



Australia
Federated States of Micronesia
Fiji

Papua New Guinea
Republic of Marshall Islands



Mr. Chairman

1. I am honored to speak on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum group including Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and my own country, the Kingdom of Tonga.

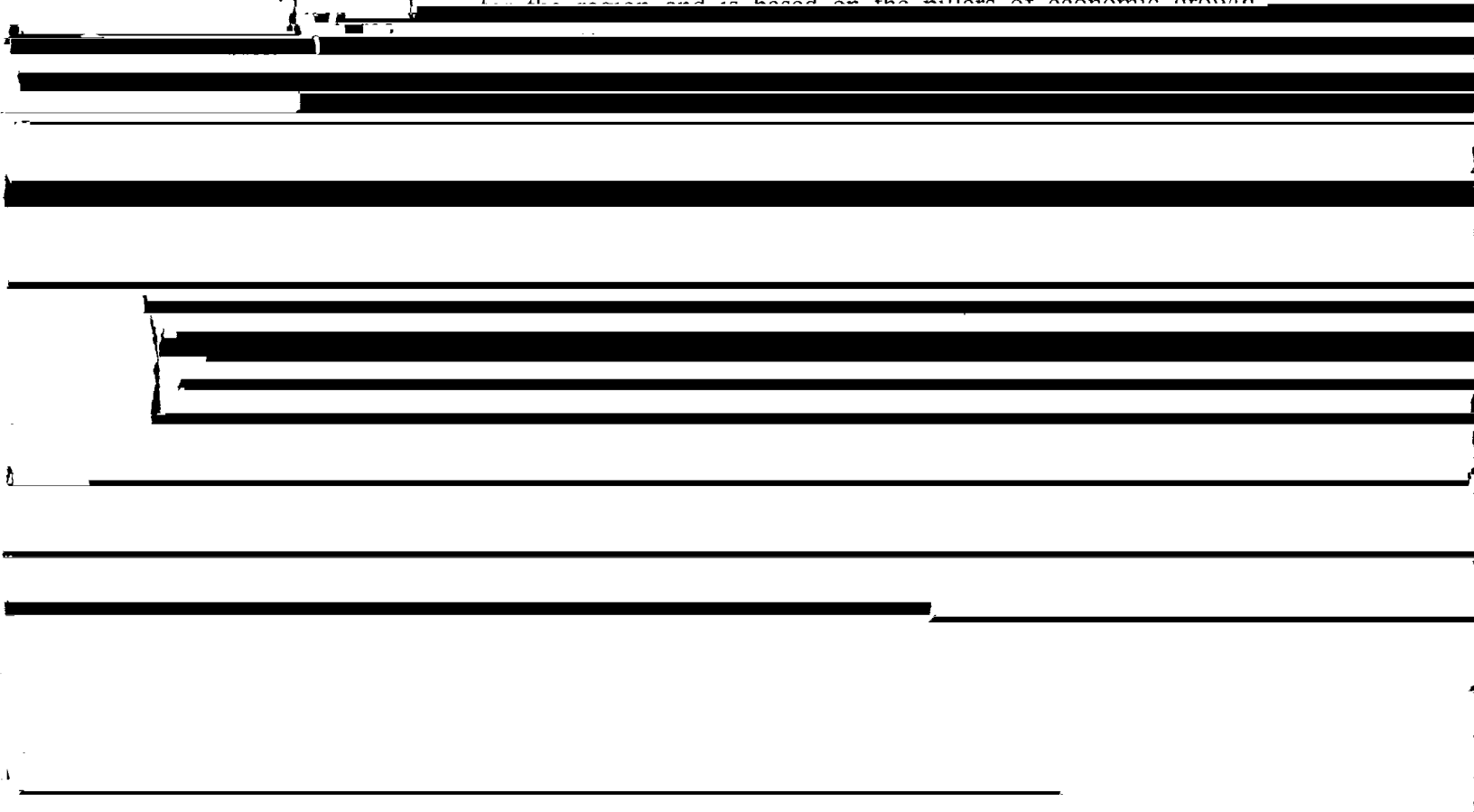
2. Congratulations on your election and assumption of Office.

3. I commend the report of the Secretary General on "financing for gender equality" and welcome the inclusion of climate change and HIV, two very important issues on to the agenda. Climate change and natural disasters impact the most vulnerable including women. The role of women in mitigation measures including through the use of traditional and indigenous knowledge can help to build resilience against climate change and catastrophic events. The gender dimensions of rapidly rising rates of HIV in our region are of serious concern. This impacts the full range of sexual and reproductive health issues which is linked to high rates of gender based violence, the effects of which are exacerbated in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Mr. Chairman

4. Improving gender equality in the Pacific island region is an ongoing concern. Our leaders acknowledged this when they endorsed the Pacific Plan in 2005. The Plan

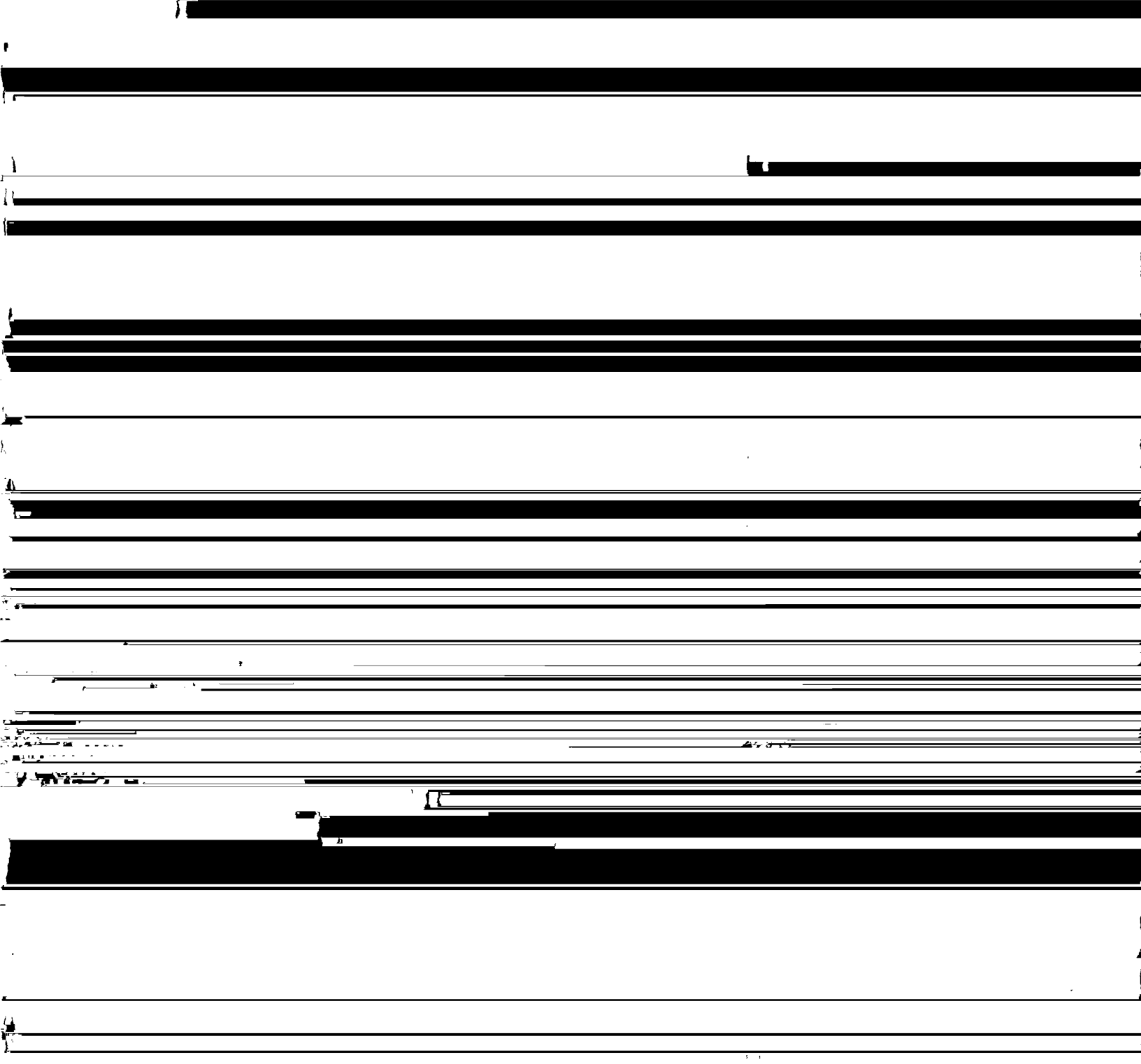
for the region and is based on the pillars of economic growth



processes. They also reiterated earlier commitments to strengthen national women's machineries by ensuring that they were adequately resourced and financed.

Mr. Chairman

7. Financing for gender equality is a challenging concept for the Pacific islands where governments are faced with competing demands on limited resources consistent



19 The Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) which comprises eleven agencies plays a critical role in the implementation of gender commitments. A

findings and recommendations are now being considered to ensure that gender is integrated into technical services and programmes delivered to countries in the region.

Mr. Chairman

20 The Pacific recognises the vital role of the United Nations agencies in advancing

