

NATIONAL POLICY FOR WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY 2011-2015



Department
for Community
Development

CONTENTS

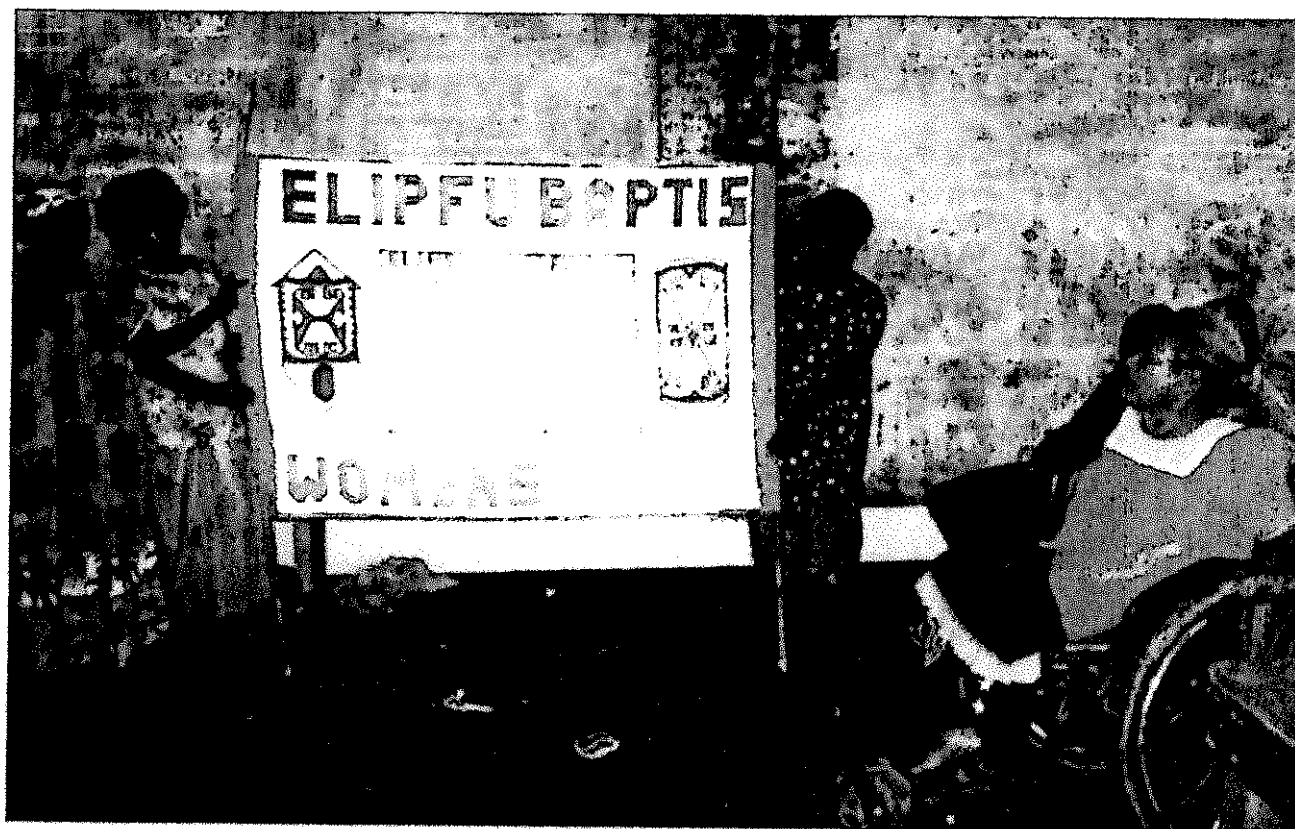
ACRONYMS.....	4
FOREWORD BY THE MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	5
STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY.....	6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	7
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE POLICY	8
1.1 Background	8
1.2 Definition of gender equality.....	9
1.3 Policy basis	10
1.4 Policy approach.....	16
1.5 Policy purpose.....	18
1.6 Policy development process.....	19
CHAPTER 2: POLICY MISSION AND PRINCIPLES	20
2.1 Policy vision.....	20
2.2 Policy mission.....	20
2.3 Policy objectives.....	20
2.4 Guiding principles.....	20
CHAPTER 3: PRIORITY ACTION AREAS AND POLICY STRATEGIES	22
3.1 Priority action areas.....	22
3.2 Other important issues	27
3.3 Policy strategies	28
CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION	32
4.1 Office for the Development of Women	32
4.2 National Council of Women.....	32
4.3 Gender and development.....	33
4.4 National government departments and agencies.....	33
4.5 Provincial governments	33
4.6 Civil society organisations	34
4.7 Development partners	34
4.8 Private sector	34
4.9 Inter-Agency Women's Advisory Committee	34
4.10 Civil Society Women's Advisory Committee	35
CHAPTER 5: POLICY REVIEW	36
5.1 Policy implementation and communication structure	37

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: Glossary of terms.....	38
APPENDIX B: National goals and directive principles	40
APPENDIX C: Vision 2050	41
APPENDIX D: Sectoral policies and plans.....	42
D1 National Population Policy 2000-2010.....	42
D2 Integrated Community Development Policy 2007	42
D3 The National Health Plan 2011-2020.....	42
D4 Gender Equity in Education Policy: Education Capacity Building Program 2003 08	43
D5 National Agriculture Development Policy and Strategy 2001-2012 and the National Agriculture Development Plan 2007-2016.....	43
D6 Law and Justice Sector Gender Strategy 2005-2010.....	44
D7 Women in Mining National Action Plan 2007.....	45
APPENDIX E: Convention on the Elimination of All Discrimination Against Women....	46
APPENDIX F: Beijing Platform for Action.....	48
APPENDIX G: Millennium Development Goals.....	49
Implementation Plan 2011-2016.....	50

ACRONYMS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	civil society organisation
FBO	faith based organisation
LLG	local level government
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MTDP	Medium Term Development Plan
NGOs	non-government organisation
PNG	Papua New Guinea
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association
WID	women in development



Women from Telefomin District in Sandaun Province

FOREWORD BY THE MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



The revised *National Policy for Women and Gender Equality 2011-2015* is a big achievement and a positive policy direction for further advancing gender mainstream and equality programmes and projects in Papua New Guinea. The first National Women's Policy, launched in 1991, was women specific. Its aim was to establish or strengthen systems and women's national mechanisms in the country. The policy achieved its overall objectives with one major achievement being the establishment in Papua New Guinea of the Office for the Development of Women.

This revised policy builds on the activities implemented under the initial one but provides a rights-based framework for building partnerships with stakeholders and partners at all levels to develop and implement gender equality and inclusive programmes which will address key issues affecting women and men. Women's critical roles in food production, income generation, natural resources management, and community organisation and domestic responsibilities are essential for sustainable development. While women's contribution to the national economy is substantial, but their labour remains undervalued and undercounted in national accounts. The Government of Papua New Guinea is committed to the development and empowerment of all citizens, including women and girls, through its national Constitution - specifically under the National Goals and Directive Principles. Integral to these principles are the components of human development and equality and participation. These guarantee the fundamental right and freedom of every Papua New Guinea citizen, including women, to participate actively in the political, social, education advancement and economic activities of the country.

The government's international commitment to strengthen the course of women in this country is reflected in Papua New Guinea's ratification (1995) of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The convention has been described as an international bill of rights for women, spelling out areas in which women experience discrimination and committing signatory countries to amend their laws, construct national gender policies and create institutions to deal with discrimination.

Papua New Guinea has performed exceptionally well in legislative reforms and policy frameworks but the country has been ineffective in the enforcement and implementation of these. This has restrained the pace of reforms by executing agencies in both government and the private sector (including non-government organisations). There will be further legislative reforms to adequately address women's leadership and political participation and other critical issues affecting women. This policy will provide the direction to address issues hindering progress and create an enabling environment for women and girls to be equal, active participants and beneficiaries in all development processes in Papua New Guinea.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Carol Kidu'.

DAME CAROL KIDU, DBE, MP
Minister for Community Development

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY



I am honoured to present the second national policy to address and advance women and gender issues in Papua New Guinea. The *National Policy for Women and Gender Equality 2011-2015* is the result of intensive consultations at all levels of society including regional and international forums. It recognizes the important need to push forward on priority women and gender issues with sound and practical national direction and guidelines.

In Papua New Guinea, women continue to be champions as change agents. They continue to influence and make positive changes in decision making, policy and legislative reform, negotiating and bringing about peace and restoration and being actively involved in formal and informal economic activities at all levels. Policy and legislative reviews - including the gazetting of the proposed *Law in National Gazette* No. G821, dated 23 April 2010, on the Alteration to the Constitution on Reserved Seats for Women - reflect the national government's recognition of and commitment to realising the constitutional rights of all citizens. This especially includes the gender equality and equity needed to empower women and girls so they can be involved in all forms of political, social and economic activities and achieve better quality of life.

This *National Policy for Women and Gender Equality 2011-2015* aims to improve and strengthen the position of all members of the community - women and men and girls and boys - both as agents of change and as beneficiaries of the development process. I am impressed with the efforts made to promote and increase the appointment of women as departmental heads, diplomats and foreign mission offices and senior officers. This indicates the nation's confidence in women's participation in the country's development and decision-making processes.

I acknowledge and commend the invaluable contributions to the development and launch of this important policy through comments, suggestions and other input by stakeholders in the private sector and public sector at all levels, as well as by development and donor partners, civil society organisations and other concerned individuals. I also express my sincere gratitude to Australia, through the Papua New Guinea Office of its international aid agency (AusAID) and the United Nations Papua New Guinea Office, for providing the technical support and needed financial assistance to develop this policy as well as editing support. I am confident Australia's support will continue through policy implementation.

This *National Policy for Women and Gender Equality 2011-2015* would not have been possible without the commitment and passion of the management and staff of Papua New Guinea's Department for Community Development through the Gender and Development Branch and the Office for the Development of Women, who all worked hard to improve the quality of lives of the majority of Papua New Guineans.

Finally, I would like to extend a big thank you and congratulations to everyone who contributed to the development and launch of this substantial and meaningful initiative.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Klapat', written over a horizontal line.

JOSEPH KLAPAT
Secretary
Department for Community Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The government continues to fulfil its constitutional commitment to improving the situation of women in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and one of the key means for doing so is through its affirmative policy framework. The first National Women's Policy was developed in 1991 and its implementation was supported through the Department for Community Development (Home Affairs). The policy reaffirmed the national directive principles and goals in the national Constitution on equality and participation and integral human development.

It was based on women in development (WID) approach, highlighting that women need to be integral part of the development process as active agents and beneficiaries. Programmes informed by the WID approach addressed women's practical needs, such as improving women's health and education, creating employment and income-generating opportunities and improving access to credit facilities.

The policy has been revised and renamed the National Women and Gender Equality Policy 2011-2015 and the new policy will be based on a gender and development approach. This approach addresses several developmental priorities covering important gender issues, including equal opportunities, equal treatment and equal entitlements so both women and men can each achieve full human development.

This policy provides an umbrella framework for advancing these development priorities for women in PNG. It is founded on the national Constitution and national overarching strategies such as the Vision 2050 (2009), Strategic Plan 2010-2030, Medium Development Strategy 2005-2010, national policies for economic and social development and relevant national legislation.

The key priority areas identified in the policy are common to women worldwide and are also covered in the international, regional and national platforms for action that PNG supports including:

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1995), Beijing Platform for Action 1995, Beijing +5, Pacific Platform for Action, and the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender Equality 2005-2015.

The policy has been developed through extensive consultation with all relevant stakeholders including government agencies at the national, provincial, district and local level government (LLG) levels, private sector partners, development and donors partners and civil society organisations (CSOs). This consultative process has been used to encourage ownership of the policy by partners and strong partnerships for policy implementation.

Gender and development issues are cross-cutting and strengthening partnerships to provide positive support by all relevant stakeholders will be required to implement the policy. The roles of relevant stakeholders are specified in this policy.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE POLICY

Background

Gender is about women and men, girls and boys. Women make up more than 50 per cent of the population in PNG. They produce and process more than 80 per cent of the country's food, mostly with limited technical assistance. While they are acknowledged as the backbone of PNG society they are also, with some force, regarded as the lower order. The disadvantaged position of women in PNG was recognized at Independence in 1975 and policy measures implemented since then have begun to address the issue. Ten years later, in 1984, the National Women's Development Programme was introduced to mobilize women and build a strong network of women's organisations from district level up to national level. The programme was, however, under funded which hindered progress.

The National Women's Development Programme was followed with a strong affirmative policy commitment by the government and the launch in 1991 of the first National Women's Policy, developed to advance the situation of women.

The first National Women's Policy focused on advocacy for and nationwide awareness of women's issues in PNG. It also focused on the need to strengthen and establish national women's mechanisms for change. Great strides have been made through this policy implementation, including the establishment of the Office for Development of Women in 2009 under the PNG government's Department for Community Development. Another significant achievement has been the increase in the participation of women in decision making on national boards and advisory committees and in executive and management positions and other levels of authority. Women's political participation has increased at all levels, including the number of women members at local and provincial levels. However, the number of women members at the national level of government needs improvement. While a large number of women candidates contest during national elections, the number elected remains critically low, at one female Member of Parliament to 108 male Members of Parliament.

Current indicators reveal that the literacy status of women in PNG is lower than in other Melanesian countries. An increased number of women occupy managerial positions but the percentage remains low. The majority of young women do not receive the training needed to participate in the formal sector or function productively in their own villages. PNG still has the highest infant and maternal mortality rates in the world. According to the 2006 Health Demography Survey, PNG's maternal mortality rate was high, with 733 per 100 000 women dying while giving birth with approximately four dying daily and 1300 women dying every year. The life expectancy of women was 47 years of age and most died of preventable diseases.

There has been a decline in the number of women involved in decision-making processes. Although the national Constitution provides for equal rights of all citizens, women do not yet fully understand and exercise these rights. This has been due to ineffective government mechanisms advocating for and promoting the rights of women and gender inequalities, which remain a severe impediment to development in PNG. For women this is in all spheres of life - social, cultural, economic and political.

The first National Women's Policy was developed on a Women In Development (WID) approach and marked an important corrective approach by highlighting that women need to be integrated as active agents into the development process - if efficient, effective development is to be achieved.

Programmes informed by this approach addressed women's practical needs such as creating employment and income-generating opportunities and improving access to credit and education. It has achieved its purpose and is overdue for review which is the main purpose for the review and development of the new National Gender Equality Policy 2011-2015.

This new policy reaffirms the national directive and goals in the national Constitution on equality, participation and integral human development. It acknowledges that the social, cultural, economic and political issues highlighted in the first National Women's Policy in 1991 are prevailing and will be addressed as the priority areas in this Policy. The policy also recognises emerging issues affecting and will affect women due to the increasing mining and development projects such as logging and fisheries.

A range of approaches will be applied to implement the programmes and activities that fall under this policy, with the main emphasis being on a gender and development model. Gender and development approach is adopted in this policy in response to the international trend in applying this approach in progressing women's work. The policy will focus on addressing inequalities and bridging gaps in relevant programme areas so women and men can work together as equal partners in nation building. This will include shaping the characters and mindsets of members of the younger generation, so they understand and accept that equality between women and men is a fundamental human right and is a common value needed for building a better society in PNG. This policy introduces several development approaches which stakeholders can draw on, as appropriate, for implementation.

Definition of gender equality

Gender equality is when the roles of women and men are valued equally. The definition has three aspects: equal opportunities, equal treatment and equal entitlements. It is directly linked to human development.

Gender equality overcomes stereotypes, prejudices and other barriers so women and men can contribute to and benefit from economic, social, cultural and political developments in society at the same level. Gender equality promotes the equal participation of women and men in decision making; supports women and girls so they can fully exercise their rights; and reduces the gap between women's and men's access to and control of resources and the benefits of the development process.

PNG is predominantly a subsistence economy and cultural norms define women's and men's roles and responsibilities, rights, access to and control over resources, as well as their interests, needs and identities in relation to one another. Women's traditional roles and responsibilities primarily concern domestic duties - child rearing and bearing, household chores, family and community caring and food production for consumption. Men's traditional roles and responsibilities primarily concern heavier, riskier jobs usually outside of the home - building houses and fences, fishing, gardening and making decisions on allocating and sharing resources.

In contemporary PNG society, women's traditional roles have changed and, today, women are engaged more in cash economy activities in the informal sector and wage employment in the formal sector. The changes being called for through this new policy focus on women and men working together in search of solutions that encourage shared responsibilities, mutual respect and trust to achieve gender equality.

Policy basis

This National Policy Women and Gender Equality 2011-2015 is an umbrella policy for women in PNG. It reflects the national Constitution, the nation's overarching strategies and policies for economic and social development and the nation's legislation. It also reflects the goals and principals of the international conventions and instruments to which PNG is a signatory.

This section provides a short description of some of PNG's own policies, which informed the development of this new strategy.

1.1 The national Constitution of the independent state of Papua New Guinea

The new national policy on women and gender equality draws on the national Constitution, in particular:

Goal 1: Integral Human Development

This goal declares that '... every person [is] to be dynamically involved in the process of freeing himself or herself from every form of domination or oppression so that each man or woman will have the opportunity to develop as a whole person in relationship with others.'

Goal 2: Equality and Participation

This goal '... provides for the equality of all citizens and directs that opportunities must be created for all citizens to participate actively in the political, social, education advancement and economic activities in the country.' The Preamble of the National Constitution also calls for '... every citizen to have equal access to legal processes and all services, governmental and otherwise, that are required for the fulfilment of his or her real needs and aspirations'.

1.2 National strategies

1.2.1 Vision 2050

PNG's Vision 2050 strategy was launched in 2009 providing a 40-year framework for improving the quality of life of the people through better quality service delivery. Vision 2050 embraces the directive and five goals enshrined in the Constitution.

Vision 2050 reflects the government's aspirations to improve PNG's human development index through economic growth, better service delivery, improved education, improved health services and sound political leadership and structures.

The strategy emphasises creating opportunities in the development process by empowering the people through improved education and life which are included in its seven pillars.

All pillars have relevant crosscutting gender issues captured in the priority areas of the National Policy for Women and Gender Equality 2011-2015, with specific alignment to Pillar 1 on Human Capital Development, Gender, Youth and People Empowerment.

1.2.2 Papua New Guinea Development Strategic Plan 2010-2030

The government has integrated poverty reduction as a development priority in its new Development Strategic Plan 2010–2030. The plan maps out the country's direction, sets out 20 years of direction and provides the sectoral focus needed for implementation.

The plan also establishes a new direction and parameters for development planning and is a translation of the vision on the basis of the Five Directive Principles of the National Constitution, the Eight Point Improvement Plan and Vision 2050. Implementation is to take place through the annual planning, programming and budgetary processes of government.

To ensure that the plan produces tangible service deliverables for the people, the government expects government departments, agencies, faith based organisations (FBOs), CSOs, private sectors, international donors, development partners and the wider community to align their sector policies, plans and strategies with development strategic plan.

1.2.3 Medium Term Development Plan 2010-2015

PNG's Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP), which covers a five-year period to 2015, is the country's overarching plan for economic and social development. It is based on sector activities and includes the need to monitor outcomes. The MTDP reiterates the government's commitment to the MDGs and recognizes that health and education outcomes are crucial to meeting PNG's human development objectives.

The MTDP fosters sustainable improvements in the quality of life of all Papua New Guineans and although gender is identified as an important issue in the plan, it has not been designated as a priority for government expenditure.

The National Policy for Women and Gender Equality 2011–2015 will provide the framework for increased government support in the resources required for effective implementation.

1.3 Other relevant government policies and legislations

Gender equality and development are crosscutting issues and therefore this policy takes a sector-wide approach, aligning with other government policies and initiatives to address them in partnership with relevant agencies and organisations. The policy also recognizes the efforts of many public and private sector organisations to develop employment guidelines and policies on equal employment opportunities and equal pay. Such efforts were highlighted at the stakeholder consultation workshops held for the development of this policy and included the National Population Policy 2000–2010, Integrated Community Development Policy 2007, the National Health Plan 2011–2020, Gender Equity in Education Policy: Education Capacity Building Program 2003–2008, National Agriculture Development Policy and Strategy 2001–2012, National Agriculture Development Plan 2007–2016, Women In Mining National Action Plan 2007–2012 and Law and Justice Sector Gender Strategy 2005–2010.

1.4 International commitments

The National Policy for Women and Gender Equality 2011–2015 accommodates the PNG government's legal international commitments on the ratification of treaties and conventions on women—including the Human Rights Charter made at all United Nations international conferences and agreements to gender equality in implementing both the Beijing Platform for Action 1995, the Pacific Platform for Action, as well as the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender Equality 2005–2015. The international instruments on gender and development are outlined below since they were the main sources of information used to develop the regional and national priority programme areas that continue to be addressed in PNG as well as this policy.

1.4.1 Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Since the adoption of the United Nations Human Rights Charter in 1945, the equality of women and men has been accepted as a fundamental principle of human rights. Many international agreements, such as the CEDAW (1979), the World Conference on Human Rights (1993) and the MDGs (2000) have highlighted the need for countries to take action against discriminatory practices.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights lays the foundation upon which all other international human rights conventions and agreements are based and this policy takes into account the Articles under the Declaration that concern gender and development.

The spirit of the Declaration is captured in PNG's Constitution which guarantees the basic rights and freedom of the individual regardless of race, sex, political opinion, tribe or place of origin.

1.4.2 Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

The PNG government ratified the CEDAW in 1995. Discrimination against women means any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, regardless of their marital status, on a basis of equality of women and men of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural and civil or any other field.

The CEDAW has been described as an international bill of rights for women. It spells out in 16 Articles the areas in which women experience discrimination and commits signatory countries to amend their laws, construct national gender policies and create institutions to deliver them.

The PNG government presented its initial, first, second and third periodic reports consolidated in one document to the United Nations Committee on CEDAW in July 2010. This National Policy for Women and Gender Equality 2011–2015 provides clear direction for the PNG government to further address the critical issues in the CEDAW Articles based on the UN CEDAW Committee Concluding Comments and translate them into actions. PNG CEDAW Implementation Strategy based on the UN CEDAW Committee Concluding Comments will be developed, however, the issues are also accommodated in this policy. (See the implementation plan included later in this strategy).

1.4.3 Beijing Platform for Action

The PNG government agreed to implement the Beijing Platform for Action at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. The Platform for Action, adopted by consensus, reflects the international community's commitment to the advancement of women. It sets out measures for national and international action over the five years from 1995 to 2000.

When implemented, the Platform for Action will enhance the social, economic and political empowerment of women, improve their overall health, improve their access to relevant education and promote their reproductive rights. It set time-specific targets by committing governments to carry out reform actions in the health, education and legal sectors as well as in decision making.

These issues continue to affect the status of women in PNG and have been designated as key priority areas in this policy.

1.4.4 Pacific Platform for Action

While Melanesian, Micronesia and Polynesia are unique, they share a bond known as 'the Pacific experience'. In this lies the strength to make the Pacific Platform for Action a reality.

The critical issues contained in the platform are the same as those in the global and PNG national platforms for action and include issues such as health, education, economic empowerment and agriculture.

1.4.5 The PNG National Platform for Action: a Decade of Action for Women Towards National Unity and Sustainability 1995-2000

The PNG Platform for Action: a Decade of Action for Women Towards National Unity and Sustainability 1995-2000 is a national statement based on a range of reports, plans and consultations. It reaffirmed the national Constitution, particularly with respect to strengthening its goals of equality and participation and its emphasis on sustainable human development and peace. It was developed with input from NGOs and reflected the spirit of partnership between these organisations and the PNG government and their joint desire to coordinate a nationally recognized framework of action in time for the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and throughout the next decade.

Critical areas of concern are common to the issues included in the platforms mentioned earlier such as health, education and women's economic empowerment.

This platform is guided by the commitments made at all United Nations international conferences on women - in particular the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 and the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender Equality 2005-2015. By agreeing to the commitments set forth in the Beijing Platform for Action at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), the PNG government promised to enhance the national machinery for women's advancement; to increase women's participation in decision making and to safeguard women's rights to health, education and social wellbeing, as well as to remove legal obstacles and gender discriminatory practices.

After more than a decade, the key areas of concern in the Platform for Action have been recaptured in this policy. This is because there have been no major improvements on the status of women in these areas.

1.4.6 The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015

The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015 reflects the government's principles and values and incorporates its responses to the impact of global changes and challenges on women and men and girls and boys. It supports and works towards the attainment of the MDGs and the objectives of gender equality expressed in the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2000 Beijing +5 Political Declaration and Outcome Document.

The PNG government recognizes that poverty eradication, the protection and promotion of human rights, the strengthening of democracy and gender equality are intrinsically inter-related. In fact, the government's stance is that the MDGs cannot be fully achieved while women and men and girls and boys do not enjoy equal rights, treatment and access to resources in a climate of freedom and discrimination.

The Plan of Action for Gender Equality thus takes a rights-based approach and is grounded in the framework of international and regional human rights conventions and other instruments. Under the plan, the PNG government focuses its actions on four critical areas:

1. gender, democracy, peace and conflict
2. gender, human rights and law
3. gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment
4. gender and HIV/AIDS.

1.4.7 The Millennium Development Goals

The PNG government is a signatory to the MDGs, which are underpinned by economic, social and cultural rights, and has undertaken to uphold them. Importantly, the MDG's goals, targets and indicators embody an outcome-based and holistic approach to development. They require that state action be oriented towards achieving the goals in a people-oriented manner.

This is particularly so with Goal 3 - Promote gender equality and empower women. The other seven crosscutting goals are gender inclusive. They will be integrated into strategies for the key priority areas of this policy.

The MDGs have been incorporated into the PNG government's current Medium Term Development Plan 2005-2010 which recognizes that: 'Protection of the vulnerable and disadvantaged, and the promotion of gender equity, is both a moral and constitutional obligation for government.'

In many provinces, women are disadvantaged with access to basic services. The gender gap in education and literacy, for instance, is significant, although recent evidence suggests that young females (aged 15 to 24) are catching up with their male counterparts. Gender differences in adult literacy are even greater, with a strong bias in favour of males.

The National 2004 MDG Report shows that for the most part provinces with the highest gender equality are developing the fastest (National Capital District and the Coastal Region except for the Gulf and Islands Region provinces). The exception is the Momase Region, where relatively high gender equity is being dragged down by low performance in poverty, hunger and mortality indices. The Highlands provinces score relatively low on gender equity and overall development, with HIV/AIDS data suggesting these provinces are some of the worst affected in the country.

The MDG Report 2009 highlighted limited improvement in the areas of women and children and calls for the need to localise MDG indicators at sub-national levels in PNG.

The National Policy for Women and Gender Equality 2011-2015 will reinforce the government's commitment to the MDGs, acknowledging their influence in eradicating poverty, empowering women and improving women's and girls' access to health and education. It also reinforces the government's commitment to the Preamble of its national Constitution, as well as the principles enshrined in the CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Beijing +5 Political Declaration and Outcome Document (2000).

1.4.8 International Labour Organization conventions

The PNG government has also ratified 24 International Labour Organization conventions. The most relevant to women - and to this policy - are the Convention on Underground Work (Women) (No. 45), the Convention on Employment Policy (No. 122), the Convention on Maternity Protection (revised) (No. 103), Discrimination in Employment and Occupation (No. 111), Equal Remuneration (No. 100) and Minimum Age (No. 138). Despite signing these conventions, however, women in PNG still face employment problems outside of the legal framework which have a considerable influence on their opportunities and impact on the way they are treated in the labour market.

1.4.9 Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is also relevant to this policy. It promotes and advocates the 'best interest of the child' in nationality, development, survival, protection and participation of children and has a strong connection to the CEDAW - the two are intertwined.

Policy approach

PNG is a multicultural society with diversity across provinces and communities. The Community Livelihood and Community Sustainability Research (2006) conducted by PNG's Department for Community Development in remote and hinterland communities across the country indicated that no one strategy works effectively in service delivery across all provinces.

This policy therefore promotes specific strategic approaches to meet the needs of specific provinces. It provides a number of development models which stakeholders can apply in programme implementation based on the needs of women alone or on the needs of both women and men. These include the following:

1. Women in development

The WID model deconstructs the economic growth paradigm and focuses on women-specific statistics and indicators, policies and schemes, plan allocation and programmes on health, education and employment. While this helps raise the knowledge and skills of women to overcome social, economic and political disadvantages it may also increase the workload of women and fail to recognize the role of men as an essential element of change.

2. Women and development

The Women and Development model integrates women into development work as active change agents. It advocates affirmative action by the government and a proactive approach by civil society through NGOs and women's groups, which will help empower women to deal with the forces of a patriarchal class society such as PNG.

3. Gender and development

The Gender and Development model is based on an understanding of gender relations and focuses on empowering the weak (female or male). It is based on the premise that gender is socially constructed and that gender relations are power relations (power is an important analytical category).

This model focuses on household, custom, religion and culture and related inequalities, which result in unequal distribution of power, control over resources and decision making. It integrates gender planning into all aspects of development work and aims to understand the impact of proposed changes on women and men (although it may not always address the specific needs of women and men).

The Gender and Development model can also be applied in homes and schools to promote - among children at early ages - the importance of shared roles and responsibilities.

4. Research, data and action

The Research, Data and Action Model informs the development of theory and policies so they are credible. The women's movement and national and international organisations involved in development programmes recognize the importance of research and data.

For many years women advocates have challenged stereotypes depicting women as passive, dependent and inferior to men. But their efforts to challenge have been undermined by the lack of reliable statistics and analysis, including those without a male bias.

Putting this kind of numerical and analytical spotlight on the needs, efforts and contributions of women in PNG is one of the best ways to speed the process of moving from agenda to policy to practice and then ultimately to a society of peace, equality and sustained development.

This model means collecting relevant data on gender issues, feeding back results to those who must take action, collaboratively discussing data and results, formulating a plan of action and finally taking the necessary action. It involves a cyclical process and forms a continuous part of major gender programme activities.

5. Self Employed Women's Association

The Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) has forged a new model of what a trade union can be. It is relevant to unprotected low-income earners. Its members are the range of self-employed women typically working in the informal sector and effectively marginalized by mainstream development strategies.

SEWA integrates a complex myriad of ways of life, occupations and issues. Whether small or large, the changes this model has resulted in continue to influence increasingly broader spheres.

SEWA aims to improve women's working situations through day-to-day, grassroots changes. The tactics used vary by individual trade, but usually begin with confronting the exploiter direct and presenting demands for change. For women participating in piece-rate work, this means asking the employer for higher wages. For vendors, it means confronting the police officers who beat women and extract bribes from them on charges of 'encroachment'. For women providing services, it means ensuring they are paid fair wages and get steady work.

6. Empowering rural women through community development

This Community Development Model uses community development strategies to empower rural women through educational and small-scale household economic activities. It will have strong connection to the community learning and development approach taken in the implementation of the Integrated Community Development Policy.

Policy purpose

The main purpose of the National Policy for Women and Gender Equality 2011-2015 is to establish a clear vision and framework to:

1. guide the process of developing laws, policies, procedures and practices which will serve to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all spheres and structures of government as well as in the workplace, the community and the family
2. provide a clear policy framework and direction to guide gender mainstreaming in national strategies and programmes for women's empowerment and equal participation
3. ensure a reference point for government departments and agencies to consult in developing gender inclusive and sensitive laws, policies, procedures and practices.

Policy development process

The National Women and Gender Equality Policy is the culmination of an extensive consultative process using evidence-based participatory research conducted at local, provincial, regional and national levels. The process began in November 2008 with a Department for Community Development and United Nations Development Programme – AusAID sponsored workshop in Port Moresby which identified key issues of concern and developed a strategy and mechanism for undertaking consultations with women and men at local level. It built on the capacity of the participants of the Basic Education Development Project and Provincial Community Affairs Officers.

The first workshop was followed by several consultations held with provincial representatives who presented provincial reports consolidated into regional issues and objectives, with actions to be undertaken to address priority areas. This level consultative process also included members of civil society, such as mainline churches, FBOs, CSOs and NGOs.

Policy consultations were also held at the national level to gauge inputs from the national stakeholders including the National Government Departments and Agencies, NGOs, Churches, Donor and Development partners throughout 2009 and 2010.

These consultations immensely contributed to refining and improvement in the content of the Policy which went through five drafts. The fifth and final draft was submitted to the Executive Management Committee of the Department for approval which it did approve in its last 2010 meeting on the 17th December, 2010. The Committee also approved for Policy Submission to NEC for final approval of the Policy.

CHAPTER 2: POLICY MISSION AND PRINCIPLES

This policy provides the overarching framework and principles which government departments and agencies and private sector organisations and CSOs can draw on to produce their own more detailed policy documents, programmes and codes of practice in an inclusive manner and by engaging relevant stakeholders. It also provides an opportunity to translate international commitments made on gender equality, ensuring supportive national legislation and relevant policy objectives into more effective implementation.

Policy vision

The vision of the National Policy for Women and Gender Equality is 'to achieve a Papua New Guinean society in which all citizens - particularly women and girls - live together in dignity, safety, mutual respect and harmony'.

Policy mission

The policy's mission is 'to promote improved equality, participation and empowerment of women in Papua New Guinea'.

Policy objectives

2.1 Overall objective

The policy's overall objective is to facilitate the development and implementation of a gender equality and women's advancement programmes which will be founded on the principles of equality of all persons, particularly women and men, as enshrined in the constitution.

2.2 Specific objectives

The policy's two specific objectives are:

1. To create an enabling policy environment for translating government commitment to gender equality into a reality and to establish the policies, programmes, structures and mechanisms required to do so.
2. To empower women and to transform gender relations in all aspects of work and in all levels of government, including the wider society.

Guiding principles

The guiding principles in this policy are:

1. Empowerment

Empowering women to have equal access to the same resources as men have, and the opportunities to build the knowledge and skills needed to address and participate actively in activities that affect their lives and the communities.

2. Ownership

Ensuring women are able to take an active role in, and ownership of, mobilising resources to contribute effectively in economic activities that will enable them to maintain and sustain their livelihoods and those of their families and communities.

3. Equality and participation

Promoting sustainable development which depends on the active participation of all citizens at all levels of society. This includes promoting women's and girls' equal participation as citizens in the development process.

4. Morality and ethics

High moral and ethical standards are the prerequisites to any development process. The standards must start with extended family members especially their attitudes towards women members of families. This will ensure the standards have the widest possible impact at community level, especially important in light of increased violence against women in PNG.

Moral and ethical standards must also be included in the school curriculum to shape the characters of children at tender ages to instil discipline and responsibilities in them.

5. Partnership

Partnerships and networking are crucial to all organisations and groups that have mandates to work for social development. Such partnerships enhance and promote the cooperation necessary to make a difference. This policy will play a key role in promoting improved partnerships with the relevant stakeholders to advance.

6. Cultural foundations

Key values in Melanesian culture are family, community and relationships. These values need to be harnessed to create a safe and conducive environment for women and girls.

CHAPTER 3: PRIORITY ACTION AREAS AND POLICY STRATEGIES

Priority areas have been drawn from the Beijing Platform for Action, National Platform for Action and the extensive stakeholder consultations held at all levels for the development of this policy. The key challenge is to transform gender relations into a process of broader institutional change.

Priority action areas

3.1 Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence remains widespread in PNG and is linked with many other factors, such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, land and property rights, race and ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation. An integrated response is essential to address these factors. Special attention needs to be paid to promoting and protecting women who continue to be marginalized and disadvantaged in communities throughout the country. Women are also victims of PNG's escalating law and order problem which includes tribal fighting and armed conflict.

To deal with gender-based violence, a strong partnership is required between the Office for Development of Women, the police and other relevant agencies to establish an integrated database on violence against women and children and a database on counseling support options.

A recent law and justice white paper revealed that gender-based violence is a striking feature of contemporary disorder in PNG. Most perpetrators are young men, while a disproportionate number of victims are women and girls. Beneath the symptoms of disorder lie deeper issues regarding masculinity, identity and socialization among young people. In 1986, the Law Reform Commission passed laws making wife beating a criminal offence and punishable by law, with perpetrators able to be charged with offences such as common assault and grievous bodily harm.

This policy emphasizes the need to undertake innovative and wide-ranging community education to raise awareness about the root causes of violence against women and how violence is both a crime and a violation of women's human rights. It also emphasizes the need to work with law enforcing and policy implementation agencies to eliminate violence and other forms of abuse against women and children - including incest, rape and prostitution - as a national priority.

3.2 Health

Women's health generally is very poor in PNG. The policy will promote improved women's health, the provision of accessible and affordable health services and a reduction in the unacceptably high rates of infant and maternal mortality. This includes strengthening community preventative programmes, activities in nutrition, health and hygiene, strengthening village birth attendance and beautifying family and community environments.

3.3 HIV/AIDS

Poverty and gender inequality are driving factors in the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS in PNG. Women and girls are more vulnerable to contracting HIV not only for biological reasons but because power imbalances make it difficult for them to negotiate safe sex or refuse unwanted sex. Their unequal political and legal status perpetuates poverty, discrimination and limits opportunities in economic, social and cultural spheres of activity. Women's empowerment is therefore a strategy of this policy. It is essential for reducing women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, and alleviating the impact of the disease.

HIV carriers are largely men who do not know they are infected - men who look for younger girls who they hope are still 'clean'. The enactment of PNG's HIV/AIDS Management and Prevention Act 2003 gave effect to the basic rights acknowledged in the preamble of the Constitution. This Act and the National Gender Policy and Plan on HIV/AIDS 2006 - 2010 cater for the prevention of the spread of HIV/AIDS and the management of discriminatory practices of people living with or believed to have HIV/AIDS.

This policy addresses the specific needs of HIV/AIDS infected and affected women (including caregivers) and those at risk of infection through gender-based violence and poverty. The main emphasis is to mainstream gender equality into sectoral, national, provincial, district and local levels of government as well as into community policies and programmes on HIV/AIDS.

3.4 Education and training

Education and training is vital to acquiring knowledge, making informed decisions, communicating ideas and broadening perspectives - for women and men. Knowledge helps people enhance their own lives and the lives of their families and communities and it enables them to contribute to the overall development process. However, in PNG, limited opportunities for education continue to be a major constraint to improving human development.

Equal opportunities for young women and girls to participate in the education system have to be realised, in a safe environment that is free from violence and that supports girls whose education is interrupted due to pregnancy. There is a need to ensure women and girls attain equal educational levels with males and are provided with skills and vocational training to participate in income - generation activities. This policy therefore involves training teachers to be gender sensitive and addressing gender stereotypes in school curricula and texts.



The culture of 'bride price' abuses women's human rights.

3.5 Cultural norms and traditions

PNG is a society with strong traditional, cultural norms, social values and obligations. The majority of Papua New Guineans are caught at a crossroad between upholding traditional values and obligations while adapting to contemporary forms of development change. At the heart of traditional life, for example, modernization has created the need for cash which most people - especially women and girls - have difficulty attaining.

Women naturally are observant, understand their place in their communities, appreciate their Melanesian identity and values, and advocate for the elimination of practices that discriminate against their wellbeing and advancement. However, women's and girls' human rights continue to be widely violated and they face different types of disadvantage and different forms of discrimination at different stages of their lives - due to the customary laws, practices and traditions that affect them daily.

This policy promotes active discussion and engagement among members of the justice system and relevant government institutions and CSOs - including cultural and traditional leaders - to address harmful practices, with special consideration given to the human rights. Furthermore, the policy promotes strengthening good values, including respect for shared roles and responsibilities in homes and communities between women and men and girls and boys and young children.

Policy implementation will be aligned with the work of community learning and development centres to ensure access to lifelong learning and promotion of women's rights regarding access to and ownership of land and property.

3.6 Women's economic empowerment

Income provides an important means of improving capabilities and opportunities. As many communities become further integrated into the monetary economy, opportunities for income generation are increasingly important. Income enables people to purchase food and other goods and contributes to quality of life. In PNG, the overall economic situation of families and communities is poor and remains the main factor contributing to the country's high rates of school leavers, urban migration and poor living conditions.

Women's contribution to the national economy at all levels is high but their labour remains undervalued and unaccounted for in the national development process. To effectively address women's labour and poverty issues this policy broadens its approach to cover gender and economic empowerment.

Policy implementation will include facilitating the creation of an enabling environment for women by establishing - in collaboration with key private and public employers - appropriate legal and regulatory standards to ensure women workers' rights, social protection, identification and development of appropriate skills and promoting women's organisations and networking. Improved access to productive resources, markets, skills and extension services is also needed, especially for women in agriculture and fisheries.

3.6.1 Fisheries

Women are also good fisherwomen and play a key role in securing and processing fish and other edible marine resources through both paid and unpaid activities. In many communities, men catch the fish while women play an important role in processing fish, selling them at local markets and putting the end product on the family meal table. Indeed, fish forms the bulk of family incomes for many maritime families and communities.

This policy supports efforts by the National Fisheries Authority to provide short courses for women to teach them methods of fish preservation and processing.

3.7 Employment opportunities and conditions

The labour sector (both public and private) has been growing since Independence to address the demand and supply needs of beneficiaries and users. Despite public service reforms to improve delivery mechanisms and systems and downsize the public service to achieve huge public savings and improve competency levels, the labour force is still big and growing. The government's 'Look North' and economic-driven policies have given effect to increased economic and commercial activities—including giant multi-million mining, petroleum, energy and other development projects.

Equal opportunities for women in the public and private sectors have gradually increased and women have moved into male-dominated jobs and jobs regarded as traditionally men's, such as mechanics, plumbing, carpentry, pilots, church pastoral work and politics.

Since the first National Women's Policy in 1995, there have also been an increased number of women appointed to managerial and decision-making positions in the public and private sectors. In the stakeholder consultations held for this policy, government agencies indicated they are developing or have developed and are implementing workplace gender equity and equal employment as well as equal pay policies and guidelines. This policy's main emphasis is different - it addresses the many issues women face daily in their jobs, including emotional, mental and physical abuse, humiliation and discrimination, verbal and sexual harassment, overwork and child care responsibilities.

3.8 Decision making

To support a strong voice for women in decision making, the Office for Women's Development must become effective national machinery for gender equality and be placed strategically in a key government decision-making area. It must build its capacity to provide effective gender equality mainstreaming resources and an integrated coordination framework with clear lines of communication and accountability. This will enable the Office to take on a primary role in providing oversight of this policy's implementation.

Gender discussions on ways to improve women's decision making and economic empowerment.



The Office's other key roles are to promote a multi-sectoral approach in gender equality integration and policy implementation and to develop practical tools and training programs targeting all institutional and strategic stakeholders.

3.8.1 Political participation

While women's access to political power and decision making in PNG has been extremely low - with only 0.9 representation of women in the national Parliament throughout most of this decade - the recommendation to establish 22 reserved seats for women for the 2012 elections will redress this situation. This quota should be reflected throughout the public service, with all appointments at international, national, provincial and local levels of government. The challenge for political institutions is to change their culture so they are more responsive to the needs of women politicians and women public servants.

3.9 Agriculture

Studies carried out by the Department for Community Development (Social Development 2002) revealed that women participate in informal economic activities by mainly selling agricultural and other products. This enables them to earn income to meet basic daily family necessities, including the paying of school fees. Women traditionally produced 80 per cent of food for domestic consumption.

This policy promotes enhanced partnership between all relevant stakeholders to support the agriculture sector to improve and develop market facilities, effective transport systems and ways to protect food security among others.

Major initiatives to be introduced in this priority area will include researching and collecting data on the current participation of PNG women in the agriculture sector, strengthening and expanding existing women's credit facilities and establishing women's networks and other women in agriculture mechanisms.

3.9.1 Market opportunities

The market network is poor, especially its ability to enable rural and remote women and men to sell their produce throughout the country. Many have to travel rugged rural terrain, mostly through bush tracks which can be a week's walk, to get to the nearest roadside or urban market. They become disheartened if, once they reach the market, much of their produce has rotten making it impossible to generate enough income to meet their basic needs.

There is an urgent need to establish strong partnerships with all concerned partners in both public and private sectors to carry out a market survey to establish which market will be accessible for the rural population, especially for women.

3.10 Environment

The majority of the population has a special attachment to the environment for its livelihood, depending on natural resources such as land, forests and water. Women are considered the primary users of natural resources because they are responsible for gathering and producing food, fuel and making handicrafts. They have a special and close relationship with the environment and advocate for the preservation of natural resources for the next generation.

Women's perspectives on and values for the environment are somewhat different from men. Women give greater priority to protecting the environment, improving the capacity of nature (including by farming and gardening lands) and caring for it for the future. Men's values and perspectives on the environment are changing in the light of multinational development projects operating in PNG - they tend to see natural resources as commercial entities that can be used to generate income. The changes tend to have more impact on women areas and cause them to face social and economic hardships.

This policy acknowledges the critical role women play in the development and effective use of their knowledge in addressing the long-term environmental effects of forestry, mining, fishing and related activities (including the impact on their livelihoods).

Other important and emerging issues

3.1 Special groups of women

The number of special groups of women and girls needing special attention for specific needs is growing across the country. This includes three distinct groups - women with disability, elderly women and displaced women.

3.2 Women with disability

This policy will complement and enhance the programmes for women already identified in PNG's National Policy for Disabilities. Women with disability continue to participate in family life, in community activities and in nation-building activities despite the stigma and discrimination they encounter daily.

Women with disability have an active national association in PNG which this policy recognizes. This policy recommends the need to strengthen this association as well as other women's networks operating at all levels throughout the country.

3.3 Elderly women

Elderly women are a source of strength in most communities. They play a range of important roles including as informal teachers and leaders, midwives, historians, advisors, mediators, negotiators, mentors, coaches and specialists in passing on skills and knowledge of womanhood and motherhood, child rearing and caring, environment, weather, food production, processing and preparation, community gatherings and ceremonies.

This policy recognizes elderly women's leadership, contributions and capabilities and will address the need to instill and strengthen Melanesian values to ensure proper care of elderly women so they can continue to participate in family, community and nation building activities. The policy will also promote health education among elderly women.

3.4 Displaced women

An increasing number of women are being displaced by man-made and natural disasters, climate change, tribal fights, land disputes and other issues. This policy focuses on consulting with displaced women and integrating their needs into all levels of planning and programming. Main programme areas will be on providing rehabilitation services by identifying the training needed to help develop the potential of displaced women.

Policy strategies

This policy provides several strategies for effective implementation of priority action areas.

3.1 Gender-based violence

- Create more awareness among community stakeholders, police, village councillors and village court magistrates.
- Provide women and children who are victims and survivors of violence with just and effective legal remedies as well as with protective shelters, legal aid and other services.
- Support the activities of women's organisations and NGOs to raise awareness of and help prevent gender-based violence.
- Build the response capacity of village court magistrates, police and health officials.
- Enact and/or enforce laws on gender-based and domestic violence.
- Conduct research on sorcery witchcraft.
- Develop protective gender-sensitive legislation.
- Develop and support male model and change agent programmes.