social and gender problem,
- the legal remedies available for complainants of domestic violence,
- any changes to the law that may be necessary or desirable to bring about greater protection of women and children and other victims of domestic violence,
- the steps that may be taken to bring the problems of domestic violence to greater public awareness, and
- examination of relevant legislation in other jurisdictions and proposals for a suitable legislative arrangement on domestic violence for the Fiji Islands.

Chapter 7 Recommendations for ADB's Gender Strategy

A. Introduction

This chapter outlines ADB's regional strategic priorities for GAD, linked to the ADB Pacific Regional Strategy 2005–2009, which establishes three strategic objectives including (i) enhanced cash income opportunities through private sector development; (ii) improved access and quality of basic social services; and (iii) effective development processes. ADB's three proposed strategic objectives in its Country Strategy for the Fiji Islands are summarized to provide a context and framework for the recommendations to the ADB on a Country Gender Strategy for the Fiji Islands.

1. ADB Regional Gender Strategy

ADB's regional gender strategy (ADB 2004d) notes that although gender relations and issues vary between and within PDMCs, Pacific women accord high priority to increasing their opportunities for economic participation and to improving social service outcomes in all of their national plans of action.¹⁰ These priorities match the goals of the proposed Pacific Strategy 2005–2009, as well as the highest priorities of the poor identified by ADB. Key issues to be addressed in order to move toward improved development outcomes for Pacific women are (i) political and economic empowerment, (ii) protection or provision of property rights, and (iii) elimination of violence and discrimination against women.

The ADB gender strategy gives priority to the following concerns in its Pacific operations:

- Integrate gender explicitly into ADB strategies and programming.
- Focus on gender and development in the poorest countries.
- Promote and protect women's property rights.
- Improve access to social services (health, education, clean water, and sanitation) and their quality.
- Support woman's participation in civil society.
- Encourage improved data collection disaggregated by gender.
- Encourage action on international commitments to WID and GAD by governments and support integration of GAD into government operations.

2. ADB proposed Country Strategy For the Fiji Islands

ADB's overall strategy for the Fiji Islands will aim to support the Government's priority of rebuilding confidence for stability and growth, particularly through measures to (i) expedite structural and economic reforms, (ii) promote inclusive development, and (iii) maintain fiscal

¹⁰ Governments working with civil society in 12 PDMCs have prepared national plans of action for women.

sustainability. ADB and other international agencies will have a key role to play, through programs and policy dialogue, and through coordinated and collective action within the international donor community, in supporting the Government's goals for development and in encouraging the reform process needed to achieve these goals. Links between ADB and civil society are also critical to ensuring that the interests of all segments of the community are reflected in ADB operations and, to the extent possible, government operations.

Assistance from Australia, the EU, and New Zealand generally focuses on the education, training and health care sectors. ADB is the key funding agency in infrastructure, together with the PRC, the EU, and France. ADB and the EU have developed a strong partnership in the agriculture sector, particularly in sugar industry reforms, and with the International Monetary Fund, the UNDP, and AusAID, in support of the Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre. ADB is working closely with the World Bank/Foreign Investment Advisory Service (FIAS) in helping the Government on private sector development policy.

ADB's strategic focus on interventions in infrastructure and governance development — especially public-private partnership in agriculture, transport, energy, water supply, sanitation, and waste management, as well as public enterprise reform and private sector development—are well aligned with the current development needs of the Fiji Islands, and are also fully consistent with the Government's SDP and the MDGs.

Accordingly, ADB's strategic focus will be on the following:

- Promoting private sector-driven growth aimed at employment generation;
 - public enterprise reform,
 - public-private partnership,
 - physical and social infrastructure.

- Supporting reliable and affordable basic social service provision;
 - water supply and sanitation,
 - urban services.

- Developing effective development institutions and processes;
 - capacity building at all levels,
 - community participation,
 - public communications,
 - fiscal and debt management.

Particular opportunities to actively promote the ADB policy on GAD will accompany ADB's strategic focus on agriculture and natural resources; fisheries and forestry; water supply, sanitation and waste management, and private sector development.

B. Recommendations for the Asian Development Bank's Gender Strategy in the Fiji Islands

The gender challenges identified in this section are based on the findings of this Country Gender Assessment for the Fiji Islands. The recommendations are organized in relation to three areas of strategic focus outlined above in ADB's proposed Country Strategy for the Fiji Islands (ADB 2005b), and are linked to relevant government policies in the SDP, the recommendations in the SDP-MTR, and to the Government's commitments to the MDGs and the WPA. Where appropriate, the recommendation are linked to proposed entry points for GAD in ADB future programs of assistance (Table 27).

1. Gender Challenges and the Promotion of Private Sector-Driven Growth Aimed at Employment Generation

a. Women Predominate Among the Poor

Their share of formal employment is significantly lower than that of men and they are concentrated in largely segregated occupations at the low-wage end of the labor market in the public and private sector, and predominate among workers in the shrinking manufacturing sector.

b. Negative Current Employment Trends for Women in the Public Sector and Manufacturing

Public sector and civil service reforms will have the greatest negative impact on women, who are concentrated in increasingly redundant clerical occupations. Of more immediate concern is the likely loss of as many as 8,000 jobs in the clothing and footwear industries in 2005–2006. Most of these women are from poor households; many are the sole breadwinner, and most live in areas where tourism development will not compensate for loss of jobs. Due to land issues in the Fiji Islands, it is very difficult for workers to shift from one location to another to seek new employment opportunities.

c. Few Opportunities for Rural Women to Earn Cash

Rural women are typically unpaid family workers and, among rural Fijians, provide most of the productive subsistence labor. Their land rights are conditioned on their husbands or other male relatives, and they have very little economic bargaining power. Customary land tenure tends to work against enterprise development, and large numbers of rural people do not own land of a size or quality suitable for agricultural development beyond the subsistence level.

d. Unsuccessful Microfinance Programs for Women

Despite some increase in women's access to microcredit, the problems of identifying money-making opportunities have been enduring, especially in rural areas. The Government hopes that the NCSMED established in 2003 will more effectively promote small and microenterprise

development accompanied by financial services to socially disadvantaged groups, including women and youth. Although women predominate among NCSMED clients, the outreach is small and financial services are undercapitalized. These services also appear inadequately linked to the Center's training services.

2. Opportunities for Women's Participation in the Promotion of Private Sector-Driven Growth Aimed at Employment Generation

a. Alternative Livelihoods for Poor Women

Current ADB assistance for alternative livelihoods has a focus on farmers and agricultural workers displaced by the decline in the sugar industry. An alternative livelihoods development program should be designed that will focus on workers displaced from manufacturing industries. These workers are mainly poor women. The program should include assistance to develop and implement macroeconomic policy that will increase investment in labor-intensive industries in nontourist urban areas. Table 26 summarizes policies and issues for GAD in the private sector.

Table 26. Summary of Policies and Issues for Gender and Development in the Private Sector

ADB Strategy	WPA Goals 1999-2008	SDP Objectives 2004	Gender Issues
Support a conducive environment for women's participation in the private sector.	Allocation of additional resources to develop women's microenterprises and encourage financial institutions to review lending policies to disadvantaged women and young women who lack traditional sources of collateral.	3: To provide disadvantaged women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and to advisory and marketing assistance.	<p>Women predominate among the poor.</p> <p>Most women are concentrated at the low wage end of private and public sector employment, despite approximate educational equality.</p> <p>Civil service and public sector reforms, when implemented, are likely to make large numbers of women in clerical jobs redundant.</p> <p>Thousands of women will be displaced from jobs in manufacturing industries in the near future.</p> <p>Few women own or manage enterprises.</p> <p>Few women own assets or have traditional rights in property.</p> <p>Woman-targeted services for microfinance and microenterprise development are few and very limited.</p>

SDP = Strategic Development Plan; WPA = Women's Plan of Action.

Source: Author's research.

b. Empowering the Poor, Especially Poor Women, with Registered Assets

At the micro level, the poor need to be empowered so that they have assets and greater economic security, which will encourage small enterprise development and investment in housing. Technical and financial assistance should be provided within an urban development program to accelerate government initiatives to resettle and provide secure titles to squatters. This initiative would benefit women if it became government policy to register residential and agricultural leases in the joint names of husbands and wives, but not excluding women who are heads of households from obtaining registered titles to property. Women would also benefit from improved basic services in settlement and other areas in which poor households predominate.

c. Targeting Women in Rural and Outer Island Economic Development

The Ministry of Agriculture needs further assistance to build policy and programs, utilizing the findings of the ADB-funded gender audit conducted by the Ministry in 2003 (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2003a). Greater efforts should be made to develop women's skills in agricultural enterprises directed to export markets and the domestic hotel, restaurant, and other tourism industries. A review of the MOW is also needed to identify how the department can more effectively utilize its field services to women to support private enterprise development.

d. Developing more Attractive Products for the Tourist Market

In rural areas there is a need to develop handicraft and souvenir products for the tourism market that draw on traditional skills of women and men, are competitively priced, and are designed to appeal to popular tastes. UNDP pilot projects for sustainable livelihood have demonstrated the potential for such ventures and beneficiaries have been mainly women. At the policy level, the Government might consider requiring imported handicrafts and souvenirs sold as the Fiji Islands products to be clearly labeled showing their place of origin.

e. Support for Microfinance Linked to Financial Literacy and Skill Training Programs for Women and Men

Explore project linkages and other opportunities to assist the ANZ rural banking service and its linkages with the UNDP Equitable and Sustainable Human Development Programme and UNDP Small and Medium-Sized Loan Programme. At present the ANZ rural banking program offers savings products to its 15,000 predominantly female customers, but is considering microfinance products in the near future. Table 27 summarizes entry points for promoting GAD in private sector development.

Table 27. Summary of Entry Points to Promote Gender and Development in Private Sector Development

Proposed TA	Entry points for Strengthening gender integration
Strengthening Commercialization of Agriculture Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women are currently 50% of agriculture students and graduates. Review the curriculum of FCA to ensure there is appropriate subject emphasis that enable graduates to succeed in the private sector. • Develop a strategy that will enable rural women to upgrade their existing subsistence skills and increase their participation in commercial horticulture and small livestock management; and to develop their technical, financial, and marketing expertise in commercial agriculture. • On land matters, examine the potential for giving preference to applicants willing to take joint husband and wife tenancy on agricultural leases.
Rural and Outer Islands Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include women's NGOs and the MOW in the process of identifying women's needs. • Review and recommend improvements on accessibility and standards of service in health care and education, with an emphasis on services addressing the needs of women and girls. • Examine the means of livelihood in rural and outer island households, with attention to the different productive roles of women and men, especially the poor. Recommend developments that directly include women. • Review the potential to extend the UNDP model of tourist-oriented handicraft/souvenir product development to women and men. Examine market opportunities and propose strategies to enable rural craftswomen to benefit from the growth in tourism.
Fisheries Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze and make recommendations on opportunities for women's self-employment and wage employment and opportunities in inshore capture fisheries, on-shore commercial and industrial fisheries, and aquaculture. • Recommend strategies to improve women's skills and increase their participation in all forms of fisheries development. • Plan programs for inshore marine resource conservation that directly involve women, who are the major users of the resource in most coastal areas.
Support for Private Sector Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider obstacles to women's participation in private enterprise and make recommendations to overcome these.
Proposed Loans	Entry Points for Strengthening Gender Integration
Alternative Livelihoods and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In policy dialogue with government, explore opportunities for a phase II program to assist women displaced from employment in the garment and footwear manufacturing sector.
Urban Sector Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address issues of land tenure and housing for the urban poor, among whom women are the majority. Develop policies and mechanisms to accelerate provision of affordable residential leaseholds for the poor. Recommend policies that give preference to applicants who are willing to register leases in the joint names of husbands and wives. • Develop strategies to meet needs of women in poor urban communities, particularly in informal settlements, for water, sanitation, power, health, education, law and justice, and other basic services.

Proposed TA	Entry points for Strengthening gender integration
Rural and Outer Islands Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and recommend improvements on accessibility and standards of service in health care and education, with an emphasis on services to women and girls. • Examine the means of livelihoods in rural and outer island households, with attention to the different productive roles of women and men, especially the poor. Recommend development that directly includes women. • Review the potential to extend the UNDP model of tourist-oriented handicraft / souvenir product development to women and men. Examine market opportunities and propose strategies to enable rural craftswomen to benefit from growth in tourism.

FCA = Fiji College of Agriculture; MOW = Ministry of Women; NGO = nongovernment organization; TA = technical assistance; UNDP = United Nations Development Programme.

Source: ADB country program and strategy and other documents.

3. Gender Challenges for the Support of Reliable and Affordable Basic Social Service Provision

a. Education

The school dropout rate in the younger age groups is highest for teenage boys. A higher number of the Fijian boys leave school after age 14 than boys of other groups and girls of all ethnic groups. This is a cause for concern related to social stability issues.

More girls than boys reach senior secondary school levels, but boys do better. Fewer girls than boys complete Form 7 and young women are also less likely than young men to enroll in tertiary education programs leading to “hard” qualifications in high demand in the labor market, such as commerce, economics, science, and technology.

Female leadership is not encouraged in school management. Twice as many men as women are primary head teachers, and about one third more men than women are assistant head teachers. In secondary schools, more than three quarters of all school principals are men and twice as many men than women are vice principals. Men also predominate among assistant principals and heads of departments. However, affirmative action favors males in primary teacher training because it is believed that male primary teachers are better disciplinarians. Table 28 summarizes policies and issues for GAD in social services.

Table 28. Summary of Policies and Issues for Gender and Development in Social Services

ADB Strategy KRAs	WPA Goals 1999–2008	SDP Objectives 2004	Gender Issues
Education Improve access to and quality of social services.	7: Women and mainstreaming. Integrate gender training in educational and national training institutions. 7: Women and the law. Develop full educational potential of women to enable them to contribute to their families and communities and to the nation. Eliminate all forms of gender basis in education and promote women's participation in all sectors of educational development.	Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women. MDG #4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015.	The school drop-out rate is highest for Fijian teenage boys in the younger age groups. Female leadership is not encouraged in school management and few women are promoted to head teacher or principal positions. More girls than boys reach senior secondary levels, but boys do better in form seven. Affirmative action for primary teacher education favors males, even though numbers of male and female primary teachers are approximately equal.

ADB = Asian Development Bank; KRA = key result area; MDG = Millennium Development Goal; SDP = Strategic Development Plan; WPA = Women's Plan of Action..

Source: Author's researches.

b. Public Health

Rural Fijian women have very high fertility rates. Their fertility rate of 4.4 is very high by international standards, and has negative implications for their health status. Renewed efforts are needed to decrease fertility rates among rural Fijian women and to involve men in family planning. It is Ministry of Health policy to encourage the participation and sharing of responsibility by men in the practice of family planning, and to make men more health-conscious, but the policy but is said to be too difficult to implement.

Noncommunicable diseases are more prevalent among women than men. Twice as many women as men are hospitalized with anemia, cancer rates are far higher among women than men, and twice as many women than men suffer from diabetes in both rural and urban communities. The prevalence of diabetes should be included as a gender-significant MDG indicator for the Fiji Islands, Under Goal #6.

Diabetes and obesity in the Fiji Islands are mainly diseases of poverty associated with dietary change. Imported foods are generally cheaper than locally grown food and those imported foods most widely consumed are mainly of poor nutritional quality. Prices of traditional staples are influenced by the prices of imported goods; growers seek to earn enough from the sale of local produce to buy needed imported goods. As urbanization or urbanizing influences increase, the poor consume more imported food than locally produced food.

More women have been recently confirmed HIV positive than men. More men are infected overall, however. In most confirmed cases the mode of transmission was heterosexual. Perceived increases in female and some male prostitution (closely linked to poverty and unemployment) are likely to contribute to the spread of HIV, as sex workers must be secretive about their occupation for legal and cultural reasons and cannot easily be identified as an “at-risk” group for HIV/AIDS education. The Fiji Islands National report on the MDGs (Republic of the Fiji Islands 2004a) rates achievement of Goal #6, combating HIV/AIDS and other major diseases, as “unlikely.” Table 29 summarizes key policies and issues for social services.

Table 29. Summary of Key Policies and Issues for Social Services

ADB Strategy KRAs	WPA Goals 1999–2008	SDP Objectives 2004	Gender Issues
Health Improve access to, and quality of social services	6: Women and the law. To improve the overall health status of women through all phases of their life. Strengthen existing programs and develop new ones, particularly for the elderly and the disabled.	Provide an adequate primary and preventive health service. (MDG targets). Provide effective, efficient, and high quality clinical health care and rehabilitation services.	Rural Fijian women have extremely high fertility rates. Noncommunicable diseases are more prevalent among women than men. More women have been recently confirmed HIV positive than men. Women now have higher rates of HIV infection.

ADB = Asian Development Bank; KRA = key result area; HIV = human immunodeficiency virus; MDG = Millennium Development Goal; SDP = Strategic Development Plan; WPA = Women’s Plan of Action.

Source: Author’s researches.

4. Gender Challenges for Developing Effective Development Institutions and Processes

a. Gender Mainstreaming

Policy frameworks and implementation arrangement for gender mainstreaming are weak. The Government is committed to the overall policy to “develop, address and promote gender-sensitive policies, issues and concerns.” This frames the government’s policy objective “to

mainstream gender perspectives, issues and concerns in the planning process.” However, although the Government is committed to this policy, it is not reflected in the SDP or the 2004 SDP-MTR. GAD is dealt with as a discrete social and community development issue with a set of policy objectives to be implemented by the MWSWPA.

GAD is not addressed as a planning responsibility. Gender is a crosscutting multisector issue and objective that needs to be mainstreamed into the policy objectives for each sector of government operations. The responsibility is given to the MOW, a line department of the MWSWPA. Accordingly, GAD policy, as it is currently framed, is not amenable to implementation.

The core business of the MOW is community-based WID programs, not gender policy. MOW lacks the financial and human resources and the linkages to promote the implementation of government policy on GAD. The MOW, however, has a strong commitment to its core business of WID and is trying to mainstream its own community-based programs with those of other departments and agencies, particularly those that address economic development. Table 30 summarizes policies and issues on gender mainstreaming and participation.

Table 30. Summary of Policies and Issues on Gender Mainstreaming and Participation

ADB Strategy KRAs	WPA Goals 1998-2008	SDP Objectives 2004	Gender Issues
Build governments' capacity to meet their commitment to WID and GAD.	Mainstream women's and gender concerns in the planning process and all policy areas.	1: Mainstream gender perspectives, issues, and concerns in the planning process.	Lack of effective policy integration action on mainstreaming gender in the planning process.
	Work toward achieving a gender balance partnership at all levels of decision making and assign 50% of representation, participation, training, appointments and promotions at all levels of government to women on merit, and encourage the same in the private sector.	4: Ensure women's accessibility and full participation in power structures and decision-making structures.	No effective implementation of WPA and SDP policy.

Source: Author's researches.

b. Law and Justice

The Fiji Islands has made remarkable and commendable progress in articulating policy and providing legislative frameworks and supporting institutions for women's rights, but there are still challenges with respect to gender and industrial relations and the implementation of EEO policy; women's property rights; dealing with family and sexual violence, and women's equity in decision making.

Women are not protected by industrial relations legislation. On average, women earned the equivalent of 88% of male wages. The Fiji Islands has no laws that require equal pay for equal work, nor is there a national basic minimum wage. Low wages in relation to high costs of living are a key factor in poverty and hardship. The creation of more employment will not necessarily reduce poverty unless the wages paid are adequate to put families above the poverty line. Legal frameworks are also needed for labor standards and safety, sexual harassment, and implementation of other ILO recommendations on gender and women workers in policy and current draft legislation (ILO-UNDP n.d.). These have been advocated by CSOs such as FWRM since 2002, working closely with the Department of Labor on law reform issues, with ADB assistance. Various EEO policies also require a legal framework within industrial relations legislation to become effective. EEO policies in the civil service lack an implementation mechanism at present.

Rates of family and sexual violence are high. The issue of family and sexual violence has been addressed by civil society, particularly through the work of the FWCC. The FLRC began a review of legislation in 2004 and will complete its report and recommendations in June 2005. However, there is an urgent need to strengthen the capacity of the Fiji Islands Police to create an institutional environment that will encourage victims to seek the recourse available to them.

Most women lack property rights. Women lack rights in customary property. The issue is one that can only be addressed by the *Bose Levu Vakaturaga* (Great Council of Chiefs). Most NLTB agricultural and residential leases and also freehold land are registered to male owners. The NLTB, Housing Authority, and Lands Department have the powers to make policy on the allocation of leases, and there is an opportunity for these agencies to implement government policy on gender equality by giving priority to joint tenancy by spouses, as well as by granting leases to female heads of households. Donors could support GAD and address a major cause of female poverty by funding an assessment of women's property rights and their poverty impacts, with a view to proposing changes. This should be done as a joint government and civil society endeavor.

Women are minimally involved in decision making, although the Government has endorsed MDG #3 for women's empowerment. This goal includes as an indicator, the proportion of seats held by women in the national Parliament. The Government's policy is for 50% representation of women in government boards and other bodies by 2005; but at present women make up only about 19% of the total appointments and are concentrated in minor health and welfare boards.

4. Opportunities to Strengthen Government Capacity to Meet its Commitments to Gender and Development and Women in Development

a. Consider Whether GAD Should Become a Planning Responsibility

The review could include consideration of whether certain existing MOW functions should be retained or transferred to the Department of Provincial Development or the Ministry of National Planning and Finance.

b. Design a Follow-Up TA for WPA for Gender Mainstreaming

The TA should assist the Ministry of Finance and National Planning to mainstream gender and development in the planning and policy development process. It should include consideration of how to implement the recommendations of gender audits carried out under the previous TA, and include new components such as gender budgeting, gender analysis of the SDP, and establishment of a gender desk. Table 31 summarizes key policies and issues for law and justice.

Table 31. Summary of Key Policies and Issues for Law and Justice

ADB Strategy KRAs	WPA Goals 1999–2008	SDP Objectives 2004	Gender Issues
Improved development outcomes and governance.	<p>Promote a sound and stable environment that is free of violence, especially domestic violence, sexual harassment, and child abuse.</p> <p>Review laws that are disadvantageous to women.</p>	<p>5: Educate the community and law enforcement agencies to prevent and eliminate violence against women.</p> <p>2: Ensure gender equality and nondiscrimination before the law.</p>	<p>Need for more government support for measures to eliminate family and sexual violence.</p> <p>Need for gender concerns, including national EEO policy, to be reflected in the industrial relations bill.</p> <p>Most women lack property rights.</p> <p>Public awareness is lacking on family law reforms, other legal rights of women, and EEO policy.</p> <p>Women are minimally represented in decision-making processes.</p>

ADB = Asian Development Bank; EEO = equal employment opportunity; KRA = key result area; SDP = Strategic Development Plan.

Source: Author's researches.

c. Support EEO Policy Development

Provide assistance for the preparation of a national EEO policy that covers private as well as public employment.

d. Support Sexual Harassment Policy Development

Provide assistance to develop a policy that covers all institutions as well as the workplace, with institutional mechanisms for the grievance and resolution system.

e. Strengthen Government Capacity to Provide Effective Antipoverty Services to Poor Women

A comprehensive review of the MOW is needed to integrate its programs more firmly with measures to reduce poverty within the MWSWPA's overall poverty reduction strategy, and to mainstream its program more directly with other economic development agencies. The MOW needs to build its capacity to address the needs of poor and disadvantaged women in all ethnic communities.

f. Assist in Defining the Role and Core Business of the MOW

The review should assist the Ministry to develop a set of goals and objectives reflecting relevant government policies, review the existing capacity of the MOW, and make recommendations and provide assistance to strengthen its capacity for poverty reduction. The review should take account of the evaluations of the WPA and WOSSED and consider whether all the MOW's current functions meet the Ministry's strategic objectives and where the focus of its activities should be.

g. Address Gender in the Reform Process

The proposed TA on Strengthening Development Planning and Public Sector Reforms could address all these issues and challenges, and the ADB should consider including them in its policy dialogue with government. Table 32 summarizes the entry points for promoting GAD in support of good governance.

Table 32. Entry points for Promoting Gender and Development in Support of Good Governance

Proposed TA	Entry points
Follow-up TA for WPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design a follow-up TA to the previous TA for WPA, to assist the Ministry of Finance and National Planning to mainstream gender and development in the planning and policy development process. • Provide TA for a review of the MOW to strengthen its advocacy and advisory role in government on the implementation of government policies on gender mainstreaming and the status of women.
Strengthening gender policy and implementation in the Ministry of Finance and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend means of implementing government policy of 50% women on boards of SOEs. • Gain more government support for measures to eliminate family and sexual violence. • Address implementation strategies for EEO and gender provisions in industrial relations legislation to cover all forms of public and private employment. • Study gender and property rights and make recommendations for reforms. • Support civil society initiatives for public awareness of family law reforms, other legal rights of women, and EEO policy. • Advocate strategies to increase women’s participation in decision-making processes. • Assist the MOW to define gender-sensitive data requirements for planning and monitoring the implementation of government policies on gender mainstreaming and the status of woman for collection and analysis by the FIBOS and each ministry.
Strengthening Local Government Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve women’s NGOs in reviewing issues of women’s participation and recommendations for action. • Recommend strategies to ensure the effective implementation of government commitment to MDG #3 for the empowerment of women and the WPA goal to increase women’s role in decision making.

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Appendix 1. The Asian Development Bank's Country Strategy and Program in the Fiji Islands (2006–2010)

The Asian Development Bank's (ADB's) program of assistance to the Fiji Islands includes technical assistance (TA) in the years 1996-2005 to the value of \$7,875,150.00 and lending 1997–2009 to the value of \$103.8 million. Gender issues have been overlooked in most TA or at best partially addressed in the ongoing programs. ADB should renew efforts to practice gender analysis and mainstreaming in its TA and project design and implementation, as it recommends these approaches to government.

Three projects involved significant gender issues: TA 3360: Women's Plan of Action; Project Preparation TA (PPTA) 3887: Alternative Livelihoods; and TA 4403: Fisheries Sector Review. Minor gender considerations were also associated with four TA projects; TA 2850: Road Sector Reform and Safety improvement; TA 3242: Urban Sector Strategy; TA 3961: Rural Electrification, and TA 4270: Capacity Building in Water and Sewerage Services.

Alternative Livelihoods. Anticipating that the sugar sector is currently on the verge of a profound transformation, the PPTA has prepared a project to assist the shift to alternative livelihoods from the oversubscribed sugar sector. This will ease pressure on the industry and allow it to undergo the urgently required restructuring with minimal social and economic disruption. Assistance will include (i) market identification and development, (ii) provision of land to displaced farmers for alternative production or the establishment of nonagricultural enterprises, (iii) financing for new agriculture and nonagricultural ventures, (iv) training in alternative livelihood activities, and (v) orderly development of and servicing of new residential areas and settlements focused on alternative livelihoods.

Gender issues will be mainstreamed and the project design arising from the PPTA envisages an increased role for women in diversified agriculture, including horticulture, floriculture, small livestock and development of a business approach to farming and the creation of off-farm livelihoods, including handicrafts, small-scale processing, and microenterprises. NGOs will be involved, including those with women field officers. Vocational training will include women, and promote income-generating skills. The PPTA did not include a detailed consideration of women's economic issues and how these differ from those of men, for example access to land and property rights, or to the current problems with microenterprise development, microfinance, and handicraft production referred to in the main body of this report.

Accordingly, ADB might consider making provision for the inclusion of women in the Project more specific; there is a need to ensure that women will benefit from the project by including components that directly target them.

Fisheries sector review. The fisheries sector review does not consider gender in the Fiji Islands' fisheries despite the significant role—a predominant role in some areas—that women play in inshore subsistence fisheries and in-shore, non-fish artisanal fisheries. Findings and recommendations of the review on the management of inshore fisheries have the greatest gender significance. The review (ADB 2005a) notes that surveying inshore areas needs to be accelerated, and

surveying methods should focus more on the pressing issues for inshore resource management, rather than on providing a comprehensive species listing. It notes that the role of extension officers needs to be modernized and focused more on resource conservation and development of management plans and less on fisheries development, pointing out that:

Fisheries development is an antiquated concept given the accessibility to vessels and outboards, and the overexploitation of stock in many areas (particularly areas close to villages and markets). Generally, areas that are not fully exploited are those where it is not economic to fish due to the distance from markets. High priority should be placed on developing management plans and increasing the resources applied to the fish warden system, as illegal fishing practices are common in many parts of the Fiji Islands (ADB 2005a: draft executive summary, April).

As Fijian women are the major regular users of inshore marine resources in most coastal (and riverine) areas, ADB might wish to raise the need with government to target women for environmental and conservation education and management training and to ensure their participation in the fish warden system.

Fourth Road Upgrading (Sector) Project (FRUP IV). The TA will prepare a detailed feasibility study for the proposed sector investment program for FRUP IV for possible ADB funding. The program is intended to upgrade sections of priority national and rural roads totaling approximately 100 km and rehabilitate a similar length of roads on the islands of Viti Levu, Vanua Levu, and Taveuni. It will also consolidate the road safety program supported under FRUP II and FRUP III. The project will benefit rural women by making markets more accessible, but there are opportunities to target women specifically in road safety promotion, possibly with NGO involvement.

Urban Sector Strategy. This project will provide opportunities to review land issues and service provision with emphasis on gender equity.

Rural Electrification. The TA provided a development strategy and investment plan for rural electrification with special emphasis on extending the Fiji Electricity Authority (FEA) electrical grid, building new diesel power capacity, and providing renewable energy supply (e.g., solar photovoltaic, microhydro, and biomass). The TA will assess the social, institutional, and environmental aspects of rural electrification, and recommend development strategies. It will also identify and carry out a feasibility study and develop a rural electrification project suitable for financing by ADB and other external funding agencies, and assess its long-term sustainability. Main outputs will be the rural electrification master plan and the feasibility study of possible projects for ADB financing. Rural electrification will provide particular benefits to women and increase their opportunities for income generation. The TA might have included specific gender analysis to develop ways to maximize these opportunities.

Suva-Nausori Water Supply. This loan project will provide significant benefits to women as the major users of water. While no specific gender analysis or gender plan was included, the Project design contained provisions for a community education and awareness program that would target women. More emphasis might have been placed on women's role in the conservation of water and water resources.

Appendix 2. List of Persons Consulted

The preparation of the CGA commenced in February 2005; initial consultations were held with the following persons:

Asian Development Bank, South Pacific Subregional Office, Fiji Islands

Ms. Sirpa H. Jarvenpaa	Regional Director
Ms. Sophia S. Y. Ho	Principal Country Programs Specialist
Mr. Christopher Wensley	Senior Program Officer

Government of the Fiji Islands

Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation

Ms. Adi Asenaca Caucau	Minister for Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation
Mrs. Losena Salabula	Assistant Minister for Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation
Ms. Emele Duituturaga	Chief Executive Officer, Ministry for Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation
Ms. Tokasa Bunimasi	Deputy Secretary, Ministry for Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation
Ms. L. Kiti Makasiale	Acting Director, Department of Women
Ms. Ilisipeci Rokotunidau	Principal Assistant Secretary, Research Communication and Training, Department of Women
Ms. Vuli Baleinavutoka	Senior Assistant, Secretary Field Services, Department of Women
Ms. Alisi Qaiqaica	Senior Assistant Secretary, Research Communication and Training, Department of Women

Other Ministries and Government Agencies

Mr. Anare Jale	CEO, Public Service Commission
Dr. Tuga	CEO, Ministry of Health
Mr. Tukana Bovoro	CEO, the Fiji Islands Development Bank
Mr. Mitieli Baleivanualala	CEO, Ministry of Fisheries and Forestry
Ms. Alumita Taganesia	CEO, Ministry of Education
Mr. Kaivati Bakani	General Manager, Native Land Trust Board
Mr. Pita Wise	Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Planning
Mr. Paula Taukei	Chief Economist, Ministry of Agriculture
Mr. Tomasi Lee	Deputy Secretary, Public Service Commission
Ms. Penina Cirikiyasawa	Sr. Planning Officer, Ministry of Health
Ms. Setaita Naitu	Senior Information Officer, Ministry of Information
Ms. Prakash Narayan	Information Officer, Ministry of Information
Ms. Losana Ravuso	Executive Officer, Public Service Commission

Mr. Josefa Sania	Planning Officer, National Planning Office, Ministry for Finance and National Planning
Ms. Maria Matavena	Director, Human Resources and Finance, Ministry of Agriculture, Sugar and Land Settlement
Ms. Vukidonu Qionibaravi	Acting Senior Legal Officer the Fiji Islands Law Reform Commission
Mr. Shalendra Kumar	Centre Manager, National Centre for Small and Microenterprise Development
Dr. Jiko Luveni	HIV/AIDS Program Officer, Ministry of Health
Ms. Nayana Rokobua	Head, Social Policy Unit, Prime Minister's Department
Ms. Vukidonu Qionibaravi	Acting Senior Legal Officer, the Fiji Islands Law Reform Commission
Mr. Tomasi Tui	OIC, Sugar Restructuring Program, Prime Minister's Department
Mr. Peni Gavindi	Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlement and Environment
Ms. Penina Cirikiyasa	Chief Planning Officer, Ministry of Health
Ms. Ana Naivakasoro	Manager, Ministry of Public Enterprises and Public Sector Reform
Mr. Paolo Ralulu	Project Manager, Poverty Alleviation Unit, Ministry for Women
Ms. Vasemaca Lewai	The Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics
Dr. Noor Bano	Coordinator, Women in Business

Donors

Ms. Linda Peterson	Programme Manager, Pacific MDG Program, UNDP
Mr. Geoff Liew	Programme Manager, Pacific Sustainable Livelihoods Program, UNDP
Ms. Stacy Tennant	Second Secretary, Development Cooperation Section, (AusAID) Australian High Commission
Gillian Mellesop	Country Director, UNICEF

Nongovernment Organizations

Ms. Virsila Buadromo	Coordinator, The Fiji Islands Women's Rights Movement
Ms. Sufi Dean	Executive Officer, Leadership the Fiji Islands
Fr. Kevin Barr	Director, ECREA
Ms. Miri Ragawa Cama	Representative, Soqosoqo Vaka Marama
Ms. Cema Bolabla	Member, National Council of Women
Ms. Tabua Salato	Women in Politics Project Coordinator, The Fiji Islands National Council of women
Ms. Shamima Ali	The Fiji Islands Women's Crises Centre

Others

Dr. Eci Kikau Nabularua	Chairperson and Senior Lecturer, School of Maori and Pacific Development, The University of Waikato
Mr. Michael Moriarty	ADB staff consultant economist
Dr. Elise Huffer	Centre of Pacific Studies, Institute for Governance and Development, University of the South Pacific
Mrs. Suliana Siwatibau	ADB staff consultant

Appendix 3. Stakeholder Consultation on the CGA Report and Recommendations

Upon completion of the draft CGA and recommendations, a consultation was held with stakeholders from the Government and private sector, civil society and donor organizations in Suva on June 8, from 9:00 to 4:00, at the Tanoa Plaza conference room.

The consultation was opened by the Hon. Losena Salabula, Assistant Minister for Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation, followed by an address by Sirpa Javenpaa, Regional Director, ADB South Pacific Subregional Office, with introductions by Emele Duituturaga, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry for Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation.

1. Presentations

The introductory session on ADB country gender assessment and gender strategy processes was presented by Shireen Lateef, Principal Social Development Specialist, ADB, Manila. Ms. Lateef explained ADB's policies and strategies on gender mainstreaming, and the way in which gender is integrated in ADB Country Strategies and Programs and Country Gender Assessments.

Penelope Schoeffel, Consultant to ADB, presented an overview of some key findings from the Fiji Islands *Country Gender Assessment*, addressing government policies on gender, challenges, and issues. In a separate presentation she outlined the proposed recommendations to the ADB.

Linda Peterson, Senior Program Officer, UNDP, presented an overview of the draft report on the Fiji Islands' progress on the Millennium Development Goals, with reference to key gender indicators.

Imrana Jalal, Director of the Regional Rights Resources Team, presented an overview of gender issues and the law, highlighting issues affecting women's economic, political, and social status.

Following these presentations, the representatives of stakeholder organizations were invited to form two discussion groups.

2. Stakeholder recommendations

Group One discussed government policy on gender and development: the SDP and mainstreaming and the role of the MOW in implementing programs to meet the Fiji Islands' international commitments on GAD and gender equality. The group made the following recommendations:

- Although gender is well covered in the SDP, it is not treated as a crosscutting issue, so a gender impact assessment of the SDP Mid-Term Review Report is needed.

- Donors, including ADB, should ensure that gender assessments are included in all their programs of assistance and that these are regularly monitored, and should consider making compliance with gender provisions a conditionality of assistance.
- The Ministry of Women provides services to women and programs for women and development, but lacks the resources to undertake policy analysis and input to the policy process on gender and development GAD and women's rights. Accordingly, ADB and the Government should encourage institutional strengthening and capacity building that will enable the Ministry of Women:
 - to have an input into the policy process across all sectors,
 - to play an advocacy role within government on gender issues,
 - to monitor the achievements of government's commitments to gender in development and gender equality, and
 - to work in close consultation with NGOs, which play an important role in implementing programs.

Group Two discussed action strategies to empower Fiji Islands women, reduce poverty, improve women's economic and employment status, and eliminate discrimination and violence against women and to achieve the MDGs for women's political participation. The group made the following recommendations:

- Donors should provide assistance to the Government to collect better and more timely data on gender-related issues in each sector, and analyze the data, so that it informs the policy process and assists in monitoring the Government's key performance indicators for the SDP.
- Donors should encourage and, where necessary, assist in enabling the Government to collect and analyze data on the economic situation of women and men in households, rural communities, and the informal sectors of the economy (e.g., special studies of gender and poverty, social security, gender analysis of HIES data, inclusion of more gender focus in future HIES).
- The Government should consider adopting a mechanism to ensure gender mainstreaming that includes relevant gender-inclusive objectives in the KPIs for the corporate plans of each department and ministry, to be delivered on by the CEOs.
- School curricula should be reviewed to encourage changes in cultural attitudes to gender.
- Programs of assistance, including micro-level projects, should be monitored so that outcomes are known and lessons learned.
- To improve the participation of women in political and decision-making processes. institutional support should be provided to agencies able to provide targeted training and advocacy.

- Donors and government agencies involved in implementation should ensure that the design of programs of assistance are gender sensitive and directly address the need to advance the economic, social, and decision-making status of women.

Stakeholder Representatives and Organisations

Representative	Organization
Virisila Buadromo	Fiji Islands Women's Rights Movement
Sufi Dean	Leadership the Fiji Islands
Nafitalai Coleacala	Fiji Development Bank
Joape K. Naqabaca	Ministry of Agriculture, Sugar and Resettlement
Uanaisi Waqa	Fiji Council of Social Services
Sandra Bernklau	Regional Rights Team
Reama Naco	Ministry of Information
Davila Toganivalu	United Nations Children's Fund
Shandiya Nand	Ministry of Public Enterprises and Public Sector Reform
Florence Masianini	Ministry of Health
Ana Laqeretubua	Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation
Seruwaia Vukivou	United Nations Development Fund for Women Pacific Regional Office
Jone Draunimasi	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade
Rokobua Naiyaga	Prime Minister's Office
Aselia Naisara	Fiji National Council of Women
Linda Peterson	United Nations Development Programme Pacific Regional Office
Kevin Barr	Ecumenical Center for Research, Education and Advocacy
Peni Gavid	Ministry of Local Government
Cema Bolabla	Pacific Islands Association of NGOs
Salote L. Dugu	Ministry of Education
Vandona Naidu	Australian Agency for International Development
Ruth Lechte	Young Men's Christian Association
Diane Goodwillie	United Nations Development Fund for Women Australia
Sakiusa Rokutakala	Ministry of Information
Sivia Qoro	Ministry of Agriculture
Anne Nacola	International Labour Organization Social Security Project
Helen Tavola	Pacific Forum Secretariat
Shelly Rao	Pacific Network on Globalizaion/Fiji Women's Rights Movement
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