

THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE AGAINST THE GIRL CHILD



*Situation Paper for the
Pacific Islands Region*



Fiji Women's
Crisis Centre



FWRM

unicef 

United Nations
Development Fund for Women
UNIFEM 

This document was prepared for UNICEF Pacific and UNIFEM Pacific by Dr Penny Schoeffel Meleisea and Ellie Meleisea. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of UNICEF, UNIFEM, FWCC or FWRM.

Any part of this publication may be reproduced without prior authorization from UNICEF and UNIFEM but accreditation of the source is required.

**THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE
AGAINST THE GIRL CHILD**

SITUATION PAPER FOR THE PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION¹

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	2
The Pacific Region.....	2
The Status of Girls and Women in the Pacific Islands	6
2. THE GIRL CHILD IN ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE SITUATIONS.....	8
A. Factors increasing the vulnerability of the girl child	8
Gender-inequality in socialization	8
Discriminatory application of “custom”	8
Early and forced marriage.....	9
Legal pluralism	9
Social acceptance of violent punishment of children	10
Preservation of a culture of silence surrounding sexual abuse	10
Limited access to, and low quality of, education.....	12
Social change, internal migration and poverty	15
B. Consequences of vulnerability of the girl child	16
High numbers of girl children engaged in child labour	16
Higher health-risks for the girl child.....	17
Low self-esteem and psychological damage among girls.....	17
Higher risk of sexual abuse among girls.....	18
Higher rates of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of girls.....	19
3. PROTECTION OF THE GIRL CHILD	20
Policies for women and girls.....	20
Constraints to protection of the girl child	25
Programmes of action to address protection of the girl child	25
4. EMPOWERMENT OF THE GIRL CHILD.....	28
Promote compliance with International Standards on rights of girls and women	28
Raise Public Awareness of the Issues	29
Conduct legislative reviews	29
Improve law enforcement	30
Develop Policies and Strategies.....	30
Make education accessible and relevant.....	31
Encourage donor support	31

1. INTRODUCTION

The Pacific region is famous for being an enchanting holiday destination. Stereotypic images of beautiful, scantily-clad island girls are not only frequently used to promote tourism but are part of popular legends which portray the South Seas as a romantic paradise. In reality, however, the Pacific is not idyllic for the girl child, who is all too often raised to think of herself as a second class citizen. Furthermore, in many countries of the Pacific region the girl child is often disciplined harshly by parents and teachers, is at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation and in some countries is even at risk of being sold or adopted into servitude

This paper examines the situation of the girl child in 14 Pacific Island States.² Figures are not generally available for the number of people aged between 15 and 18³, however the figures that are available indicate that around 49 per cent of the total population of the Pacific Islands is aged under 20, and that girls comprise around 48 per cent of that age group.

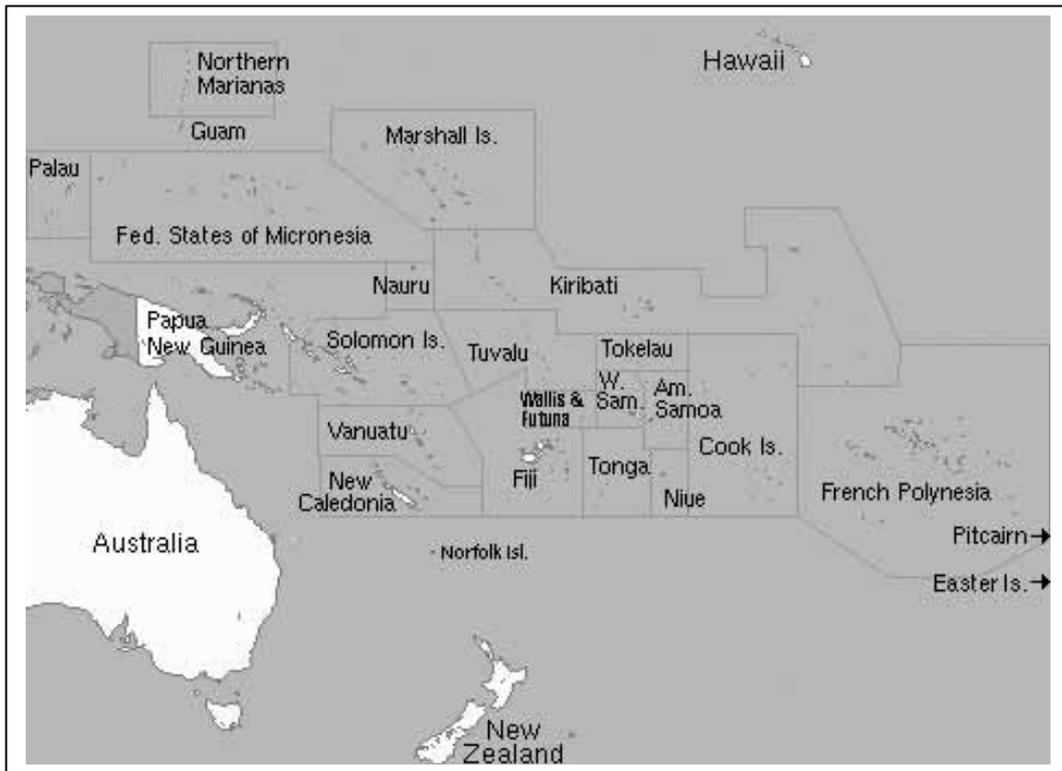
This paper begins with an overview of the Pacific region in terms of geography, population and socio-cultural traits and trends. The status of girls and women in the region is then discussed, as this status has particular consequences for violence and discrimination against the girl child. The paper then examines in detail several cultural and socio-economic factors which contribute to the vulnerability of the girl child, including gender inequality in socialization; discriminatory application of "custom"; early and forced marriage; limited access to, and low quality of, education; and social change and poverty. Following this, the paper examines the consequences of these vulnerability-enhancing factors, which include high numbers of girl children engaged in child labour; higher health-risks for the girl child; low self-esteem and psychological damage among girls; higher risk of sexual abuse among girls; and higher rates of commercial sexual exploitation of girls. The next section of the paper examines the policies and programmes in place which serve to protect the girl child from discrimination and violence. In conclusion, the paper outlines a series of recommended actions for empowering the Pacific girl child.

The Pacific Region

Geography

The small island states of the Pacific region are scattered across 30 million square kilometres of ocean, with vast distances between them. These nations are generally made up of groups of islands, which are themselves separated by wide expanses of water, and the island states are therefore characterized by remoteness and associated issues, such as a lack of infrastructure and poor delivery of services.

For example, Kiribati, with a land area of only 811 square kilometres, has 33 atolls spread out over 3,500,000 square kilometres of ocean. The vast distances between Kiribati's many tiny atolls make transport and communications expensive and difficult.



Map 1. The Pacific Islands

In general, the island states of the Pacific are very small, with over 60 percent having a land area of less than 900 square kilometres and, with the exception of Papua New Guinea (PNG), all having a land area of less than 30,000 square kilometres.

Population

The population sizes of the Pacific states correspond roughly to their land areas, and range from around 2,000 in Niue to almost six million in PNG. Most of the population of the Pacific region live in the four largest countries: PNG, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu.⁴

The total population of the Pacific numbers around 8.6 million inhabitants.⁵ Most countries of the region have high fertility rates and populations are growing steadily, particularly in the larger island nations which do not have significant outward migration rates. The inhabitants of the independent Pacific states are overwhelmingly indigenous; only Fiji has a significant non-indigenous minority population⁶.

Table 1 shows the land area, populations, and GDP per capita of the 14 Pacific states (divided by cultural area).

Table 1: Pacific Island Countries by Culture Area and Selected Characteristics

Cultural area and Country	Land area km ²	Population (2004)	GDP per capita (US\$) 2006
Melanesia			
Republic of the Fiji Islands	18,272	836,000	3,514
Papua New Guinea (PNG)	463,000	5,695,301	661

Solomon Islands	28,530	460,104	632
Republic of Vanuatu	12,200	215,836	1,571
Polynesia			
Cook Islands	240	14,000	8,567 ⁷
Niue	260	1,593	6,088 ⁸
Samoa	2,944	182,750	1,933
Tonga	748	98,321	2,249
Tuvalu	26	9,639	1,374 ⁹
Micronesia			
Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)	702	112,708	-
Kiribati	811	93,098	673
Marshall Islands	181	55,366	1,925 ¹⁰
Nauru	21	10,100	3,555 ¹¹
Palau	458	20,703	6,925

Sources: Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Fact Sheets, 2006; CIA Factbook 2006; SPC Demography and Population Programme, 2004(b), "Pacific Island Populations by sex and 5yr age groups".

Culture

The Pacific region has retained an enormous linguistic and cultural diversity, the largest on earth. The region has around 1,250 distinct languages, most of which are still spoken today.¹² However, in addition to local languages, and the creole *lingua franca* of Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and PNG (Bislama and Tok Pisin), the Pacific island states generally have English as one of their official languages, as a consequence of their colonial past.¹³

Culturally and linguistically, the region can be divided into three areas, Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia.¹⁴ The three sub-regions, while differing from each other in many ways, have certain socio-cultural similarities.

One similarity is that all of the Pacific societies traditionally have a communal socio-economic base, characterized by reciprocity and sharing.¹⁵ Traditionally, collective interests were primary in all Pacific societies - group survival required that individual interests must be secondary.

Also, in all of these island states, traditional culture is centred on the extended family and, in many cases, the Christian church.¹⁶ Another cultural trait shared by all three areas of the Pacific is that children, and the girl child in particular, have very low status in society. In these societies status is attained with age and, to a lesser extent, through contributing to supporting the extended family by participating in traditional activities. Traditionally, children are expected to contribute to the family economy and compensate their parents for the cost of their upbringing by assisting with household and agricultural tasks from an early age. Although many Pacific nations have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in practice children are not recognized as having any particular rights because of the traditional low status of children in society.

Children and youth make up a large proportion of the population of the region, with each country having between 31 and 52 percent of their populations under the age of 20.

Table 2 shows the number and proportion of people aged under 20 in each of the 14 Pacific states, and the number and proportion of females aged under 20 in each country.

Table 2: Pacific Island Countries by total population, population aged under 20, and female population aged under 20

Cultural area and Country	Total Population (2004)	Population under age 20 (female and male) (2004)	Population under age 20 (% of total population) (2004)	Female Population under age 20 (2004)	Female population under age 20 (% of total population under 20) (2004)
Melanesia					
Fiji	836,000	339,542	40.6	164,416	48.4
Papua New Guinea	5,695,301	2,835,658	49.8	1,353,060	47.7
Solomon Islands	460,104	236,051	51.3	113,408	48
Vanuatu	215,836	113,250	52.5	54,628	48.2
Polynesia					
Cook Islands	14,000	6,042	43.2	2,844	47.1
Niue	1,593	669	42	326	48.7
Samoa	182,750	92,315	50.5	44,141	47.8
Tonga	98,321	44,146	44.9	20,904	47.3
Tuvalu	9,639	4320	44.8	2004	46.4
Micronesia					
Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)	112,708	55472	49.2	26,750	48.2
Kiribati	93,098	45717	49.1	22,289	48.8
Marshall Islands	55,366	28,792	52	13,985	48.6
Nauru	10,100	4918	48.7	2370	48.2
Palau	20,703	6435	31.1	3104	48.2
Total	7,805,509	3,813,327	-	1,824,229	

Source: SPC Demography and Population Programme, 2004, "Pacific Island Populations by sex and 5yr age groups"

Socio-economic situation

Until the 1960s the majority of Pacific populations depended on subsistence economies based on root and tree crop cultivation, pig farming, fishing and hunting. Cash was a luxury rather than a necessity. Economic modernization, new economic and lifestyle aspirations and, in some cases, population growth, have increased dependence on, and demand for, money, and have created new economic inequalities in Pacific island societies.¹⁷

Today, cash poverty and poverty of opportunity are growing in Pacific Island economies, as is national dependency on foreign exploitation of natural resources in the larger countries¹⁸ and cheap female labour in a few others.

Although rural poverty has been shown to be more prevalent in the larger Pacific Island countries such as PNG,¹⁹ urban poverty has created the most problematic social challenges in all Pacific countries, large and small.

Rapid urbanization over the past few decades has created a new kind of poverty linked to radical social and economic change: massive unemployment and underemployment among youth,²⁰ rising levels of violence and violent crime, the loss of community norms and subsistence resources. At the same time, internal male migration²¹ and complete dependence on money for livelihoods are contributing to a fragmentation of families.²²

Health

Most countries of the Pacific are experiencing a health trend where the prevalence of infectious disease (other than sexually transmitted disease) is declining but non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer are increasing, as a result of changes in diet and lifestyle, and longer life expectancy.

However, countries such as Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), PNG, Marshall Islands, and Solomon Islands have high prevalence of both NCDs (mainly in urban areas) and infectious diseases, in particular sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Rates of HIV/AIDS are still low in most Pacific Island countries,²³ with the exception of PNG, which has had a significant problem with HIV/AIDS for the past decade, and has been declared as having an AIDS pandemic. Recent studies of the spread of STIs in PNG show that the spread of HIV could be attributed to increased polygyny²⁴ and male promiscuity, encouraged by windfall cash incomes (from mining, petroleum, logging royalties and rents).²⁵

Child malnutrition is prevalent but sparsely documented in most Pacific Island countries. It is associated with malaria²⁶ and diarrhoea in children, as well as with seasonal food shortages in some rural areas. Child malnutrition, which can present as childhood obesity, is also associated with urban poverty, where families subsist on cheap foods of low nutritional value such as rice, bread, sugar and cheap fatty cuts of meat,²⁷ because of poor eating habits and lack of access to kitchen gardens.²⁸

There is no regular immunisation programme for children in countries with isolated rural populations and inadequate “cold chains”, such as PNG, Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands.²⁹

The Status of Girls and Women in the Pacific Islands

The relative status of women and gender relations are important factors influencing the situation of the girl child. The three sub-regions of the Pacific, Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia, differ somewhat in the role and place of girls and women in society. These differences between the three sub-regions of the Pacific, and differences within countries in each sub-region, account for variations in the well-being and opportunities of the girl child across the region.

Traditionally, all Pacific societies were characterised by social rather than economic status. Within Melanesia, societies were ranked by gender and in these countries (PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and parts of Fiji) there is far greater gender inequality than in the countries of the other Pacific sub-regions.

In most Melanesian societies all adult men were theoretically equal and competed for status. Women and girls were subordinate to men and boys. In these cultures females were considered not just different, but innately inferior to males. In general, this difference in status meant that men controlled resources and made decisions while girls and women performed most of the productive as well as all the household labour.

The low status of girls in some Melanesian societies was apparent in traditions such as arranged marriages and “bride price”. Girls were – and in many areas still are – regarded as a valuable resource to be traded between groups of men as brides in exchange for payments, which nowadays include cash.³⁰ These traditions persist in PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in spite of significant socio-cultural changes in other areas of life.

In Polynesia, and some parts of Micronesia, social inequality was not based as much on gender as on inherited chiefly status. Accordingly, a girl child born into a very high ranking family would be seen as socially superior to a man or boy of a low ranking family, although not to a man or boy of their own rank. In Tonga and Samoa, for example, women of all ranks were traditionally revered as sisters. However, social changes are today undermining the high status this gave to girls and women.

Other Polynesian and Micronesian cultures esteemed women for their fertility and their role as mothers. In these cultures, girls were generally treated more gently than boys. Furthermore, in some Polynesian cultures a girl child was not supposed to do heavy outdoor work, as it would lower the collective status of her family. At the same time, however, adolescent girls were usually subjected to severe restrictions, sometimes harshly treated, and denied the freedoms and choices allowed to boys. This strict and sometimes severe treatment was intended to ensure the protection of a girl’s reputation and a family’s honour. For example, in Tonga and Samoa families were – and often still are – very strict with girls and restricted their movements in an effort to prevent premarital pregnancy, which would disgrace a girl and her family and usually prevent her from making a “good” marriage.

Today, modern ideas of individual rights, women’s rights and children’s rights have come into conflict with customary norms based on collective interests, particularly in the male-dominated Melanesian societies. As a consequence, adolescent girls often suffer severe emotional distress over tensions between personal aspirations and the customary social expectations of them.

2. THE GIRL CHILD IN ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE SITUATIONS

A. Factors increasing the vulnerability of the girl child

Gender-inequality in socialization

In Pacific Island countries children generally have the lowest status in society. Given the lack of gender equality in most countries of the Pacific, and particularly in Melanesian societies, the girl child is typically at the very bottom of the social hierarchy. Furthermore, the girl child is socialized to a sense of inferiority in many countries of the Pacific.

In accordance with her place in the social hierarchy, the Pacific girl child is socialized to a sense of inferiority. The socialization process of most Pacific countries has the result that girls often do not develop the notion of having a choice or an opinion, and, in countries where girls are of particularly low status in society, they are taught to never question male authority.

Perhaps the most detailed study of this socialization process was by the anthropologist Maurice Godelier. In his studies of the Baruya people of PNG in the 1960s, he found that men live in separate houses, to which young boys are taken at about the age of seven after being ritually cleansed of female influence. Young girls are trained to step off pathways when males approach, and to lower their eyes in submission in the presence of males.³¹ While the Baruya may be an extreme case, it can be argued that all Pacific societies are raising their female children to believe that they have relatively little value. This gender-inequality in socialization, combined with other factors (as described below) is making girls more vulnerable to violence, particularly to sexual violence.

Discriminatory application of “custom”

In many Pacific Island societies, “culture”, “custom” and “tradition” are frequently invoked as justification for discrimination against, and even abusive treatment of, women and girls. However, the “customs” and “traditions” that are invoked are often distorted versions of the original, which have been modified to suit the needs of the males in the family. For example, in PNG, some fathers have used the “tradition” of bride price as a reason for trading their daughters for cash, motor vehicles or houses, from transient logging and mining workers. In such cases, the father often conveniently overlooks other traditions and expectations associated with bride price, such as a marriage ceremony and traditional dispute resolution processes.³² Furthermore, some groups within PNG who did not practice it in the past have adopted the “tradition” of bride price as a way of demanding cash for the marriage of a daughter.³³

Similarly, men invoke “traditional rights” to use cash windfalls (such as mining or logging royalty payments – or money earned by their wife or wives during intermittent cash crop booms, or successful small family businesses) – to acquire an additional, and usually very young, wife. The exercise of these traditional rights to spend the family income as they please is, in today’s rapidly changing societies, leading to undesirable social outcomes. For example, anthropologists studying the impact of petroleum extraction in

the Lake Kutubu area of the PNG Southern Highlands, note that oil royalty cash payments to men have had the effect of increasing the practice of polygamy and inflating bride prices, as well as enabling men to afford to buy the services of young prostitutes in towns.³⁴

Early and forced marriage

The legal age at which girls can marry in the Pacific is usually between 14 and 16 years old, although consent of parents is often required until the age of 18 or 20.³⁵ The legal age at which boys can marry is usually higher, generally 18 years of age.³⁶ In some countries, such as PNG, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, customary law remains very strong in some parts, and allows girls to be married at puberty – at around 12 or 13 years old. Customary law can be overruled, although it rarely is (see the following section for further details).

A difficulty faced in PNG and Solomon Islands in enforcing the legal minimum age for marriage is that only around 2% (PNG) and 15% (Solomon Islands) of births are registered so there is often no means of legally verifying the age of a child.³⁷

Evidence from PNG, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu indicate that early marriage puts girls at high risk of physical abuse, as they move outside of their relatively safe extended family to live with their husband and his extended family.³⁸

Early marriage is also a health concern as teenage pregnancy is a well-recognized maternal and infant survival risk factor and can result in difficult and dangerous pregnancies. Further, it usually means an end to the girl's education and any future opportunities that education could bring.³⁹

Legal pluralism

The constitutions of some Pacific states, for example PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, guarantee the preservation of human rights (rights applicable to all) as well as traditional rights (that favour men or traditional elites).

This legal pluralism, by giving recognition to customary law as well as formal law, increases the vulnerability of the girl child. In PNG, for example, the formal legal system specifies that the minimum age of marriage is 16 (for girls); however customary marriages are guided by "custom", determined by male-dominated village courts, which allows girls as young as 12 or 13 to marry. The conflict between them is rarely challenged in the courts because few people understand their constitutional rights.⁴⁰

The Constitution of PNG and the *Customs Recognition Act* allow custom to be overruled if it is "repugnant to general principles of humanity" or is contrary to the "best interests of a child under the age of 16 years". However, such cases are rarely taken to the National or Supreme Court for a ruling.

Other examples of conflict between modern and traditional law are the practices of "customary" adoption of children (in particular girl children), polygny, bride price and sale

of girl children. Such customs tend to increase the vulnerability of the girl child to poor health, poverty of opportunity, economic exploitation, sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation.⁴¹

Social acceptance of violent punishment of children

Most countries of the Pacific, if not all, accept violent punishment, mockery, ridicule, public humiliation and severe verbal abuse of boys and girls as valid forms of discipline. Even in countries where corporal punishment is illegal, such as Marshall Islands and Fiji, violent punishment of children is accepted both at home and at schools. A study of parental practices in Fiji found that in punishing their children, hitting, smacking and hitting with a stick or other object was almost as frequently employed as verbal scolding. However, the study found that violent punishment was more frequently administered to boys, and that girls were somewhat more likely to be punished by being given arduous tasks such as weeding and cutting grass.⁴²

Violence is not only directed at children, but in many countries of the Pacific violence is seen an acceptable means of conflict resolution within the family, particularly when used against women and girls. For example, reports from Samoa and Fiji showed that violence between spouses, by parents against children and between other family members, was widely tolerated and condoned.⁴³

In most countries of the Pacific, violent punishment of children is defended as being part of local culture. For example, an ethnographic study of childhood and the socialization of children in Tonga showed, violent punishment and humiliation of children is justified on cultural grounds by many Tongans.⁴⁴

In all Pacific countries, discipline is considered a vital part of good parenting and punishment is seen as being for the child's own good.⁴⁵ Studies show that violent means of punishment are used because parents do not know of any alternative forms of discipline. For example, a small but indicative study of child discipline conducted among Pacific Island migrants in New Zealand⁴⁶ in 1994 found that parents punished their children in the same way they had themselves been punished when they were children – with beatings – and were unaware of alternative means of discipline.⁴⁷ Likewise, a recent report on the physical and emotional punishment of children in Fiji noted that many parents administer physical punishment because they do not know of any other methods of discipline.⁴⁸

Not only do these findings represent common patterns, but, as country studies under the Pacific Children's Programme have found, social acceptance of violent punishment of children is so entrenched that those in authority, including police, school principals, clergy, and community leaders, often do not see the violent or psychologically abusive punishment of children as an issue of concern.⁴⁹

Preservation of a culture of silence surrounding sexual abuse

Country studies commissioned by UNICEF and UNESCAP demonstrate that sexual abuse of girls is only sporadically reported in the Pacific.⁵⁰ This is not because it rarely

occurs but rather because although Pacific societies regard sexual contact between an adult and a child as highly immoral⁵¹ and although sexual contact with a child is illegal in all Pacific Island countries, there is much secrecy surrounding this crime.

In Pacific societies, the rape of a child, particularly when perpetrated by a family member brings great shame to the family and, if made public, can tear families and communities apart. Furthermore, in small communities with little privacy, accusations of sexual abuse – no matter how valid – can lead to ostracism of the victim and her family.⁵² In addition, in most countries because rape leads to a girl child being “permanently spoiled”, parents will often keep silent to avoid the economic devaluation of a girl who has been abused.⁵³ Therefore the rape of girl children is often concealed and the offender often goes unpunished, no matter at what cost to the abused child.⁵⁴

In some countries (PNG, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomons) sexual abuse also occurs in schools. In PNG girls are often withdrawn from school when they reach puberty because of parental concerns that they will be sexually harassed or abused by teachers and male students.

Sexual abuse also often occurs when girls leave their immediate family and live with relatives. Reasons for leaving include: lack of schools near their home, lack of employment opportunities in their village, or being “adopted” by a family member (to be an additional source of labour).

There is a tendency in Pacific societies to deny that the problem could be home-grown and to assume that sexual abuse of children is only committed by foreigners. This is because it is much easier to report criminal sexual behaviour of a foreigner, if it can be detected, and to punish him or her, than it is if the abuser is a local. For example, a study of attitudes towards child protection in Samoa notes that popular perceptions involve “stranger danger” and reputed cases in which foreigners are reputed to have photographed children for child pornography websites, or engaged in acts of paedophilia.⁵⁵

Even when child sexual abuse is reported to the police, the reports may be ignored or dropped, often because police are not adequately trained to respond to these reports, as well as because of pressure on complainants to drop the charges. For example, in a village in Niue, three girls under the age of 15 became pregnant to older family members. The police did not pursue the matter and there were, consequently, no official repercussions for the offenders.⁵⁶

An additional difficulty in prosecuting those who sexually abuse children is that in many countries of the Pacific, for example, in Fiji, Tonga and until recently, the Marshall Islands, the crime of “statutory rape” does not exist because there is no defined minimum age required for consent to sexual relations.⁵⁷ However, even in countries where there is a minimum legal age for sexual relations, statutory rape is rarely recorded. For example, in Niue statutory rape has been a crime for over 10 years, but although an average of one child aged between 13 and 15 presents with pregnancy each year, no cases of statutory rape have been reported.⁵⁸

Where the rapist is a man of influence or high status, the police may refuse to take action. In some cases the police themselves are perpetrators, as has been reported in PNG, for example.⁵⁹

In certain instances, the sexual abuse of a child is condoned in the context of defending family pride. For example “revenge rape” still occurs in several Pacific countries. In such cases a group of men or youths rape a girl to punish her father or brothers. Sexual assaults on girls to rupture her hymen may also be perpetrated to force them into marriage; the rape being seen to culturally “devalue” the girl by taking her virginity.⁶⁰ Girls as young as six years old have been raped under such circumstances.⁶¹ Sexual abuse of girls is reportedly worst in regions where there have been civil conflicts, such as Bougainville in PNG and in the Solomon islands.

Limited access to, and low quality of, education

Although older generations of women were quite disadvantaged, today girls and boys in most Pacific countries, participate in basic education in fairly equal proportions.⁶²

In fact, in some Polynesian and Micronesian countries today, a comparison of primary school enrolment rates with the combined figures for enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education indicate that girls are generally more likely than boys to participate in higher education. In Kiribati, for example, girls outnumber boys at both the secondary and tertiary levels.⁶³ An explanation suggested for this discrepancy is that there is perhaps a greater tendency among boys to despair of finding suitable employment upon graduation which therefore causes them to see little value in continuing their education.⁶⁴

In Melanesia, however, there are continuing low levels of education amongst girls. There are various reasons for this. Not only is their labour often needed at home, but the cost of school fees is often considered too high to be spent on a girl’s education. Also, parents fear that their teenage girls will find a boyfriend, which will not only “devalue” her and bring shame on the family but will increase the likelihood of her resisting marriage arrangements that her parents have made.⁶⁵ Parents also fear that by attending school their teenage girls are at risk of early pregnancy and of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. Furthermore, parents fear for the safety of the girl child at school, as they are at high risk of being sexually abused by teachers and male students, and if school is distant, there is a high risk of violence to the girl occurring while she is travelling to or from school.⁶⁶

These risks often lead to parents removing girls from school, particularly at secondary level. However, removing girls from secondary school has the result that these girls have few employable skills and, if no alternative sources of income are readily available, they are therefore at greater risk of being drawn into prostitution.⁶⁷ A study of sexual exploitation and abuse of girl children in Kiribati showed that girls who engage in regular sexual transactions with seafarers in Kiribati had either not attended school or had very low levels of education.⁶⁸

Table 3 shows the relative participation rates of girls and boys in primary education in the 14 Pacific countries and their respective enrolment ratios in all formal education. The table also shows the relative literacy rates of females and males.

Table 3: Participation of girls/boys in education, and female/male literacy rates, by country

Country ranked from lowest to highest participation of girls	Participation in primary education of girls (%) 2004 ⁶⁹	Participation in primary education of boys (%) 2004 ⁷⁰	Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary (%) female ⁷¹	Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary (%) male ⁷²	Literacy rates of adult females (% ages 15 and above) 2000-2004	Literacy rates of adult males (% ages 15 and above) 2000-2004
Papua New Guinea	70 ⁷³	80 ⁷⁴	37	44	50.9	63.4
Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)	75 ⁷⁵	75 ⁷⁶	-	-	94.2 ⁷⁷	96 ⁷⁸
Solomon Islands	79	80	54	58 ⁷⁹	45 ⁸⁰	62 ⁸¹
Cook Islands	83 ⁸²	87 ⁸³	-	-	100 ⁸⁴	100 ⁸⁵
Tonga	89 ⁸⁶	92 ⁸⁷	84	82	99	98.8
Nauru	88 ⁸⁸	79 ⁸⁹	56	54	74.5 ⁹⁰	88.9 ⁹¹
Samoa	91	90	72	70	98.4	98.9
Vanuatu	93	95	58	59	48 ⁹²	57 ⁹³
Palau	94 ⁹⁴	99 ⁹⁵	86	82	-	-
Kiribati	98 ⁹⁶	96 ⁹⁷	-	-	90 ⁹⁸	90 ⁹⁹
Niue	98 ¹⁰⁰	99 ¹⁰¹	-	-	83 ¹⁰²	80 ¹⁰³
Tuvalu	99 ¹⁰⁴	97 ¹⁰⁵	70	67	-	-

Source: UNDP, 2004, Human Development Report Statistics; UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2006; UNICEF, 2006, "Info by country" website (data are for 2000-2004); Australian Department of Foreign Affairs website, 2006, "Country, economy and regional information".

While access to education remains a gender issue in some countries, in most countries of the Pacific, access to education depends more on availability of educational services. In Nauru, for example, the lack of qualified teachers is a major factor in limiting accessibility to education among children at the secondary level.¹⁰⁶ In the Marshall Islands a major constraint on access to education is the insufficient number of schools, due to lack of available land. A further constraint is the poor and unsafe conditions of school facilities and grounds.¹⁰⁷

In all of the Pacific countries, access to education is most problematic for children in outer islands and remote areas, where there are few schools and trained teachers. This lack of educational services means that girls and boys living on outer islands must often travel to urban areas to attend secondary and tertiary education. This kind of "forced" urbanization of children brings with it many risks for the girl child.

In particular, girls who travel to urban areas for education are at high risk of sexual abuse from members of their extended family (with whom they must usually live).¹⁰⁸ For example, in Fiji, a survey of children who were living with their extended families while attending school found that there was a high rate of school drop out among these girls, with 83 percent dropping-out within five months of moving to live with their relatives. Of

the girls who dropped out, 26 percent reported having been sexually abused by male relatives while living away from home.¹⁰⁹

Although education is accessible to girls in most countries of the Pacific, the quality of the education received is often low, due to the lack of facilities and trained teachers, even in urban areas. For example, in Nauru, the low quality of education is cited as a major reason for high drop-out rates among girls and boys.¹¹⁰

Another reason that children drop out of school, or do not attend in the first place, is related to whether education is compulsory or not (if it is not compulsory then there is less incentive for parents to send their children – particularly girl children) and whether fees are charged or not. Even when education is “free”, there are often considerable costs associated with education, such as the cost of uniforms and registration fees, which parents are either unwilling (when a low priority is given to education) or unable to pay.¹¹¹

Table 4 summarizes the accessibility of education to children in each of the 14 Pacific countries, in terms of whether it is free and compulsory or not. As the table shows, most of the 14 Pacific countries have compulsory education,¹¹² with the exceptions of PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. These three countries, along with Fiji, Samoa and Tonga, also do not provide free education.

Table 4: Pacific Island countries and status in terms of compulsory and free education

Cultural area and Country	Education is compulsory	Education is free
Melanesia		
Fiji	Yes (until 15 years old)	No ¹¹³
Papua New Guinea (PNG)	No	No
Solomon Islands	No	No ¹¹⁴
Vanuatu	No	No
Polynesia		
Cook Islands	Yes (ages 5 to 15)	Yes
Niue	Yes (until 14 years old)	Yes
Samoa	Yes (until 14 years old) ¹¹⁵	No
Tonga	Yes (ages 6 to 14)	No
Tuvalu	Yes (until 13 years old)	Yes
Micronesia		
Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)	Yes (ages 6 to 14)	Yes
Kiribati	Yes (ages 6 to 14)	Yes
Marshall Islands	Yes. (ages 4 to 18) ¹¹⁶	Yes ¹¹⁷
Nauru	Yes (ages 6 to 16) ¹¹⁸	Yes
Palau	Yes (ages 6 to 17)	Yes

Sources: UN Survey on Violence Against Children, 2005; US Department of State, 2005, “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices”. UNICEF, 2004/2005, Situation Analyses of Children, Youth and Women.

Ability and willingness of parents to send their children to school is also affected by factors such as availability of safe drinking water and toilet facilities in schools. This is a particular problem in countries in Micronesia, where fresh water is often scarce.¹¹⁹

In most countries of the Pacific girls and boys are usually not given education in reproductive health and they do not receive any empowerment training or education about children's and women's rights. In Niue, for example, there has been no reproductive health training in any venue since family relations education at Form 6 level ceased at the national high school in 1999, even though age- and culturally-appropriate educational materials are readily available through the New Zealand education service (from which most other educational materials in Niue are sourced).¹²⁰

Reproductive health education is rarely provided in Pacific Island schools because of taboos regarding sexual matters, and beliefs that this kind of education will encourage sexual experimentation among school children. While this may or may not be the case, studies indicate that the lack of reproductive health education often leads to a higher risk of children and youth getting pregnant or contracting STIs. For example, in a survey conducted among high-school children in Niue, almost 50 percent of respondents did not know what contraceptives were or where to obtain them from, although approximately a quarter of the respondents claimed to be sexually active.¹²¹ Studies also suggest that the lack of reproductive health education and empowerment training of girls leads to them being at a higher risk of sexual abuse and exploitation.¹²²

While gains in equality of access to education by girls in Polynesia and Micronesia have occurred gradually over the past 20 years, so far these gains have yet to be reflected in higher-level employment, which is still male-dominated.

Gender imbalance in the workplace is particularly evident in Melanesia. In PNG and Solomon Islands, for example, there has been very little progress in achieving gender equality in the labour market. The labour force in these countries continues to be strongly gender segregated with the majority of females employed in agriculture and low-pay service occupations.

Social change, internal migration and poverty

Although culture provides a context that influences the degree of vulnerability of the girl child, the most potent threats to girls in Pacific societies are not traditional but arise from aspects of modernity and associated globalizing influences which have led to rapid socio-cultural change, internal migration (including urbanization and male labour mobility) and increasing poverty.

A significant change in Pacific societies is the fragmentation of families, with fewer people living in extended families and in close-knit communities. People increasingly live in a more nuclear family structure and live more isolated from their communities. This change is having significant consequences for child-rearing. While previously the raising of children was a community responsibility, in this changed living environment the task is increasingly falling directly on parents, who are often unable to cope. Without traditional

support mechanisms and without the interventions in conflicts between parents and children that used to occur when the extended family lived in close proximity, the pressure on parents is leading to increasing violence and abuse within families.¹²³

In rural areas and remote areas such as the outer islands, education and health services are in decline as rural populations dwindle due to urbanization. As dependence on money increases and the security of the subsistence economy diminishes, there is great poverty in these areas, which puts new strains on family relations.¹²⁴ In some cases, these strains lead to greater substance abuse (alcohol and *kava*¹²⁵) among males, which is believed by many to be a contributing factor to child neglect and domestic violence, including the physical and sexual abuse of girls.¹²⁶

At the same time, urbanization is leading to the creation of informal settlements in urban areas which often have poor services, high rates of unemployment and crime, and little law and order. Girl children living in such areas are at high risk of sexual abuse and exploitation.¹²⁷

In countries where resource exploitation is extensive, such as PNG and the Solomon Islands, there is high internal labour migration among males which have led to the establishment of rural enclaves where men live away from their families for long periods. These enclaves feed the expansion of markets for internet and video pornography that demean and commodify girls and women, and lead to a greater demand for prostitution and increasing cases of commercial sexual exploitation of girl children.¹²⁸

B. Consequences of vulnerability of the girl child

High numbers of girl children engaged in child labour

As noted earlier, child labour is exploited within households in all of the Pacific countries and children are expected to become unpaid family workers at an early age. However due to the gendered division of labour discussed earlier, which usually excuses boys from work in the home, girls are far more likely than boys to be exploited and the girl child is likely to perform long hours of heavy work for her family as soon as she is physically able to do so.

This is particularly the case in cultures where gender inequality is high, such as in rural Melanesia. In these cultures, girls help their mothers to cultivate food plantations, carry produce to market, help to cook, clean, make handicrafts, care for animals, wash clothes, carry water and firewood and care for younger children. Even in comparatively more gender-equal Fiji, researchers observed girl children rising at dawn to help their mothers prepare food and iron school uniforms, while their brothers bathed and dressed. After serving breakfast to their brothers, the girls struggled into their uniforms and ran behind the boys to catch the bus without breakfasting themselves.¹²⁹ This early apprenticeship for womanhood in some Pacific Island countries means that the girl child is less likely to be sent to school than the boy, or less likely to be allowed to remain at school when she reaches puberty, leading to higher poverty of opportunity and lower participation in the workforce among females than males.

In some countries of the Pacific, children also work outside the home. Poverty creates conditions which foster the economic exploitation of girls and boys, who may be seen, day and night, on the streets of some Pacific towns selling flower garlands and souvenirs to tourists. Increasingly, as will be discussed below, poverty and poverty of opportunity, along with other factors, are leading to children seeking work as prostitutes.¹³⁰

Higher health-risks for the girl child

In countries where girl children have particularly low status, their health may be neglected. For example, if health care is not readily available, as is the case in rural PNG and Solomon Islands, efforts to obtain treatment for the illness of a female child is generally less frequent than for male children.¹³¹ Furthermore, in these countries, if food is scarce – or more likely, if the most desired foods are in short supply – the girl is given less to eat than the boy.

With little or no reproductive health education, girls in the Pacific are increasingly at risk of contracting STIs, including HIV/AIDS. In countries which continue customary practices such as polygamy and have a large sex industry, such as PNG, girls in early adolescence are at particular risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, as they are highly sought after as additional wives by older men.

According to reports from several Pacific countries, fear of HIV is driving men to seek sexual relations with very young “clean” girls.¹³² These girls are, in turn, are drawn into the sex industry by the relatively high incomes that can be earned there, in order to gain desperately needed cash for food or their families.

Due to the biological factors that make females more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS than males, women and girls are contracting the disease at a higher rate than boys and men. With rates of female infection increasing, children of infected mothers are also increasingly at risk of contracting HIV.¹³³

Low self-esteem and psychological damage among girls

As noted earlier, in most Pacific cultures, violent and psychologically abusive punishment of children is acceptable, and is often justified on cultural grounds. However, this acceptance of violent and abusive punishment, combined with the effects of socializing girls to accept discrimination by males, has negative consequences for girls in terms of low self esteem and psychological damage.

Country studies of endemic family violence against women in the Pacific show that girls too often learn to accept the violent treatment of their mothers by their fathers as normal. Studies indicate that girls will, accordingly, expect to receive similar treatment from their husbands, thus perpetuating norms of family violence.¹³⁴

An analysis of community attitudes to violence in Fiji notes that the result of violent punishment and violence in the home is seen *“in the high numbers of rapes and child sexual abuse cases ... in police reports of family members severely injuring female relatives, calling it ‘discipline’ instead of violence (and) ... in the cases where children have been severely injured, hospitalized and killed as a result of violent punishment in homes and schools”*.¹³⁵

Violent punishment may also be partly responsible for the high rates of female youth suicide in the Pacific. For example, in Samoa, suicide attempts among female youth may be attributable to the fear of severe punishment that is meted out to girls if they bring shame and disgrace on the family through teenage pregnancy and similar offences.¹³⁶ Another theory put forward to explain suicide among girls is related to the conflict between modern and traditional beliefs about a woman’s role and frustration of girls’ aspirations by their families. In Melanesia other factors are also important in explaining female youth suicide. In Fiji, for example, female suicide is attributed by many theorists to the low status of women in both Fijian and Indo-Fijian cultures.¹³⁷

Higher risk of sexual abuse among girls

The socio-cultural factors discussed earlier, including acceptance of violence, a culture of secrecy about sexual matters and rape, and a lack of education about reproductive health, put the Pacific girl child at high risk of sexual abuse.

In addition, the socialization process of girls in Pacific countries, which leads them to place little value on their own opinions, has led to the girl child being at higher risk of being abused.¹³⁸ Adolescent girls who are not used to making choices or contradicting males, are unable to say “no” to sexual advances, even when the male is not a “boyfriend”, but just someone she agreed to go out with and who then demanded sex.

In many Pacific societies, while girls are taught to respect males, particularly older men, boys are not taught to value the rights of women or to respect them as individuals. Society teaches them that if a girl agrees to spend time with them or is unprotected by a male family member, she is sexually available. Therefore even if a girl is able to say “no” to sexual advances, males are not deterred and feel justified in raping the girl as, by putting herself in an “available” situation, she has “asked for it”.

Therefore, when a girl is raped, it is often seen as being the girl’s fault. Girls who have been raped consequently feel a lot of shame and self-blame.¹³⁹ A girl who is likely to be blamed for being raped is unlikely to tell anyone about it. However, even when she does tell her parents, they are unlikely to report it, for reasons discussed previously.

In the past, when most Pacific Islanders lived in closely-settled villages, public scrutiny often served to deter offenders. But in many Pacific countries today people live in dispersed settlements, with less likelihood of being observed by community members. The changes brought about by urbanisation, and the shift away from extended families towards nuclear families, has led to higher risks for the girl child of being sexually abused in the home.

In the Solomon Islands and PNG where the practice of informally adopting girl children is quite common, generally by family members for the purpose of adding to the household labour force, there are many examples of abusive adoption. These girls are often mentally, physically and sexually abused in their adopted homes.¹⁴⁰

Most Pacific nations do not have social welfare systems, and therefore lack supportive institutional mechanisms to assist girls and women who are victims of, or at risk of, violence and sexual abuse and exploitation.

Lack of support and lack of reporting of sexual abuse send a message to girls that there is no redress for such crimes and this serves to disempower them even further. Girls who have been sexually abused often run away from home, which can lead them into other abusive situations, and often leads them into becoming victims of commercial sexual exploitation in order to survive.

Higher rates of commercial sexual exploitation of girls

The existence of commercial sexual exploitation of children appears to have increased significantly in recent years in the Pacific, due to urban poverty and unemployment, mass tourism and the rise of certain industries such as logging, mining and fishing employing large numbers of single foreign and local men. Where the primary victims are girls, as in PNG, the low status of females is also a key factor. Furthermore, in very poor households, the girl may be “sold” in pursuit of family income.¹⁴¹

A study of the situation in Fiji identifies prostitution, sex tourism, pornography and adoption, all related to poverty among the victims of these activities, as the main forms of exploitation. Cases of prostitution ranged from schoolgirls exchanging sexual services for pocket-money or taxi rides, to street kids engaging in commercial sex to survive. The photographing of Fiji children for pornographic purposes has so far only been proved in one notable case, where the law did not then provide penalties for child pornography so the offender was charged and convicted of rape and indecent assault.¹⁴²

Fiji is a major tourist destination and there is anecdotal evidence collected by the study that some tourists visit Fiji with the main objective of procuring sexual relations with under age girls and boys. Adoption of Fijian children by foreigners for purposes of sexual servitude is a shocking manifestation of this predilection. So far known cases have mainly involved boys, although one case involving three girls has been successfully prosecuted.¹⁴³ The law has since been tightened to prevent this form of sexual servitude.

Vanuatu also has a significant tourism industry, but so far no direct sex-tourism has been identified. In Vanuatu, commercial sexual exploitation of girl children is associated with the sale of girls by their fathers into early marriages and with transactional sex around bars in Port Vila, mainly involving girls from poor families in urban settlements.¹⁴⁴

Tourism is minor in PNG and Solomon Islands but the economic base of both countries rests on commercial resource extraction enclaves, dominated by foreign men and employing large numbers of local men from distant communities. The situation in both countries is grim, and in PNG is the more worrying because it is the only Pacific Island

country so far to have an HIV/AIDS pandemic. The prostitution, rape, pornographic exploitation, sexual abuse and rape of girl children has been extensively documented in a PNG situation analysis commissioned by UNICEF and UNESCAP and in a report by Amnesty International.¹⁴⁵ In September 2006, Amnesty International called upon the Government of PNG to address the endemic violence against girls and women.¹⁴⁶

The study of child sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation in the Solomon Islands provides tragic examples of the exploitation of girls in prostitution in various forms and settings.¹⁴⁷ Commonly reported instances of prostitution included girls meeting clients at clubs or hotels, girls selling sex to obtain money for school fees, transport or other needs, and girls visiting fishing or other boats in the harbour, logging companies, or other industrial sites. The study found that clients are principally men (both foreign and local) with financial or land resources or other power within the community, and that club and hotel owners, taxi drivers and family are common facilitators of child prostitution.

3. PROTECTION OF THE GIRL CHILD

Policies for women and girls

The Pacific States which have ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) have made a commitment to achieve gender equality and to ensure the full development of women. The Convention affirms women's rights to be free of all forms of discrimination including education and social activities, so that they may attain their full potential.

Table 5 lists each of the 14 Pacific Island states along with their ratification or accession status and the dates on which they submitted their latest report. As the table shows, the majority of Pacific countries have acceded to the Convention, and two nations, Solomon Islands and Niue (through New Zealand), have ratified it. Three countries have neither ratified nor acceded to CEDAW. Most of the Pacific Island States Parties to the Convention have so far failed to meet reporting requirements.

Table 5: Ratification and Accession of CEDAW and dates of Reports, by Country

Cultural area and Country	Ratification or Accession of CEDAW	Due date of Report	Date of submission of latest report ¹⁴⁸
Melanesia			
Fiji	29 August 1995; Accession ¹⁴⁹	27 September 1996	14 January 2002
Papua New Guinea (PNG)	12 January 1995; Accession	11 February 1996	Combined first, second and third periodic report in progress. Assistance sought to prepare report.
Solomon Islands	6 May 2002	6 June 2003	First report in progress.
Vanuatu	8 September 1995;	8 October 1996	Combined first, second

	Accession		and third periodic report in progress. Assistance sought to prepare report.
Polynesia			
Cook Islands	11 August 2006; Accession	10 September 2007	-
Niue	10 January 1985 (through New Zealand)	-	New Zealand has submitted reports. ¹⁵⁰
Samoa	25 September 1992; Accession	25 October 1997	10 January 2005. Combined initial, second and third periodic reports.
Tonga	No	-	-
Tuvalu	6 October 1999; Accession	6 November 2000	First report in progress.
Micronesia			
Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)	In process ¹⁵¹	-	-
Kiribati	17 March 2004; Accession	17 April 2005	First report in progress.
Marshall Islands	2 March 2006; Accession	2 April 2007	-
Nauru	No	-	-
Palau	No	-	-

Source: United Nations, Division for the Advancement of Women, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/states.htm> (accessed on 9 September 2006).

CEDAW covers a particularly important issue for women and girls in the Pacific: the issue of traditional cultural gender values. The Convention emphasizes "that a change in the traditional role of men as well as the role of women in society and in the family is needed to achieve full equality of men and women". In this regard, the States Parties are obliged to take measures towards modifying the social and cultural patterns of conduct of both men and women in order to eliminate "prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women" (Article 5).

The Pacific Platform for Action (PPA), endorsed in Noumea by the Ministers for Women in the Pacific Island states in 1994, was last evaluated, reviewed and revised at the "Second Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Women" in 2004.¹⁵² The PPA unfortunately does not include the Beijing Platforms of Action (BPA) critical area of concern regarding "Persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child".¹⁵³

In many of the Pacific countries, government agencies or women and civil society women's agencies have formulated a "National Plan of Action for Women" (NPA), which has been endorsed by their respective governments. The priorities in each national plan are generally drawn from the critical issues identified in the PPA and BPA. Only Solomon Islands included concern for the girl child in their NPA but without specific actions to address the concern.

Table 6: Priorities in national plans of action for Women

Priorities in National Plans of Action for Women in 12 Pacific Developing Member Country (PDMCs)	Number of PDMCs identifying the Priority
• Economic participation or empowerment	12
• Agriculture and fishing	5
• Poverty	3
• Health;	11
• Education and training	11
• Violence against women	7
• Shared Decision-making	9
• Human rights	7
• Environment	5
• Culture and family	6
• Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women	5
• Population	2
• Women and the media	2
• The girl child	1
• Peace/armed conflict	1
• Indigenous rights	1

Source: Pacific Foundation for the Advancement of Women's Rights (PACFAW), 2004

All independent Pacific Island States have also ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which obliges States to take all appropriate measures to protect the child from discrimination (Article 2) and from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse (Article 19).

However, most Pacific States are struggling with their reporting obligations on the CRC,¹⁵⁴ and few have a comprehensive policy or plan of action for children, let alone one which specifically addresses the situation of the girl child. Furthermore, while some Pacific Island countries have signed the Optional Protocol to the CRC on child prostitution, child pornography and the sale of children, none have ratified this instrument (which provides additional protection from forms of abuse and exploitation to which the girl child is particularly vulnerable).¹⁵⁵

Table 7 lists each of the 14 Pacific Island states along with their ratification or accession status and the dates (where applicable) on which they submitted their initial and periodic reports.

Table 7: Status of CRC ratification and reporting

Country	Ratification Date	Initial CRC Report		Periodic CRC Report	
		Due Date	Status	Due Date	Status
Melanesia					
Fiji	13 August 1993	11 September 1995	Pre-session on 27 January 1998. Plenary session -	11 September 2000	Periodic report in draft form.

			25/26 May 1998. Concluding observations issued.		Follow-up needed on current status.
Papua New Guinea (PNG)	1 March 1993		No additional steps taken. ¹⁵⁶		
Solomon Islands	10 April 1995	9 May 1997	Initial report presented to Child Rights Committee in Geneva on 26 May 2003. Concluding observations issued.		n.a.
Vanuatu	7 July 1993	5 August 1995	Report received 21 January 1997. Plenary session Nov 1999. Concluding observations issued.	5 August 2000	Draft periodic report completed.
Polynesia					
Cook Islands	6 June 1997	5 June 1999	Draft report ready to be endorsed by Cabinet.		n.a.
Niue	1 December 1995	18 January 1998	Draft report finalized: to be endorsed by Cabinet.		n.a.
Samoa	29 November 1994	28 December 1996	Initial report presented to Geneva Child Rights Committee on 12 September, 2006		n.a.
Tonga	6 November 1995	6 December 1997	Regional consultative workshops completed. National workshop to be held in November 2006 to finalize report.		n.a.
Tuvalu	22 November 1995	21 December 1997	Draft report finalized.		n.a.
Micronesia					
Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)	5 May 1993	3 June 1995	Committee reviewed report January 1998. Concluding observations	3 June 2000	Periodic report in draft form

			issued.		
Kiribati	11 December 1995	9 January 1998	Initial report presented to Child Rights Committee, 13 September, 2006		n.a.
Marshall Islands	4 October 1993	11 November 1995	Report submitted to CRC Comm. on 18th March 1998; Plenary Session September 29/00; Concluding observations issued.	2 November 2000	Finalized in Dec 2003. Presentation to Child Rights Committee was planned for 2004.
Nauru	27 July 1994		Report yet to be drafted.		
Palau	4 August 1994	2 September 1997	Report received on 21/10/98; Plenary with Committee in January 2001; concluding observations issued.	3 September 2002	Follow up needed.

Source: UNICEF, updated December 2005.

The omission of the girl child from most national plans of action for women reflects the tendency to see women's issues as being separate from those of the girl child. This omission, and the lack of comprehensive national policy or actions for girls and boys in the Pacific more generally, also reflect the prevailing culture of denial in Pacific Island States concerning abuse of children's rights, especially the rights of girl children.

Responsibility for child welfare in the Pacific Island states is usually under the departments of social welfare, which often covers women's issues. However, in most Pacific states the programmes addressing women's and children's issues have so far not been implemented simultaneously. More recently, concerns about rights relating to gender, women and the girl child have been drawn together by a number of studies sponsored by UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNESCAP, UNFPA and various national and regional NGOs. These are serving to raise the awareness among governments and the community of the links and overarching themes that are common to both women and the girl child.

Constraints to protection of the girl child

Pacific societies tend to pride themselves on the strength of family and community capacity to provide an informal system of social welfare and support to all in need. Nevertheless, as summarized above, social changes have increased the vulnerability of the girl child, and where family and community protections existed in the past, they have generally been weakened by the forces of modernity. However, there has been little effort by governments to build new systems of protection to address the widening gap between rhetoric and reality.

Constraints to establishing effective programmes of action to protect girl children include lack of public sensitivity to the vulnerabilities of girl children, reflected in denial that problems exist, or insistence by opinion-makers that abuse of girl children is rare, or the fault of foreigners alone.

Even where the law provides protection, the problem is compounded by inadequate police and court procedures.¹⁵⁷ In PNG, for example, police are typically under-funded, understaffed and under-resourced in rural areas. Supplementing forces with community police in order to reach further into the community has often been counterproductive as it results in uniformed but untrained young men assuming power and authority without accountability. As a UNIFEM report noted, the law is not always sympathetic to the victim of rape. In many Pacific countries, the justice system tends to treat crimes against property more seriously by than crimes of violence against women and girls, and magistrates often impose relatively short sentences on rapists.¹⁵⁸ A further constraint to protecting the girl child is that there is no official scrutiny of harmful “customary” practices.

Other than a few church-run organizations in some countries, there are no specific care institutions for girls who have been sexually abused. These girls are placed in orphanages and other institutions with young women offenders and all of these girls are vulnerable to sexual and physical abuse because of their situation. The institutions that the abused and delinquent girls are sent to lack the capacity to make significant national interventions and they generally do not have personnel who are trained to assist girls who have been sexually abused. These girls therefore receive little comfort and advice in dealing with the trauma that they have experienced.¹⁵⁹

Programmes of action to address protection of the girl child

Civil society action

While there are active NGOs in most Pacific countries dedicated to promoting family welfare and the rights of women and girls, these tend to be under-resourced, donor dependent, and rarely have state support. They could also be better coordinated, through say, collaborating on child rights and watch-dog functions.

One of the pioneering and best known organizations is the Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre (FWCC), which has been well supported by bilateral donors and overseas NGO donor

organizations, but attracts little national funding. FWCC provides counselling, advisory and legal support services to abused women and girls, works with the police and judiciary to promote awareness of issues of violence against women and girls, conducts focused public awareness programmes on key issues, and provides training to networked feminist-based crisis counselling services run by organizations in other Pacific island countries. FWCC has gradually won national and international respect and provides a model of how to institute effective civil society interventions in the absence of state supported police protection, legal aid services, and individual and family recovery, rehabilitation, systems.

FWCC's male advocacy programmes are now being applied by NGOs in Vanuatu, Cook Islands, Bougainville, Solomon Islands and parts of PNG. Through these programmes, more and more Pacific men are being sensitized to all forms of discrimination against girls and women, involving personal transformation. The programmes challenge and support men to work as an advocate for women and girl's rights, and change attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate mistreatment, exploitation and crimes against women and girls.

The Pacific Children's Programme

The Pacific Children's Programme was a project initiated by AusAID in 2001 aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect in Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu. In its early phases, it commissioned studies on "Knowledge Attitude and Behaviour Practices (KABP) in these countries to understand community responses to child protection. It then went on to develop and implement primary prevention strategies on child abuse for local communities. In 2005, management of the programme was transferred to UNICEF Pacific and planning is underway to extend activities to the Solomon Islands and Kiribati from 2007. The programme will also be broadened into a framework for child protection activities, which includes support for CRC implementation in these five countries .

Pacific Regional Workshop on Combating Poverty and Commercial Exploitation of Children and Youth

At the Pacific Regional Workshop on Combating Poverty and Commercial Exploitation of Children and Youth, held in Nadi, Fiji, in September 2003, participating Pacific countries identified the need for data to support policy development and strengthen legislation to combat the commercial exploitation of children and youth.

To promote data collection in this area UNICEF, ECPAT and UNESCAP supported seven studies into child commercial sexual exploitation in the region, using local NGO expertise and networks, and local knowledge. The seven countries in which studies have been initiated are the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu. Five of these studies have been completed. All studies found that commercial sexual exploitation of children is a serious and growing concern related to increasing poverty, urbanization, lack of both traditional and modern mechanisms for protecting children and development activities that create economic enclaves into remote villages and towns, creating dependence on "windfall" cash income. The studies found that the problems are not being addressed and is little recognised by

governments, NGOs or the wider community. All countries reported increasing incidences of child prostitution and, in some countries, increasing incidences of child-sex tourism.¹⁶⁰

Pacific Consultation on Violence against Children

In September 2005 UNICEF Pacific, in partnership with Save the Children Fiji, the Fiji Ministry of Women, Social Welfare And Poverty Alleviation, and the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, led the Pacific Consultation on Addressing Violence against Children. This meeting was a follow-up to the East Asia and Pacific Regional Consultation on Violence against Children held in Bangkok in June 2005.

Fifteen Pacific Island Countries sent delegates to the Pacific Consultation which was held in Suva, Fiji. This meeting was the first in the region to specifically address the topic of violence against children.¹⁶¹

The Consultation was preceded by a Children's Forum on 24 September, to prepare 11 Fijian child delegates to participate in the Pacific Consultation. At the Children's Forum the child delegates were familiarised with the issues surrounding violence against children and were given an opportunity to express their views and to formulate recommendations for presentation to the Pacific Consultation. The Consultation made a set of recommendations, National Plans of Action to address violence against children were produced by the participating countries and recommendations were made for the Pacific Plan for Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration.

The Stockholm Declaration on commercial sexual exploitation of children and child sexual abuse

Under the leadership of UNESCAP, eight of the 14 independent Pacific Island countries have adopted the 1996 Stockholm Declaration. The Stockholm Declaration is a declaration of measures to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children and child sexual abuse and commits countries to develop national action plans.¹⁶²

Regional programmes of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) provides technical assistance to the 22 Pacific member states and territories in areas such as: health and nutrition, epidemiology, statistics, demography, culture, youth, women's advancement, fisheries.

SPC is currently reviewing its Public Health Programme and developing a NCD strategy that will focus on strengthening national level emphasis on the family, the home environment, gender roles and how the inequalities that exist impact on the health of women and their children. The SPC Pacific Women's Bureau will conduct a gender audit of the strategy and implementation plan, with a view to filling information gaps on the

gender dimensions of HIV in the Pacific. It also aims to improve gender disaggregation of data and gender analyses of statistical and demographic information.

4. EMPOWERMENT OF THE GIRL CHILD

While the situation of the girl child has been a largely neglected issue in Pacific Island countries, recent studies sponsored by UNICEF, UNIFEM, Save the Children, AusAID, Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (and its regional programme), the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), the Pacific Women's Bureau and the gender programme within the Pacific Forum Secretariat, with the cooperation of many Pacific government departments of women, social welfare, and community affairs, and national NGOs, have begun to bring the need for protection of girl children to the forefront and to place girl children on national agendas for social development.

Country and regional studies show that there is no single answer applicable to every country due to the differences in development, culture, governance and the effectiveness of public policy. However country and regional situation reports sponsored by UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNESCAP, Save the Children, Amnesty International, and AusAID recommend the actions outlined below.

Promote compliance with International Standards on rights of girls and women

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women recognizes that violations of women's rights cannot be justified under "custom, tradition, or religious consideration." The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action supported this position, stating that "Any harmful aspect of certain traditional, customary, or modern practices that violates the rights of women should be prohibited and eliminated". The Committee on the Rights of the Child has indicated in most of its concluding observations on Pacific countries the importance of ensuring that customary law adheres to international human rights standards as well as the formal legal system. As noted above, it also obliges States to take all appropriate measures to protect all children from violence and discrimination.

The United Nations, in its policy dialogue with Pacific states, should encourage all Pacific states to become compliant State Parties to international commitments such as CEDAW, the Convention of the Rights of The Child (CRC), its Optional Protocols; and the Stockholm Declaration; further:

- Encouragement should be given for State Parties to accede to complementary Conventions such as the Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and Convention against Torture (CAT).

- Those countries who have not completed CEDAW or CRC reports should be assisted to do so.
- Assistance should be provided to train a competent government official in each country to oversee and advise government on international standards of human rights, to make reports as necessary, and to advise on international standards regarding human rights for public education.

Raise Public Awareness of the Issues

The studies of the situation of children and the girl child in the Pacific show that public attitudes of denial or indifference, or misapprehension of affective modes of child discipline underlie many of the vulnerabilities of the girl child. The follow measures are needed:

- Public education campaigns targeting the clergy and church organizations, school teachers and law-makers, law enforcement agencies and parents.
- Community-based prevention programmes, including parenting-skills training, and education in child development and in non-violent and non-abusive methods of child discipline.
- Promotion of non-violence as a cultural value using existing community institutions, structures and linkages.
- Meaningful consultation with children and young people, particularly girl children, to plan and implement strategies to address violence and discrimination against the girl child.

Conduct legislative review and reform

While the laws of Pacific Island States provide some protection for the the girl child with respect to sexual offences, the protection is not wholly adequate. Sexual offences against girls are often ill-defined (such as the definition of rape¹⁶³) and most laws do not provide children with protection against commercial sexual exploitation, such as prostitution or child pornography. Unlike the law in New Zealand and in some states of Australia, the laws of most Pacific States do not specifically address violence or psychological abuse of children, and some countries do not address labour exploitation of children. Where relevant legislation exists, offences are massively underreported, in part to due to public attitudes that conceal the abuse of girls. In some countries poor governance and law enforcement means that those offences that are reported are inadequately dealt with.

A number of measures are urgently needed, including review and reform of legislative provisions for the protection of girls and women to ensure consistency with international standards. Issues which require urgent review are:

- Birth registration.
- Age of marriage and legal sexual consent for girls.
- Subordination of customary laws on marriage to constitutional law and human rights law.
- Scope, definitions and penalties for sexual offences against children.
- Informal adoption practices and possible controls on the practice.
- Laws to prohibit violent or psychologically damaging punishment of children.
- Laws to prohibit commercial sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution and child pornography.
- Penalties on against those who purchase sexual services, instead of against those who provide them.
- Rules of evidence and court practice and procedure for cases involving crimes against children and child witnesses,
- Legal protections to encourage the reporting of crimes against women and children.
- Laws to regulate the work of children in both the informal and formal economy.

Improve law enforcement

In addition to reviewing and updating laws, there is a need to improve law enforcement in the area of violence against the girl child to ensure more effective practices.

Appropriate measures might include:

- Re-education of police and magistrates on the vulnerabilities of girl children and their obligations to provide protection for girls and women.
- Capacity building in the justice system on the needs and rights of victims, particularly girl children who have suffered violence, exploitation and abuse
- Gender-sensitive and child sensitive court proceedings.
- Identification and appointment of police and justice personnel to specialise in cases of sexual abuse, assault and rape.
- Establishment of police sexual assault and family violence units, with links to a specialized hospital unit.
- Improvement of forensic expertise of police and prosecutors, and procedures for investigation, gathering and securing evidence regarding sexual abuse, assault and rape.
- Training of more women for positions in the judiciary and police.

Develop Policies and Strategies

Governments and NGOs need to develop policies and strategies to address the vulnerability of girl children, with emphasis on the following:

- The upcoming “Third Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Women” and “Asia-Pacific Ministerial Consultation on Children”, to be held in May 2007, in New Caledonia and Fiji respectively, offer an opportunity for leaders in the region to address issues faced by the girl child.
- Policy development on gender and family violence by Pacific Island governments.
- Women’s non-government organizations need to include the girl child specifically into their regional and national policy platforms.
- Increased emphasis on policy and action programmes to prevent child sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation including child sex tourism.
- More substantive policy-oriented research on gender socialization of children in Pacific Island countries to better understand how gender identities are formed from early childhood onwards.

UNIFEM Pacific and UNICEF Pacific are ready to work collaboratively on this issue, in particular to address the mother-daughter relationship, as a preventive strategy.

Make education accessible and relevant

- More vigorous effort to implement national policies on the education of girls in countries where gender barriers to education still exist: PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.
- Revise curricula in formal education to include training in reproductive health, family life, legal and human rights awareness, and good citizenship.

Encourage donor support

The vulnerabilities of the girl child tend to be submerged in wider issues of gender inequality and programmes of action for women, and require special focus. Donors and technical assistance agencies should seek out and support specific initiatives for the protection of the girl child. Donors should include at least one programme of action to empower the girl child within their programmes of assistance.

Endnotes

¹ This paper was jointly written and researched by Penelope Schoeffel, Independent Social Development Consultant, Sydney, Australia, and Ellie Meleisea, Editor, ICT in Education Unit, UNESCO Bangkok, with assistance and inputs from Elizabeth Cox, Director, UNIFEM Pacific; Gillian Mellsop, Representative, and Louise Pounder, Child Protection Officer, UNICEF Pacific, Linda Peterson, Director, Pacific Women's Bureau, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Noumea; Samantha Hung, Gender Issues Adviser Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Fiji; Vijaya Raman, Human Rights Policy Officer, Public Interest Advocacy Centre Ltd, Australia; and Claire Slatter, Development Alternatives with Women for a New era (DAWN), New Zealand.

² The 14 Pacific States discussed in this paper are: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), The Republic of the Fiji Islands (Fiji), Kingdom of Tonga (Tonga), Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

³ Population figures are divided into 5-year groups (0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19) so it is difficult to get figures for the 0-18 (child) age group.

⁴ SPC Demography and Population Programme, 2004, "Current Pacific population dynamics and recent trends", SPC, Noumea. Note: all of the four most highly-populated countries are located in the sub-region "Melanesia". The people of Polynesia and Micronesia make up 7.4% and 6.2%, respectively, of the total Pacific-region population.

⁵ SPC Demography and Population Programme, 2004(a), "Current Pacific population dynamics and recent trends", SPC, Noumea

⁶ Fiji has a significant number of "Indo-Fijians", who are descended from indentured workers imported from the Indian sub-continent by Britain during the early colonial era, as well as free settlers from India who were encouraged to go to Fiji to set up trades and other businesses in the 1920s. Other non-indigenous groups include Chinese, Europeans, Pacific Islanders, and people of mixed ethnic origin. The latter are not usually counted as "indigenous" if their Fijian ancestry is in the paternal line of descent.

⁷ DFAT, 2006, Cook Islands Fact Sheet, (2005 figures).

http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/cook_islands/index.html

⁸ DFAT, 2006, Niue Fact Sheet, (2003 figures). <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/niue/index.html>

⁹ DFAT, 2006, Tuvalu Fact Sheet, (2002 figures) <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/tuvalu/index.html>

¹⁰ DFAT, 2006, Marshall Islands Fact Sheet, (2003 figures)

http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/marshall_islands/index.html

¹¹ DFAT, 2006, Nauru Fact Sheet, (2003 figures) <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/nauru/index.html>

¹² Tyron, D. 2005, "What Future for Pacific Languages?", Port Vila Press,

<http://www.news.vu/en/living/Events/051108-Vanuatu-languages-special-feature.shtml>

¹³ French territories, and former territories, such as Vanuatu, also have a significant Francophone population.

¹⁴ "Melanesia" includes Fiji, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Timor Leste. "Polynesia" incorporates American Samoa, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Wallis and Futuna. "Micronesia" includes FSM, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau.

¹⁵ Meleisea, P.S., 2004, "Cultural Values of Peace in the Pacific Islands: A Case Study of Samoa", in Zhou Nan-Zhao and Bob Teasdale (eds), *Teaching Asia-Pacific Core Values of Peace and Harmony: A Sourcebook for Teachers*, UNESCO, Bangkok; Crocombe, R. and Meleisea, M. (eds) 1994, *Land Issues in the Pacific*, Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Canterbury, Christchurch.

¹⁶ Fiji is an exception, with significant Hindu, Muslim and Sikh minority groups.

¹⁷ Most Pacific Island economies are experiencing higher rates of population growth than economic growth, which means that governments have difficulty in providing sufficient educational and health services to meet needs, particularly the needs of the large section of the population aged under 20 (which in Pacific Island countries ranges between 31 and 60 per cent of the population). The exceptions are those with continuing ties to the former administering

metropolitan countries which allow free migration (such as the case of Cook Islands migration to New Zealand) or migration quotas (such as the case of Samoan migration to New Zealand). In some of these countries, such as Samoa, remittances from overseas migration constitute a significant contribution to the economy. See: Situation Analysis papers commissioned by UNICEF Pacific 2003-2005 for Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Marshall Islands and FSM.

¹⁸ Christian Care Centre of the Church of Melanesia and the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), 2004, "Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Sexual Abuse in the Solomon Islands, Unpublished report commissioned by UNICEF Pacific.

¹⁹ The study *Poverty and Access to Infrastructure in Papua New Guinea* by Gibson and Rozelle (2002), found that poverty is primarily rural in PNG and associated with poor access to services, markets and transportation. Access to education had the most significant long-term effect on poverty reduction.

²⁰ Meleisea, E. and Schoeffel, P. (forthcoming), "Youth in the Pacific Small Island Developing States", *World Youth Report*. United Nations, New York

²¹ Foreign-operated logging, mining, petroleum and commercial fisheries industries promote male labour mobility within countries and create enclaves in which the populations are predominantly male.

²² Fitzgerald, M. H. and Howard, A., 1990, "Aspects of Social Organization in Three Samoan Communities", *Pacific Studies*, Vol 14, No. 1, November 1990

²³ In the Pacific Islands HIV/AIDS is spread mainly by heterosexual contact.

²⁴ Polygyny means multiple wives. Polygamy means multiple spouses. While men in some parts of the Pacific have multiple wives (polygyny), women in the Pacific do not have multiple husbands (polyandry).

²⁵ Hammer, Lawrence, 2005, Unpublished studies of sexual behavior and sexually transmitted disease in the Moro-Lake Kutubu and Kikori areas of PNG, PNG Institute of Medical Research. Testing for HIV can only be done on a voluntary basis, and is surrounded with protocols as anti-retroviral drugs are only available on a very limited basis. Therefore, statistically valid samples are virtually impossible to obtain.

²⁶ Malaria is a severe health problem in PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

²⁷ Major food imports in the Pacific consist of cheap meat and poultry by-products such as mutton ribs, frozen or salted beef belly, turkey tails and chicken carcasses. These products consist largely of fat and bones.

²⁸ UNICEF, 2003, "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Republic of the Marshall Islands", UNICEF Pacific, Suva

²⁹ "Cold chains" refer to refrigeration systems used to preserve vaccines.

³⁰ In Vanuatu, in an effort to control the amount of money spent on bride price, the Council of Chiefs (the Malvatumauri) issued a policy in April 2005 placing an upper limit of 80,000 Vatu on bride price (NZ\$1,066). In conjunction with the Vanuatu National Council of Women, the Council of Chiefs also ruled that bride price should be paid in traditional goods (pigs, mats and kava) rather than money. Reported by Claire Slatter, Development Alternatives with Women for a New era (DAWN), New Zealand.

³¹ Godelier, M., 1986, *The Making of Great Men*, Cambridge University Press

³² HELP Resources, Inc, and UNICEF (PNG), 2005, *A Situation Analysis of Child Sexual Abuse and the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Papua New Guinea*, UNICEF Pacific, Suva (commissioned by UNESCAP).

³³ HELP Resources, Inc, and UNICEF (PNG), 2005.

³⁴ PNG Department of Environment and Conservation, PNG Gas Project Environmental Impact Statement, Special Study no. 10, Social Impact Assessment. Citing studies by L. Goldman and J. Weiner.

³⁵ US Department of State, 2005, "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices", <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/c17093.htm>. In PNG and Solomon Islands girls can marry at 14 with consent, and 16 without consent. In most other countries the minimum age of marriage, with consent, is higher (15-16).

³⁶ In most countries of the Pacific, the age of majority (the age at which a person is considered to be able to manage their own affairs) is 18. However, as Sue Farran points out in a review paper, when the legal age of marriage is under the age of 18, such as in Vanuatu where the legal age for girls is 16, this means that girls reach the marriageable age before they reach their majority. In such countries, therefore, the legal incapacity of girls to contract “seems to be ignored for the purposes of marriage”. (Farran, S. 2000, “Gender Discrimination: A review of legislation in Vanuatu”, *Development Bulletin*, no. 51, pp 17-19).

³⁷ HELP Resources, Inc, and UNICEF (PNG), 2005; UNICEF Pacific, 2005(c). Birth Registration in the Pacific, UNICEF Pacific, Suva.

³⁸ HELP Resources, Inc, and UNICEF (PNG), 2005.

³⁹ UNICEF, 2003, “A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Republic of the Marshall Islands”, UNICEF Pacific, Suva.

⁴⁰ However, in some countries customary law is being challenged. In Samoa, for example, there have been a number of challenges on the grounds of the incompatibility of customary law with the human rights guaranteed by the constitution.

⁴¹ HELP Resources, Inc, and UNICEF (PNG), 2005

⁴² Pacific Children’s Programme, 2003, “Community Responses to Child protection in Fiji: Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviour and Practice”, Unpublished Baseline Survey

⁴³ UNFPA, 2005, *Samoa Family Health and Safety Study*; Save the Children (Fiji), 2006, “The Physical and Mental Punishment of Children in Fiji: A Research Report”, Save the Children, Suva, p. 8.

⁴⁴ Morton, H., 1996, *Becoming Tongan: An Ethnography of Childhood*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu

⁴⁵ Plange, Nii-K, et. al., 2002, “Pacific Child Protection Study: Overview report on child protection practice in Fiji, Vanuatu and Samoa”, Pacific Children’s Programme; See also UNICEF Situation Analysis Reports (2003-2005) for Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Cook Islands, FSM, Nauru and Niue.

⁴⁶ In New Zealand, smacking children is illegal and Pacific Islanders are particularly liable to be accused by police and teachers of violence to their children.

⁴⁷ Schoeffel, P., Meleisea, M., David, R., Kalauni, R., Kalolo, K., Kingi, P., Taumoefolau, T., Vuetibau, L., & Williams, S., 1996, Pacific Islands Polynesian attitudes to child training and discipline in New Zealand: Some policy implications for social welfare and education. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, 6, 134-147

⁴⁸ Save the Children (Fiji), 2006, p. 8.

⁴⁹ The Pacific Children’s Programme, (funded by AusAID) conducted baseline studies on knowledge, attitudes, behaviour and practice (KABP) on child protection in Fiji (2003), Samoa (2004), and Vanuatu (2003).

⁵⁰ Five country studies of commercial sexual exploitation of children and child sexual abuse were commissioned by UNICEF Pacific and UNESCAP in 2004-2005 for Fiji, Kiribati, PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

⁵¹ The exception is documented in anthropological accounts from PNG of ritual fellatio between male children and adult men, associated with religious beliefs and male initiation. Child betrothal and marriage was practiced by some Melanesian peoples, but coitus did not occur until the girls were past puberty. The traditional definition of a girl child in many Pacific societies was pre-pubescence. When menses commenced the child was usually considered a woman. See: HELP Resources, Inc, and UNICEF (PNG), 2005

⁵² In Niue, a victim of child sexual abuse and her family were forced to leave the country to escape ostracism after reporting a case of child sexual abuse. See: UNICEF, 2004(d) “A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Niue”, UNICEF Pacific, Suva, p. 44.

⁵³ UNICEF, 2005(a), “A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Kiribati”, UNICEF Pacific, Suva

⁵⁴ For example, a 12 year old Samoan boy sexually abused his six-year old cousin and was caught. The boy was himself being abused by an adult member of his mother’s family. When the matter became known within the extended family, the head of the family rejected suggestions the matter be taken to a doctor or counsellor, and ordered that was not be spoken of again.

Punishment fell indirectly on the boy, who was subsequently shunned by his cousins, aunts and uncles. Schoeffel, P., Unpublished data collected in 1994.

⁵⁵ Pacific Children's Programme, 2004, "Community Responses to Child Protection in Samoa: Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviour and Practice", Unpublished Baseline Survey Report.

⁵⁶ UNICEF, 2004(d), "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Niue", UNICEF Pacific, Suva, p. 41

⁵⁷ United Nations Survey on Violence against Children, 2005; and US Department of State, 2005, "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices".

⁵⁸ UNICEF, 2004(d), "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Niue", UNICEF Pacific, Suva, p. 42

⁵⁹ Amnesty International Amnesty International, 2006(a), *Papua New Guinea – Violence against Women: Not Inevitable, Never Acceptable!*, Amnesty International

⁶⁰ The ethnographic literature on Samoa and Tonga contains many instances of this practice. Dr Digim'Rina, an anthropologist from the University of Papua New Guinea, also reports the practice in the Southern Highlands of PNG, where older men have monopolised the market for young brides, and young men have tried to compete or assert prior claim by assaulting girl children to rupture their hymen and thus "devalue" them.

⁶¹ Dr Linus Digim'Rina, in an unpublished report (2006), recorded an account by police in Tari of the rape of a six year-old girl to punish her father for not sharing the bride price of his older daughters.

⁶² Education data are unreliable in many countries of the Pacific, particularly data from rural areas. This is due to many factors, including poor data collection and poor analysis, owing to low capacity. Also, indicators may not exist, so that education statistics are simply derived from census data, based on assumptions. Official literacy rates, for example, are not necessarily the result of surveys of functional literacy, however, but are usually proxy figures, i.e. the percentage of adults who had three or more years of primary school. See: UNICEF, 2004(a), "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Cook Islands", UNICEF Pacific, Suva, p. 56. Therefore, literacy figures often merely represent attendance at primary school rather than educational attainment. Alternatively, education data are estimates based on factors such as the number of schools. In PNG and the Solomon Islands, for example, enrolment figures are estimates based on such things as the number of schools that have been built. These estimates are likely to be incorrect given that, even though schools may exist, many are not operational due to lack of teachers and equipment, or because schools have been vandalized or burned down in inter-group warfare.

⁶³ UNICEF, 2005(a), "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Kiribati", UNICEF Pacific, Suva

⁶⁴ UNICEF, 2004(c), "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Nauru", UNICEF Pacific, Suva.

⁶⁵ For example, in Fiji this is a common concern among parents in both Fijian and Indo-Fijian families.

⁶⁶ Amnesty International, 2006(a), *Papua New Guinea – Violence against Women: Not Inevitable, Never Acceptable!*, Amnesty International.

⁶⁷ Christian Care Centre of the Church of Melanesia and the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), 2004, "Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Sexual Abuse in the the Solomon Islands", Unpublished report commissioned by UNICEF Pacific, Suva

⁶⁸ Regional Rights Resource Team, 2004, "Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Sexual Abuse in the Republic of Kiribati", Unpublished report commissioned by UNICEF Pacific, Suva

⁶⁹ Estimate by UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

⁷⁰ Estimate by UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

⁷¹ Estimate by UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Data refer to a year between 1995 and 1999

⁷² Estimate by UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Data refer to a year between 1995 and 1999

⁷³ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 2006, data refer to 2002

⁷⁴ UIS, 2006, data refer to 2002

-
- ⁷⁵ Lahmeyer, J, 2004, "Population Statistics Website – FSM", Werkgroep Seriële Publicaties" ("Working Alliance on Serial Publications"), University of Utrecht, Netherlands; Data (estimate) refer to a year between 1999 and 2004.
<http://www.library.uu.nl/wesp/populstat/Oceania/microneg.htm>
- ⁷⁶ Lahmeyer, J, 2004, "Population Statistics Website – FSM"; Data refer to a year between 1999 and 2004.
- ⁷⁷ Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Division of Statistics, 2006, "Education Statistics", FSM Division of Statistics website; Data refer to the year 2000.
- ⁷⁸ FSM Division of Statistics, 2006; Data refer to the year 2000.
- ⁷⁹ Government of Solomon Islands, 2002. Primary and Secondary School Statistics, attendance only. Data refer to 1999. Quoted in UNICEF, 2005(b), "A Situation Analysis of Children Youth and Women: Solomon Islands", UNICEF Pacific, Suva.
- ⁸⁰ Lahmeyer, J, 2004, "Population Statistics Website – Solomon Islands", Werkgroep Seriële Publicaties" ("Working Alliance on Serial Publications"), University of Utrecht, Netherlands, data refer to a year between 1999 and 2004.
<http://www.library.uu.nl/wesp/populstat/Oceania/solomong.htm>
- ⁸¹ Lahmeyer, J, 2004, "Population Statistics Website – Solomon Islands", Werkgroep Seriële Publicaties" ("Working Alliance on Serial Publications"), University of Utrecht, Netherlands; a year between 1999 and 2004. <http://www.library.uu.nl/wesp/populstat/Oceania/solomong.htm>
- ⁸² UIS, 2006, data refer to 1999.
- ⁸³ UIS, 2006, data refer to 1999.
- ⁸⁴ Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2006, "Country Information: Cook Islands" website, data refer to 2002.
- ⁸⁵ ADB, 2006, "Country Information: Cook Islands", data refer to 2002.
- ⁸⁶ UIS, 2006, data refer to 1999.
- ⁸⁷ UIS, 2006, data refer to 1999.
- ⁸⁸ UIS, 2006, data refer to 2002.
- ⁸⁹ UIS, 2006, data refer to 2002.
- ⁹⁰ UIS, 2006, data refer to 1990.
- ⁹¹ UIS, 2006, data refer to 1990.
- ⁹² Lahmeyer, J, 2004, "Population Statistics Website – Vanuatu", Werkgroep Seriële Publicaties" ("Working Alliance on Serial Publications"), University of Utrecht, Netherlands; data refer to a year between 1999 and 2004. <http://www.library.uu.nl/wesp/populstat/Oceania/vanuatug.htm>
- ⁹³ Lahmeyer, J, 2004, "Population Statistics Website – Vanuatu", Werkgroep Seriële Publicaties" ("Working Alliance on Serial Publications"), University of Utrecht, Netherlands; data refer to a year between 1999 and 2004. <http://www.library.uu.nl/wesp/populstat/Oceania/vanuatug.htm>
- ⁹⁴ UIS, 2006, data refer to 1999.
- ⁹⁵ UIS, 2006, data refer to 1999.
- ⁹⁶ UIS, 2006, data refer to 1999.
- ⁹⁷ UIS, 2006, data refer to 1999.
- ⁹⁸ Lahmeyer, J, 2004, "Population Statistics Website – Kiribati"; Werkgroep Seriële Publicaties" ("Working Alliance on Serial Publications"), University of Utrecht, Netherlands; Data refer to a year between 1999 and 2004. <http://www.library.uu.nl/wesp/populstat/Oceania/kiribatg.htm>
- ⁹⁹ Lahmeyer, J, 2004, "Population Statistics Website – Kiribati"; Data refer to a year between 1999 and 2004. <http://www.library.uu.nl/wesp/populstat/Oceania/kiribatg.htm>
- ¹⁰⁰ UIS, 2006, data refer to 1999.
- ¹⁰¹ UIS, 2006, data refer to 1999.
- ¹⁰² SPC Statistics Database. Quoted in UNICEF, 2004(d), "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Niue", UNICEF Pacific, Suva
- ¹⁰³ SPC Statistics Database. Quoted in UNICEF, 2004(d), "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Niue", UNICEF Pacific, Suva
- ¹⁰⁴ UIS, 2006, data refer to 1999.
- ¹⁰⁵ UIS, 2006, data refer to 1999.
- ¹⁰⁶ UNICEF, 2004(c), "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Nauru", UNICEF Pacific, Suva.

-
- ¹⁰⁷ The Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands has reported that it lacks the resources to maintain public school facilities. See: UNICEF, 2003, "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Republic of the Marshall Islands", UNICEF Pacific, Suva, p. 45.
- ¹⁰⁸ Even where boarding schools exist, families often prefer to enrol their children in day schools and send their children to live with relatives. Traditional reciprocal ties between families oblige relatives to look after their children.
- ¹⁰⁹ Save the Children (Fiji), 2004, "The Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of Children in Fiji: A Situational Analysis", commissioned by UNESCAP in cooperation with UNICEF and ECPAT, p. 25
- ¹¹⁰ UNICEF, 2004(c). "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Nauru", UNICEF Pacific, Suva.
- ¹¹¹ UNICEF, 2003, "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Republic of the Marshall Islands", UNICEF Pacific, Suva, p. 44.
- ¹¹² Usually between the ages of 6 and 14.
- ¹¹³ There are no primary school fees, but there are secondary school fees.
- ¹¹⁴ Primary school fees were eliminated in 2005. Secondary school fees still exist.
- ¹¹⁵ Compulsory education until 14 years old is not enforced.
- ¹¹⁶ The law was changed in 2004 to make education compulsory from ages 4 to 18. Previously education was compulsory for children aged 6 to 14. Lack of sufficient numbers of secondary school classrooms is making it difficult to enforce compulsory education for children over 14.
- ¹¹⁷ Education is free but schools have registration fees.
- ¹¹⁸ In Nauru and other Micronesian countries there are high rates of truancy (up to 60%) and vandalism of school facilities by students. Most children do not complete secondary school. This is partly because children see no point in continuing their education if there are no jobs available upon graduation. See: UNICEF, 2004(c), "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Nauru", UNICEF Pacific, Suva; UNICEF, 2005(a), "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Kiribati", UNICEF Pacific, Suva.
- ¹¹⁹ UNICEF, 2005(a), "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Kiribati", UNICEF Pacific, Suva; UNICEF, 2004(c), "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Nauru", UNICEF Pacific, Suva; UNICEF, 2003, "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Republic of the Marshall Islands", UNICEF Pacific, Suva.
- ¹²⁰ UNICEF, 2004(d), "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Niue", UNICEF Pacific, Suva.
- ¹²¹ UNICEF, 2004(d), "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Niue", UNICEF Pacific, Suva.
- ¹²² Save the Children (Fiji), 2004; Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), 2004.
- ¹²³ UNICEF, 2004(b), "Situation Report on Children, Youth and Women in the Federated States of Micronesia", UNICEF Pacific, Suva.
- ¹²⁴ Wan Smol Bag and the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), 2004, "Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Sexual Abuse in Vanuatu", Unpublished report, commissioned by UNICEF Pacific
- ¹²⁵ Kava is a traditional drink, made from the root of the pepper plant, which is mildly narcotic.
- ¹²⁶ Pacific Children's Programme, 2003, "Child Protection in Vanuatu: A Report of a Baseline Study on Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviours and Practices"; Christian Care Centre of the Church of Melanesia and the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), 2004; UNICEF, 2003, "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Republic of the Marshall Islands", UNICEF Pacific, Suva.
- ¹²⁷ Christian Care Centre of the Church of Melanesia and RRRT, 2004.
- ¹²⁸ HELP Resources, Inc, and UNICEF (PNG), 2005; Christian Care Centre of the Church of Melanesia and RRRT, 2004.
- ¹²⁹ Kikau, Eci and Schoeffel P., Unpublished observations made at Dawasamu, Tailevu, in 1979.
- ¹³⁰ For example, a recent Radio Australia interview with Marc Neil-Jones, Editor and Publisher of the Vanuatu Daily Post and Marilyn Tahu, Coordinator of the Vanuatu Women's Centre, reported that anecdotal evidence suggests that the number of women and girls turning to prostitution is related to rising urbanization and to unemployment levels. It was reported that in Port Vila as

unemployment levels rise, more and more girls are becoming involved in the sex industry, visiting kava bars where local men are, and the wharfs when foreign fishing boats visit. See: Coutts, G., 2006, "Vanuatu: Anecdotal evidence points to prostitution increase", 27 February 2006, Radio Australia (Pacific Beat).

¹³¹ HELP Resources, Inc. and UNICEF (PNG), 2005; Christian Care Centre of the Church of Melanesia and RRRT, 2004.

¹³² Reported by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre.

¹³³ Children of AIDS infected mothers are not necessarily at a higher risk of infection, except at birth and if they are breastfed by their infected mother.

¹³⁴ UNIFEM, 2002, *Actions to end violence against women: a regional scan of the Pacific*, UNIFEM; Amnesty International, 2004, "Solomon Islands Women Confronting Violence", Amnesty International.

¹³⁵ Moore, P., 2006, "Violence breeds violence: Let's keep children safe and secure in Fiji homes, schools and communities", Statement by Women's Action for Change (WAC) – Fiji, 1 September 2006, Suva.

¹³⁶ Booth, H. 1999, "Pacific Island Suicide in Comparative perspective", Working Papers in Demography, No 76. Demography and Sociology Program, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University. Canberra. Booth points out that the number of attempted suicides among young women in Samoa is in fact quite low compared to other Pacific countries; however the method chosen (paraquat weed-killer poisoning) is so effective in causing death that the rate of suicide of female youth in Samoa is very high..

¹³⁷ Booth, H. 1999, pp. 14-15

¹³⁸ Police statistics from Fiji indicate that defilement of girls between the age of 11-13 years is the most common offence against children. Source: communication from Edwina Kotoisuva, Deputy Coordinator, Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC). Also see: Plange, Nii-K, et. al., 2002, "Pacific Child Protection Study: Overview report on child protection practice in Fiji, Vanuatu and Samoa", Pacific Children's Programme

¹³⁹ UNICEF, 2005(a), "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Kiribati", UNICEF Pacific, Suva

¹⁴⁰ Christian Care Centre of the Church of Melanesia and the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), 2004.

¹⁴¹ HELP Resources, Inc. and UNICEF (PNG), 2005

¹⁴² Save the Children (Fiji), 2004, p.19

¹⁴³ Save the Children (Fiji), 2004, pp.20-22

¹⁴⁴ Wan Smol Bag and the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), 2004

¹⁴⁵ HELP Resources, Inc. and UNICEF (PNG), 2005; Amnesty International, 2006(a).

¹⁴⁶ Amnesty International, 2006(b), "Papua New Guinea: Culture and resources no excuse for violence against women", Amnesty International Press Release, 4 September 2006.

¹⁴⁷ Christian Care Centre of the Church of Melanesia and the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), 2004. It should be noted that prostitution is not a new phenomenon in the Solomon Islands. The practice of traditional prostitution has been documented in an anthropological study by Hogbin, H. I., 1964, *A Guadalcanal Society: The Kaoka Speakers*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York.

¹⁴⁸ The initial report is due approximately one year after ratification or acceding. Following that, reports are due at least every four years.

¹⁴⁹ Fiji originally acceded with reservations, but withdrew those reservations on 24 January 2000.

¹⁵⁰ New Zealand submitted its fifth periodic report on 30 June 2003.

¹⁵¹ FSM has made reservations regarding Article 11 (1) (d), 11 (2) (b), 2 (f), 5, 16, 29 (1). In response to these reservations, the Government of Portugal objected on 15 December, arguing that such reservations could "contribute to undermining the basis of international law". Source: United Nations DAW website <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reservations-country.htm#N46>.

¹⁵² SPC, 2004, "2nd Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Women", Press Release 16 August, 2004.

According to critics, implementation of the PPA has so far failed to make any significant difference in the progress towards gender equality in the Pacific. Pacific magazine, "Gender Equality: Reality or Myth?", March 1, 2004.

¹⁵³ The PPA does not include the BPA critical areas of concern regarding "Stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems, especially the media"; and, "Persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child". The Beijing platform does not include the PPA critical areas of concern: "Agriculture and fisheries", "Culture and the family"; and "Indigenous people's rights".

¹⁵⁴ The Cook Islands, Niue, Nauru, Tuvalu and Tonga are yet to submit their initial report on their implementation of the CRC to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. The periodic reports of most other Pacific Island States are overdue, some by five years.

¹⁵⁵ Fiji, Vanuatu, Nauru, Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia have all signed (but not yet ratified) the Optional Protocol to the CRC on child prostitution, child pornography and the sale of children

¹⁵⁶ Yale Law School, 2005, "Representing Children Worldwide Survey", Yale University.

¹⁵⁷ The PNG study of sexual abuse of the girl child (HELP Resources, Inc. and UNICEF 2005), describes how police themselves are often the perpetrators of such abuse.

¹⁵⁸ UNIFEM, 2002, *Actions to end violence against women: a regional scan of the Pacific*, UNIFEM

¹⁵⁹ Source: Communication from Edwina Kotoisuva, Deputy Coordinator, Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC).

¹⁶⁰ UNICEF and UNESCAP supported studies, 2004-2005, "Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Sexual Abuse" (Unpublished)

¹⁶¹ The Pacific Consultation (a follow-up to the East Asia and Pacific Regional Consultation on Violence against Children held in Bangkok in June 2005) as held in Fiji, 26-28 September 2005.

¹⁶² Pacific countries were urged to adopt national plans of action at a Pacific regional workshop held in Fiji in September 2003, attended by government and NGO representatives from 12 Pacific Island countries.

¹⁶³ For example the practice of rupturing the hymen of a girl child using the fingers classified as a lesser offence of sexual assault rather than rape, even though the consequences for the girl may be as severe as sexual penetration.

Bibliography

Amnesty International, 2006(a), *Papua New Guinea – Violence against Women: Not Inevitable, Never Acceptable!*, Amnesty International.
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa340042006>

Amnesty International, 2006(b), “Papua New Guinea: Culture and resources no excuse for violence against women”, Amnesty International Press Release, 4 September 2006.

Amnesty International, 2004, “Solomon Islands Women Confronting Violence”, Amnesty International. <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa430012004>

Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2006, “Country Information: Cook Islands” website

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) 2006, Country Fact Sheets, <http://www.dfat.gov.au>

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), 2006, “Country, economy and regional information”, <http://www.dfat.gov.au>

Booth, H. 1999, “Pacific Island Suicide in Comparative perspective”, Working Papers in Demography, No 76. Demography and Sociology Program, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University. Canberra

CIA Factbook, 2006,

Christian Care Centre of the Church of Melanesia and the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), 2004, “Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Sexual Abuse in the the Solomon Islands”, Unpublished report commissioned by UNICEF Pacific, Suva.

Coutts, G., 2006, “Vanuatu: Anecdotal evidence points to prostitution increase”, 27 February 2006, Radio Australia (Pacific Beat).
<http://abc.gov.au/ra/pacbeat/stories/s1579037.htm>

Crocombe, R. and Meleisea, M. (eds) 1994, *Land Issues in the Pacific*, Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Canterbury, Christchurch

Federated States of Micronesia Division of Statistics, 2006, “Education Statistics”, FSM Division of Statistics website

Fitzgerald, M. H. and Howard, A., 1990, “Aspects of Social Organization in Three Samoan Communities”, *Pacific Studies*, Vol 14, No. 1, November 1990

Gibson and Rozelle, 2002, *Poverty and Access to Infrastructure in Papua New Guinea*,

Godelier, M., 1986, *The Making of Great Men*, Cambridge University Press

Government of Papua New Guinea and UNICEF PNG, 2005, "The Girl Child, Development Programming and Chained Well-being in Papua New Guinea", Unpublished draft, UNICEF Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby.

Hogbin, H. I., 1964, *A Guadalcanal Society: The Kaoka Speakers*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York

HELP Resources, Inc. and UNICEF (PNG), 2005, A Situation Analysis of Child Sexual Abuse and the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Papua New Guinea, UNICEF (Pacific), Suva. (Commissioned by UNESCAP).

Hammer, Lawrence 2005, Unpublished studies of sexual behavior and sexually transmitted disease in the Moro-Lake Kutubu and Kikori areas of PNG, PNG Institute of Medical Research

Kikau, Eci and Schoeffel P., Unpublished observations made at Dawasamu, Tailevu, in 1979.

Lahmeyer, J, 2004, "Population Statistics Website", Werkgroep Seriele Publicaties" ("Working Alliance on Serial Publications"), University of Utrecht, Netherlands.
<http://www.library.uu.nl/wesp>

McMurray, C., 2001, "Youth Employment in the Pacific", Paper Prepared for ILO/Japan Tripartite Regional Meeting on Youth Employment in Asia and the Pacific.

Meleisea, E. and Schoeffel, P. (forthcoming), "Youth in the Pacific Small Island Developing States", *World Youth Report*. United Nations, New York

Meleisea, P.S., 2004, "Cultural Values of Peace in the Pacific Islands: A Case Study of Samoa", in Zhou Nan-Zhao and Bob Teasdale (eds), *Teaching Asia-Pacific Core Values of Peace and Harmony: A Sourcebook for Teachers*, UNESCO, Bangkok

Moore, P., 2006, "Violence breeds violence: Let's keep children safe and secure in Fiji homes, schools and communities", Statement by Women's Action for Change (WAC) – Fiji, 1 September 2006, Suva.

Morton, H., 1996, *Becoming Tongan: An Ethnography of Childhood*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu

Plange, Nii-K, Vakaoti, P, Finekaso, G, Schuster, F, and Hughes, D, 2002, "Pacific Child Protection Study: Overview report on child protection practice in Fiji, Vanuatu and Samoa", Pacific Children's Programme.

Pacific Children's Programme, 2004, "Community Responses to Child Protection in Samoa: Report of a Baseline Study on Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviour and Practice", Unpublished report.

Pacific Children's Programme, 2003, "Community Responses to Child Protection in Fiji: A Report of a Baseline Study on Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviour and Practice", Unpublished report

Pacific Children's Programme, 2003, "Child Protection in Vanuatu: A Report of a Baseline Study on Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviours and Practices", Unpublished report

Pacific magazine, "Gender Equality: Reality or Myth?", March 1, 2004.
<http://www.pacificislands.cc/issue/2004/03/01/gender-equality-realty-or-myth>

Papua New Guinea Department of Environment and Conservation, 2006, "PNG Gas Project Environmental Impact Statement", Special Study no. 10, Social Impact Assessment.

Regional Rights Resource Team, 2004, "Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Sexual Abuse in the Republic of Kiribati", Unpublished report commissioned by UNICEF Pacific, Suva.

Save the Children (Fiji), 2006, "The Physical and Mental Punishment of Children in Fiji: A Research Report", Save the Children, Suva.

Save the Children (Fiji), 2004, "The Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of Children in Fiji: A Situational Analysis", commissioned by UNESCAP in cooperation with UNICEF and ECPAT.

Schoeffel, P., Meleisea, M., David, R., Kalauni, R., Kalolo, K., Kingi, P., Taumoefolau, T., Vuetibau, L., & Williams, S., 1996, Pacific Islands Polynesian attitudes to child training and discipline in New Zealand: Some policy implications for social welfare and education. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, 6, 134-147

Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), 2004, "2nd Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Women", Press Release 16 August, 2004. SPC website:
http://www.spc.org.nc/AC/womensconference_pressrelease.htm

SPC Demography and Population Programme, 2004(a), "Current Pacific population dynamics and recent trends", SPC, Noumea.

SPC Demography and Population Programme, 2004(b), "Pacific Island Populations by sex and 5yr age groups", SPC, Noumea

Tyron, D. 2005, "What Future for Pacific Languages?", Port Vila Press,
<http://www.news.vu/en/living/Events/051108-Vanuatu-languages-special-feature.shtml>

US Department of State, 2005, "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices"
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/c17093.htm>.

United Nations, Division for the Advancement of Women, website
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/states.htm> (accessed on 9 September 2006)

United Nations, 2005, "United Nations Survey on Violence against Children" (Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu), Unpublished, conducted by Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, UNOG - OHCHR, Geneva

UNICEF, 2006, "Info by country" website

UNICEF, 2005(a), "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Kiribati", UNICEF Pacific, Suva

UNICEF, 2005(b), "A Situation Analysis of Children Youth and Women: Solomon Islands", UNICEF Pacific, Suva

UNICEF, 2005(c), Birth Registration in the Pacific, UNICEF Pacific, Suva.

UNICEF, 2004(a), "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Cook Islands", UNICEF (Pacific), Suva

UNICEF, 2004(b), "Situation Report on Children, Youth and Women in the Federated States of Micronesia", UNICEF Pacific, Suva

UNICEF, 2004(c), "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Nauru", UNICEF Pacific, Suva

UNICEF, 2004(d), "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Niue", UNICEF Pacific, Suva.

UNICEF, 2003, "A Situation Analysis of Children, Youth and Women: Republic of the Marshall Islands", UNICEF Pacific, Suva

UNIFEM, 2002, *Actions to end violence against women: a regional scan of the Pacific*, UNIFEM

UNFPA, 2005, *Samoa Family Health and Safety Study*, UNFPA

UNDP, 2004, Human Development Report (HDR) Statistics, UNDP HDR Statistics website. <http://hdr.undp.org/statistics>

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 2006, "Country Profiles".
http://www.uis.unesco.org/profiles/selectCountry_en.aspx

Wan Smol Bag and the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), 2004, "Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Sexual Abuse in Vanuatu", Unpublished report commissioned by UNICEF Pacific.

Yale Law School, 2005, "Representing Children Worldwide Survey", Yale University.
<http://www.law.yale.edu/rcw/rcw/jurisdictions/oceania/melanesia/papuanewguinea/frontpage.htm>