

Clean Energy Workshop and Pacific Women in Energy Conference

Partnership of the U.S Embassy Suva and SPC

4 – 6 October, 2022
Suva, Fiji

Background

Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy can greatly improve quality of life for all. However, there is a considerable gap in the benefits from energy resources across the 22 Pacific Islands Countries and Territories (PICTs). The Pacific Islands region is facing a unique and challenging situation with respect to energy security and resilience. Demographics vary widely between countries, but often feature small, isolated population centres. Markets are very thin, difficult to serve, and without significant economies of scale. Across the PICTs, 36% of the population is without access to electricity, but access varies widely, from 10% to 100% at the national level. Half of the population in the Pacific are still using fuels such as biomass and kerosene for cooking which are detrimental to their health and the environment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a key factor in slowing progress toward energy access in the region in the last 2 years. At the current rate of progress, 20 % of the population will remain without electricity by 2030 despite the fact that most PICTs have made commitments to achieve 100% energy access by 2030. Addressing these gaps has become more crucial, especially since the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal 7 (ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all) recognizes that energy is central to progress in all areas of development.

While energy is critical to improve quality of life, the access to energy is not equal. This is a consequence of the deeply embedded structural conditions in the Pacific region determined by gender, age, disability, religion, language, *kastom* and tradition to name a few. While women and girls carry the higher share of household work requiring use of energy, their access to energy is limited because of these structural conditions. In this context, gender-blind approaches can further institutionalise and perpetuate existing inequalities.

There is also inequality in the access of income generation, participation in the labour force and leadership in the energy sector. Women continue to face legal discrimination when trying to join the labour force as employees or entrepreneurs. In the informal sector where a large proportion of women engaged in, they are subject to precarious work condition where most work is low-paid, part-time and unregulated. The labour rights are unprotected, and job security is vulnerable to economic volatility. Limited childcare and access to capital and other financial resources further impedes women's participation.

Meanwhile women are primary users and key actors in clean energy development. Women can be key agents of change, and their participation in energy-related labour force and leadership can create a more gender-balanced energy sector. This will accelerate socio-economic development and a faster transition towards a cleaner future. As clean energy has become a growth sector, to avoid socially excluded groups to lose out from engaging with these energy projects

At the 51st Pacific Islands Forum in July, 2022, the Pacific islands leaders made an ambitious commitment amalgamated in the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. They called for a clear pathway for energy security and urgent requirement for decarbonisation of the energy sector towards renewable energy. Pacific Leaders have also announced a collective aim to achieve carbon neutrality in the Pacific by 2050. With these clean energy targets, the Pacific region is essentially undergoing a clean energy transition that will result in abundant economic benefits. It is critical that regional and national authorities ensure that both women and men have equal access to these new opportunities.

This regional strategy reinforces the regional commitment to the Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality. The platform offers targets and indicators on women's rights and gender equality and is a regional counterpart to the global commitment on sustainable development through empowering women.

Pacific Energy and Gender Network Strategic Action Plan (PEGSAP)

Social development, following people-centered and social inclusion approaches, underpins the Pacific Community (SPC)'s scientific and technical programmes. We integrate gender assessments and gender mainstreaming activities, and measure outcomes related to empowering women, providing equitable capacity-development opportunities, and offering a space to address issues of women working in many sectors.

At the 2019 regional meeting of energy ministers in Apia,¹ PICTs endorsed the development of the new Framework on Energy Security in the Pacific 2020-2030 and directed that it further addresses the gender conditions/imbalance in the energy sector. The ministers' resolution also notes the progress of energy projects implemented by SPC, including the Pacific Energy Gender Network.

The Pacific Energy and Gender Network Strategic Action Plan (PEGSAP) sets out the strategic direction and suggested priorities to address the structural barriers in advancing gender outcomes in energy sector at (1) **the institutional** level by strengthening the enabling factors to promote gender mainstreaming; at (2) **the business/utility** level by enhancing employment opportunities for women; at (3) **the society/community** level by promoting women's involvement in energy-related decision-making at the community and household levels; and (4) **the individual** level by enhancing women's agency, knowledge, skills and access to resources to voice their energy needs and engage in the clean energy value chain.

PEGSAP is intended to serve as a guiding framework for each PICTs to implement in a flexible, responsive, and culturally sensitive manner, considering both women's and men's needs and responsibilities, and ensuring equal participation of both men and women in development activities and as beneficiaries and decision-makers. Each PICTs is to adapt the PGSAP to its national context by selecting its own priority activities and developing a national level action plan. The PGSAP also aims to develop institutional gender action plans for main energy stakeholders to mainstream gender in their internal policies and procedures. SPC has been designated to oversee the implementation of PGSAP.

Why the Pacific Women in Energy Conference?

The Pacific Women in Energy Conference provides for a timely opportunity to reactivate the Pacific Energy and Gender (PEG) Network, a means of sharing of lessons and best practices in harnessing the economic and gender equality benefits that renewable energy presents. This reinvigoration of PEG Network builds on the earlier phase, which mission was to uphold the mandate of regional policy and programmatic framework on gender and sustainable development to ensure active, meaningful, and inclusive participation of all members of Pacific society particularly women in the planning and development of clean energy sector.

The Conference is also an impetus to launch PEG Network Strategic Gender Action Plan (PEGSAP) which offers guideline for gender mainstreaming in the energy sector across the Pacific. Integral to the launch of PGSAP is the setting up of a Regional Steering Committee, a coordination mechanism at the regional level to provide oversight of the delivery of PGSAP at country level and ensure relevant linkages and complementarity with external initiatives and stakeholders.

What will Pacific Women in Energy 2022 Discuss?

Across the three days, Pacific Women in Energy Conference 2022 will consist of plenary presentations and *talanoa* in small group, as follow:

What will Pacific Women in Energy 2022 deliver?

Across the three days, Pacific Women in Clean Energy Conference 2022 will consist of plenary presentations and *talanoa* in small group, as follow:

Day 1	Session 1	Each PIC has their own ambitious clean energy transition plans with various degree of success making progress towards their goals.
4 OCT	National Clean Energy Transition Plans & Challenges in the Pacific	In this session, participants from each country will provide concise overviews of their national energy transition plans (lengthy process) , key challenges they have faced with implementation, and any solutions or best practices they want to highlight. This will be followed by a facilitated

¹ Fourth Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministers' Meeting, "Resolution of Energy Ministers", Apia, Samoa, 19 September 2019. Available online: <http://prdrse4all.spc.int/>.

		<p>group discussion on shared challenges, opportunities, and lessons learned.</p> <p>Potential speakers: Government officials, industry, and civil society representatives from each PIC represented at the conference; researchers from the University of the South Pacific (USP); and regional representatives from the Pacific Community (SPC), the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP), and the Pacific Power Association (PPA).</p>
	<p>Session 2</p> <p>Standards and Legislative and Regulatory Frameworks for Clean Energy Development</p>	<p>Clean energy initiatives in the Pacific – whether at the community, national, and regional levels – have been mostly piecemeal in nature, with limited efforts to impose national and regional standards.</p> <p>This session will focus on the critical role standardization and certification requirements can play in reducing long-term operational and maintenance costs of solar and other clean energy systems. The session also will explore the important role that legislative and national and regional regulatory frameworks can play in fostering clean energy development and reducing dependence on fossil fuels, especially costly imported diesel fuel.</p> <p>Potential speakers: Experts from key regional Pacific bodies and national and regional regulatory bodies, including the Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (PCREEE), the Office of Pacific Energy Regulators Alliance (OPERA), and the Sustainable Energy Industry Association of the Pacific Islands (SEIAPI); and US experts from USAID, ENR, Department of Energy, and U.S. regulatory bodies.</p>
	<p>Session 3</p> <p>Tools for Attracting Private & Multilateral Investment</p>	<p>A major challenge in the Pacific is attracting private and multilateral investment for clean energy projects. PICs are handicapped by limited economies of scale and their remoteness from major markets and each other. PICs also generally lack the human resources and technical capacity necessary to attract clean energy funding from multilateral banks and climate-financing facilities, including the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF).</p> <p>This session will focus on strategies and potential U.S. assistance for overcoming these limitations and attract more foreign investment, including from U.S. sources.</p> <p>Potential Speakers: Fiji-based representatives from the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) office and likeminded development partners; and U.S. government representatives, including from the regional Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) office in Sydney, USAID Manilla (especially from the Climate Ready Program, which assists PICs apply for GEF and GCF funding), the United States Trade and Development Agency (USTDA), and the Development Finance Corporation (DFC).</p>
	<p>Session 4</p> <p>Beyond Solar & Hydro: Other Clean Energy Opportunities</p>	<p>Most clean energy initiatives in the Pacific have focused on the potential of solar, while Papua New Guinea and Fiji also have benefitted from hydro resources. This session will include presentations and discussion of other possible clean energy opportunities for the Pacific, including offshore wind, tidal energy, geothermal, and biofuels.</p> <p>Potential speakers: Experts from Pacific regional bodies -- including USP and SPC, the latter of which has been exploring biogas and tidal energy potential; and US clean energy startups; and U.S. government experts, including from ENR, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), and Department of Energy.</p>

<p>DAY 2</p> <p>5 Oct</p>	<p>Session 1</p> <p>Understanding marginalization and supporting empowerment and engagement of populations with different identities for energy resilient communities</p>	<p>This session will focus to build understanding around marginalization and supporting empowerment and engagement of populations with different identities particularly women for energy resilient communities.</p> <p>This will be delivered by cross learning opportunity between policy makers and community of practice. This is where community of practice will share experience, challenges, lessons, and innovative ideas.</p> <p>The session is to follow by PICTs convening to group discussions and reporting back to plenary. Countries are requested to present on what is happening at home, with a short 5-minute presentation covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • current status of access to energy (through gender perspective), legislation, policy, planning or programming initiatives to address gender equality, and social inclusion in the energy sector, both in terms of meeting the energy needs of everyone all the time, but also in terms of empowerment and engagement of populations particularly women in clean energy sector value chain; • data currently being collected (socio, economic, sex-disaggregated etc); the methods used for data collection and assessment of data; • challenges being faced, and; • any new or innovative approaches to promote gender equality being trialled <p>Each group <i>talanoa</i> will be facilitated by SPC's gender advisors.</p> <p>Suggested lead / moderator: TBC</p>
<p>DAY 3</p> <p>6 OCT</p>	<p>Session 2</p> <p>From gender equality and inclusion to transformation in the energy sector</p>	<p>To ensure sustainable and equitable outcomes in renewable energy, we must go beyond just inclusion in energy activities and services and seek to be transformative in our approaches. This requires addressing fundamental barriers to gender equality and what these transformative approaches look like in the respective institutions, business utilities, communities, and individuals.</p> <p>The session will require PICTs, institutions, service providers/business utilities and society/communities to produce an action plan, with concrete next steps for 1-3 years towards realising one or more of these objectives as outlined in PEGSAP: (i) mainstream gender in energy policies, (ii) enhance employment opportunities for women in the energy workforce, (iii) to promote women's access to, and representation in energy-related-decision-making, (iv) ensuring that women in the Pacific have enhanced agency, knowledge, skills, and access to resources to voice their energy needs and engage in in the energy value chain. Countries are requested to present their respective action plan, with a short 5-minute presentation to the plenary.</p> <p>Each group <i>talanoa</i> will be facilitated by SPC's gender advisors.</p> <p>Suggested lead / moderator: TBC</p> <p>This session will culminate in the announcement of a Regional Steering Committee members and mandates.</p>

The discussions and dialogue during the conference will:

- > **Enhance the generation of knowledge** to inform policies and decision-making, and support advocacy for gender equality in the clean energy sector
- > **Mainstream gender** across all legislation, policies, programmes, and services delivered by government, CROP agencies and civil society organisations (CSOs)

- > **Develop and strengthen effective partnerships** between governments, institutions, CSOs, the private sector, so that women and men of all ages across all levels of society have equal access to, as well as benefits from, energy resources flow, and economic opportunities
- > **Mobilise resources and sustain investment** to support women's engagement in the energy value chain, facilitate financial inclusion of women and in rights-based approaches to technology that contribute to alleviating the burden of unpaid care work and support women's economic empowerment

Outputs of Women in Energy Conference 2022

- > Clear roadmap to fulfill priority initiatives outlined in the Framework for Energy Security and Resilience in the Pacific (FESRIP) 2021-2030.
- > Officially launch PEGSAP
- > List of PEGSAP priority activities to be implemented in the 1-3 years
- > Identify the resources (personnel and funding) needed to fully implement PEGSAP, including beyond the next three years
- > Establish a PEGSAP Regional Steering Committee (RSC) and identify RSC members
- > Conference report

Participants

Around 50 people would be expected to participate from the following organisations:

- (1). Pacific Energy Gender Network members, energy professionals, regulators, government officials (including from PIC Ministries of Women), academics and researchers, NGOs and civil society representatives, private energy firms, Female Leaders in Energy (FLIE) program participants and representatives from their hosting institutions, and representatives from SPC's Pacific Women's Lead Programme, Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (PCREEE), Office of Pacific Energy Regulators Alliance (OPERA), and likeminded donors and development partners.
- (2). RSC members that include representatives of the Pacific Power Association (PPA), Department of Energy, Ministries of Women, University of the South Pacific (USP), Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), development partners, and Sustainable Energy Industry Association of the Pacific Islands (SEIAPI).