

UN/CSW64-REVIEW OF BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION

Sub-heading-: Social and Economic Support System for Vulnerable Women-
inclusive development, shared prosperity, poverty eradication, social protection
and social services.

1. FIRST, I AM PRIVILEGED TO TO BE CHOSEN UNDER PDC AS ONE OF THE PENALIST FOR THIS SIDE EVENT AND I ACKNOWLEDGE WITH SINCERE THANKS THE ORGANISERS ,PPSEAWA INTERNATIONAL,THE PRESIDENT ,VICE PRESIDENTS,THE SECRETARIAT,PPSEAWA UN REPRESENTATIVES AND OUR FELLOW PPSEAWA SISTERS IN THE US AND THE NEW YORK CHAPTER And ALL OUR WOMEN NGOS/CSOS FRIENDS HERE WITH US TODAY .I PERSONALLY PERCEIVE THIS AS GOOD WELCOME TO THE US AND UN/CSW64- THE OPPORTUNITY TO FOCUS TOGETHER ON OUR COMMON INTERESTS,OUR STRATEGIES, HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS ON HOW BEST TO DELIVER IN THE SERVICE TO FELLOW WOMEN-OUR SISTERS.

2. IN FIJI WE THE NGOS/CSOS WERE FORTUNATE TO HAVE BEEN PART OF THE GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION PROCESS ON THE REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION WHICH IS THE SUBJECT OF THIS EVENT AND UN/ CSW64.I REPRESENTED PPSEAWA IN THAT EXERCISE.THE FIJI COUNTRY REPORT IS BEING FINALISED TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE UN SYSTEM.WE,THE FIJI WOMEN NGO/CSO ARE ALSO PLEASED WITH OUR CURRENT GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE FOR A PERMANENT CONSULTATIVE FORUM WHERE THE MINISTER FOR WOMEN MEET US ON A REGULAR BASIS. HOWEVER WE NEED SOMETHING MORE ,LIKE THE US WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF VOTERS A POWERFUL POLITICAL INFLUENCE AND LOBBYST FOR WOMEN CAUSES BUT THIS CAN ONLY HAPPEN WITH A PROPER LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN PLACE . OUR FIJI NATIONAL CONSTITUTION WAS IMPOSED ON US .BY THE WAY,

WE HAVE A WOMEN'S LEAGUE BUT THIS WAS ESTABLISHED BY GOVERNMENT AND DOES NOT APPEAR VISIBLE.

3. THE FIJI BEIJING PERFORMANCE REPORT HAS BEEN GENERALLY GOOD. HOWEVER, GAPS AND CHALLENGES THAT HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED DURING THE CONSULTATION PROCESS WILL LIKELY OUTWEIGH GOVERNMENT ACHIEVEMENTS IN SOME INSTANCES. IN FIJI'S CASE FOR EXAMPLE, PPSEAWA RECOMMENDATION FOR MORE SHELTERS FOR VICTIMS OF RAPE AND VIOLENCE HAS BEEN INCLUDED VAGUELY IN THE FIJI COUNTRY REPORT ON ITS PERFORMANCE ON BEIJING TO THE UN. IT WILL LIKELY DISAPPEAR UNDER THE MAZE OF BUREAUCRACY. NEVERTHELESS, I AM ALSO MINDFUL THAT GOVERNMENT ALONE CANNOT BE SOLELY RESPONSIBLE-IT IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS.

4. IN THE GLOBAL GENDER GAP REPORT(2017) FIJI IS STILL IN THE UNENVIABLE POSITION OF 104 OUT OF 144 COUNTRIES IN TERMS OF POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT AND IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ONLY 25% OF EMPLOYEES ARE FEMALES. SITUATION IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE IS NO LESS UNFAVOURABLE WITH MORE WOMEN IN THE LOWER GRADES AND LESS AT THE TOP-THE ABSENCE OF GRIEVANCE/DISPUTE MACHINERY AND SYSTEM OF REDRESS DOES NOT HELP. THERE IS NEPOTISM AND JOBS ARE FOR THE BOYS. AS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE, IT TOOK GOVERNMENT MORE THAN 30 YEARS AFTER INDEPENDENCE TO APPOINT THE FIRST FEMALE HEAD OF THE CIVIL SERVICE. I KNOW BECAUSE THAT WAS ME! GENERALLY THERE IS LIMITATION OF ACCESS TO PAID EMPLOYMENT AND PAY DISTORTION IN FAVOUR OF MALES AND UNFAVOURABLE WORKING CONDITIONS. VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FACE JOB DISRUPTION AND LOW JOB RETENTION WITH MOST LEAVING THE JOB MARKET AND PERPETUATING THE CYCLE OF POVERTY. THE GENDER IMBALANCE IN THE WORKPLACE IS A DIRECT REFLECTION OF THE GENDER GAP IN EDUCATION. WOMEN AND GIRLS IN FIJI NEED

SKILLS AND TRAINING IN 'STEM'
(SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY,ENGINEERING AND MATHS) TO BE
COMPETITIVE AGAINST MALES IN THE JOB MARKET.

5. ONE OF THE FIRST PRIORITIES UNDER THE BEIJING PLATFORM IS FOR PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES TO FACILITATE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND TO IMPLEMENT THE WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA.IT IS THE OVERARCHING FRAMEWORK ON WHICH ALL OTHER DECLARATIONS ARE DEPENDENT FOR THEIR IMPLEMENTATIONS. FIJI HAS MADE SOME MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENTS AND ADOPTED STRATEGIC PLAN,LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND POLICIES AND AGENCIES REFLECT PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA IN THEIR PLANS. BUT THERE ARE NO CLEAR INDICATOR OF IMPLEMENTATION.THERE IS ALSO NO DATA/INFORMATION ON WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL SECURITY AND NO INDICATOR ON BUDGETARY ALLOCATION FOR CLAIMED ACHIEVEMENT ON WOMEN PROGRAMMES.THERE IS NO INFORMATION BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE ON THE NUMBER OF WOMEN RECRUITED INTO THE FORCES.BUT THERE IS NO SECRET IN A SMALL COUNTRY.

6. OVERALL THERE IS GENDER INEQUALITIES, HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS,GENDER BASED VIOLENCE,EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE OF CHILDREN WITH LACK OF REPORTING DUE TO SHAME AND CULTURAL BARRIERS. THERE IS LACK OF STATISTICS ON SEX DISSEGREGATED DATA AND AWARENESS ON WOMEN/CHILD RIGHTS AND ALTHOUGH GOVERNMENT HAS MADE OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS,INCLUDING JUDICIAL AND NON-JUDICIAL MEASURES BUT THIS PROBLEM PARTICULARLY THE RAPE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN CONTINUE TO EXIST AND TO INCREASE. IT IS EXCERBATED WITH FREQUENT NATURAL DISATERS WHEN POPULATIONS AND COMMUNITY PROTECTION MECHANISM ARE DISRUPTED.TODATE SOME PEOPLE IN FIJI ARE STILL LIVING IN TENTS ONE YEAR AFTER THE LAST CYCLONE. RAPE

AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN FIJI IS SO EXTREME THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF HAS CALLED IT A 'NATIONAL SHAME'. HERE AT THE UN WE HAVE BEEN A TROOP CONTRIBUTOR IN PEACE KEEPING OPERATIONS YET OUR WOMEN AND CHILDREN NEED PEACE AND SECURITY AT HOME.

7. AT THIS POINT I HAVE TO ACKNOWLEDGE WITH THANKS THE MONTHLY DATA PROVIDED IN THE FIJI MEDIA BY THE OFFICE OF THE FIJI DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTION FOR PUBLIC AWARENESS PURPOSES AND ESPECIALLY THE REPORT BY A SISTER NGO ,THE FIJI WOMEN CRISIS CENTRE,GOVERNMENT BUREAU OF STATISTICS,AUSAID AND UN WOMEN WHICH INVOLVED A NATIONAL SURVEY OF 3,193 WOMEN OUT OF 189,385 SAMPLE POPULATION.THE FINDINGS ARE DISTURBING IF NOT SHOCKING AND A BRIEF SUMMARY IS AS FOLLOWS;

- a) 72% of women experience violence –physical, sexual or emotional in their lifetime,
- b) 94% were slapped, tortured and sexually abused, kicked in the stomach during pregnancy, punched, dragged, beaten, burnt etc.
- c) 82% were raped and 45% raped repeatedly
- e) Fiji has 4th highest rate rate of physical/sexual abuse compared to 20 other countries using the same survey method.
- f) Fiji rates of injury due to domestic violence is high-of 20 countries Fiji is 4th.
- g) many women in Fiji are injured each day-43- due to domestic violence-estimated 15,725 injuries yearly.
- h) children whose mothers suffer from domestic violence are likely to have low school performance and repeat or drop out of school altogether or develop violent or suicide behavior.

8. THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE AGAIST WOMEN ADVERSLY IMPACT, PHYSICAL HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH .THE SURVEY ESTABLISHED THAT 5678 WOMEN WILL NEED HEALTH

CARE BUT WILL NOT ACCESS IT FOR THE REASONS ALREADY DISCUSSED. INJURIES FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ARE MANY AND VARIED INCLUDING-ASSAULT AND LOSING CONSCIOUSNESS,SPRAIN / DISLOCATIONS AND BROKEN BONES,BROKEN TEETH, EARDRUMS AND EYE INJURIES ,INTERNAL INJURIES ETC.NEW PROTOCOLS AND IMPROVED RURAL HEALT SERVICE IN THE RURAL AREAS TO DEAL WITH CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS ESSENTIAL..

9.POVERTY ERADICATION,SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAMMES FOR VICTIMS OF DOMETIC VIOLENCE,ARE SCARCE AND OBVIOUSLY NOT EFFECTIVE.ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT SHOUL D SUPPORT WOMEN TO CLAIM THEIR RIGHTS TO EARN AND CONTROL INCOME AND ASSETS AND SECURE ACCESS TO HOUSING AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES.

10. THERE HAVE BEEN WIDE -RANGING PROPOSALS ON HOW TO ADDRESS AND END VIOLENCE FROM AWARENESS,TARGETTING THE RISK GROUPS,IMPROVING HEALT SECTOR RESPONSES,PREVENTION,GENDER EQUALITY TO SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND COUNSELLING,MEDIATION SERVICES,PEACE KEEPING,GENDER EQUALITY ETC.THE FIRST EFFECTIVE MEASURE IS NOT NEW –IT IS RECOGNITION THAT IT IS EVERYONE’S BUSINESS – SERVICE PROVIDER, TRADITIONAL AND CHURCH LEADERS,FAMILIES AND FRIENDS TO ENSURE THAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN IS NOT TOLERATED.THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE A LOT IN THE WAY OF WELFARE AND SOCIAL PROTECTION TO VICTIMS BUT NOT ADEQUATELY .

10. GIVEN THE URGENCY AND SERIOUSNESS OF THIS CRISIS, PRAGMATIC AND PRACTICAL MEASURES HAVE TO BE ADOPTED FORTHWITH. FIJI PPSEAWA IS CONSIDERING MORE SHELTER/HOMES AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND IS PROPOSING AN INTERGRATED PROJECT IN A RURAL AREA (HIGH FREQUENCY) FOR SHELTER/LIVELIHOOD AND EMPOWERMENT /COUNSELLING/SMALL BUSINESS CENTRE TO BE SUSTAINABLE AND SELF FUNDING .FOR THIS PILOT PROJECT WE HAVE SECURED A PIECE OF LAND BUT WE

NEED FUNDING ASSISTANCE AND FOR THAT I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO INVITE PARTNERS AND ADVICE ON DOORS AND DONORS FOR DIALOGUE .I HAVE ALREADY PREPARED A PROJECT DOCUMENT IN CASE THERE ARE INTERESTS RECEIVED IN THIS FORUM.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOU KIND ATTENTION.

TAINA TAGICAKIBAU – NATIONAL PRESIDENT,PPSEAWA FIJI.