FOREWORD

This national report documents the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BD & PoA) formulated at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. It covers amongst other areas, the resources and institutional arrangements made available by government towards implementation of actions contained in the BD & PoA, the progress made to date, obstacles that are encountered and emerging issues affecting women and gender development nationally.

Fiji had announced that following the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women it will focus on mainstreaming of women and gender concerns in public sector policies, programmes etc; law; micro-enterprise development for women; balanced partnership in decision-making and violence against women and [redacted] ened in [redacted] children. A *Women's Plan of Action: 1999 - 2008* on these Other areas [redacted] October 1998. This report, however, is not confined to on[redacted] such as poverty, the economy and the girl-child are also a[redacted]

[redacted] t the many challenges before us is that the Plan is implemented system-wide [redacted] e community. Linkages and cooperation between government Ministries, [redacted] ents, women's NGOs, educational and training institutions, advocates and [redacted] ional donor community is vital as these are all key stakeholders in [redacted] entation activities. The allocation of additional resources and technical [redacted] ce in all sectors is an integral part also. An additional critical component is [redacted] ideration of women and gender concerns are integral to [redacted] the recognition [redacted] sustainable [redacted]

[redacted] an initial benchmark of the status women and gender [redacted] will be useful in the future when further review exercises [redacted] The report f[redacted] developmen[redacted] are carried o[redacted]

[redacted] gratitude to UNIFEM Pacific Area for their support. They [redacted] the staging of a national women's consultation from 10 - [redacted] I wish to rec[redacted] had been the [redacted]

[redacted] further changes to the report my appreciation [redacted] this [redacted] é Pulea for the writing of the initial draft and the finalisation of [redacted] exte[redacted] grateful to women's NGOs and representatives of Ministries [redacted] the [redacted] r tireless advocacy work, energy and contribution. [redacted] Dep[redacted]

[redacted] d Dhan bad. [redacted] Vin[redacted]

[redacted]

Minister for Women, Culture and Social Welfare.

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[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

PREFACE

This report covers the period 1995 to 1999 on the implementation of the *Beijing Platform for Action* by the Government of the Fiji Islands. Many of the steps taken as part of general government policy to improve the status of women in the Fiji Islands have been an on-going process prior to the Beijing Conference. Since then, the formulation and adoption by [illegible] Government of the *Women's Plan of Action 1998 – 2008* to serve as a blue print to integrate [illegible] and promote gender equity in the development process and [illegible] women [illegible] is a significant step forward [illegible] amongst others, to improve the legal s[illegible]

[illegible] the Ministry of Women and Cultural [illegible] Improvements have been made in a nu[illegible] of responsibilities [illegible] established in 1997 has been further handicapped to underta[illegible] and political sectors. [illegible] ensure women's equal and active participation in the eco[illegible] specific [illegible] There are also designated sectoral government gender fo[illegible] been improvements [illegible] responsibilities to integrate women's concerns in sector [illegible] made in legislation and in 1997 Cabinet approved [illegible] women [illegible] There is an on-going [illegible] others, give recognition to women's equal rights [illegible] process by the Fiji Law Reform Commission to [illegible] on in other sectors such as [illegible] those relating to women's employment, continues [illegible] consistently committed against women. This proc[illegible] offences which are [illegible] dealt with the Fiji Islands [illegible] Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against [illegible] Women (CEDAW) [illegible] Reservations to the Conve[illegible]

[illegible] achievements to protect women's interests and to [illegible] Although the Government [illegible] ensure their participation in development, it is also conscious that more needs to be done and [illegible] additional resources should be allocated to implement the strategic objectives of the *Beijing Platform for Action* and the *Women's Plan of Action*. A systematic monitoring and evaluation [illegible] [illegible] the position of women in all sectors also needs to [illegible] Vistas of all pro[illegible] Government has established 5 Task Forces composed of [illegible] installed to measu[illegible] [illegible] Government Organisations (NGO) and other stakeholders [illegible] both Government [illegible] *Action* and they have proposed strategies in those areas that [illegible] implement the *B*[illegible] [illegible] immediate action. These are set out in some detail in Part 3 o[illegible]

[illegible] financial [illegible] Any action taken cannot be sustained without Government commitm[illegible] [illegible] support, skilled personnel and support from the NGO community. [illegible] [illegible] implementation of action plans in all sectors vary. Some planned act[illegible] [illegible] strategic objectives in the *Beijing Platform for Action* may be prema[illegible] [illegible] implementation of concerted actions are sometimes [illegible] some progress made. A [illegible] targeted time-frame. Despite these obstacles, there [illegible] sectors, which is essential [illegible] strong partnership has been forged by Government [illegible] to promote gender equity and to respond to other gender issues. If women's concerns are to [illegible] be fully addressed in a comprehensive manner, it is critical that the cooperation of all [illegible] stakeholders continue to remain firm and that their efforts are coordinated to bring about the [illegible] planned changes. The Government is committed to continue to pursue its ministry's and [illegible] objectives on gender issues in partnership with NGOs, to attain equity and respect for [illegible] women's human rights.

NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE

G PLATFORM FOR ACTION

t is set out in 3 Parts:

provides an overview of the major achievements that have been accomplished
n the implementation of policies, institutional strengthening and programmes,
dominant problems faced in certain sectors to achieve gender equality and the
trends towards achieving gender equality and the advancement of women.

Part 2 sets out the Financial and Institutional Measures to implem
on-going programmes to improve the status of women and the actio
Women's Plan of Action 1998 - 2008 which are generally consisten
Platform for Action.

Part 3 outlines the implementation of the 12 Critical Areas of Con
Platform for Action. It sets out innovative policies, programmes, pr
practices, the obstacles encountered and commitments made for fur
initiatives to be taken.

PART 1

G GENDER EQUALITY AND

OVERVIEW OF TRENDS
WOMEN'S ADVANCEMEN

ich has been reinforced over the years

1.0 The legacy of inequalit

by perceptions, attitudes, custom, tradition and structures in society. Over the last two decades, the potential of women and the strength they bring to the life of a country has been seen as one of the major survival factors of a nation. With Fiji's ethnic, racial and cultural diversity, women have different experiences and different needs and there is no single standard upon which women's issues can be assessed. It is also recognised

women with

that the needs of rural and urban women differ as well disabilities and other vulnerable groups. Although this acknowledged, all women however, are commonly pe

or and their role

true of Fiji Milli

largely confined to the domestic and family sphere. islands but is a world wide assumption

Fiji Islands has

As the substantial work to improve the status o on-going process. Prior to the Fourth World Co

omen, this

as the actions

report documents the major actions taken in a number taken so far to implement the activities set out in the N

Action 1998

to be taken in

2008. The progress made through the actions taken, al

he future, clearly represents a consistency with the strategic objectives as outlined in the

Beijing Platform for Action and indeed, women contribute strongly to

implementation of some of those objectives.

1.2 Part 1 of this paper provides an overview and draws together the major areas that have made a substantial impact

nes some of the obstacles and barriers

tive policies and the prevailing attitudes

structure and to privatise key industries.

areas

evements to promote the advancement of

of priority areas through such measures as

improve the status of women. Major

reas:

of Women and Culture (a full Ministry in

87 but restructured in the general

he changes that were put in place and work

policies to enhance the participation of

honest the high priority areas listed for

1998

established in 17 Ministries and Departments to

and programmes. In addition, the Gender Focal

development of gender sensitive policies

respective Ministries. They are also required to

Women and to respective Ministries of the overall

elopment.

ittee on Women was also established in 1998 to

Plan of Action.

women begin to emerge as

hese reforms require

ust not a perfect solution. W

open opportunities and revamp a conservative system thereby making

equal as far as existing policies and employment opportunities are con

Micro-Finance Coordinating Unit has been established by Government

through which advice and funding can be accessed for micro enterprise

achievements and lest n

on the advancement of w

encountered by them as

towards women as well a

Au Major achieven

1.3 There are a numb

women

and these have been see

adopted and programmes

progress has been made n

(i) Institutional stren

1.4 The upgrading of t

1997 (although it was a fu

reorganisation of Departm

expected from the Ministr

women. Institutional stren

donor support by NZODA

actions into their M

Units are required

programmes and pr

provide advice to th

needs in the area of

1.6 The Inter-M

oversee and coordinate the implementation

1.7 Microfinancing is the new culture i

the new commercial competitors. This majo

open opportunities and revamp a conservative system thereby making

equal as far as existing policies and employment opportunities are con

Micro-Finance Coordinating Unit has been established by Government

through which advice and funding can be accessed for micro enterprise

1.8 Some significant attempts have been made to invest in human development. where women are given employment and training opportunities. These opportunities are by no means wholly given on the basis of equality although there appears to be a trend in this direction.

(ii) Strengthening women's networking

1.10 The Ministry has a range of responsibilities but its primary mission is that of advisor on public policy issues which affect women and gender. The cooperation between the Ministry and the NGO sectors has been strengthened through [illegible] involvement in the mobilisation of resources to deal with specific iss

tion of gender concerns in the law reform process [illegible] other specific issues such [illegible] benefits [illegible] in the work place, domestic violence, rape and [illegible] sexual harassment. In the economic sectors, work h [illegible]

but on a [illegible] cooperative basis with other Ministries and NGOs [illegible]

skills. [illegible] enhancement, income generation and credit progra

social sectors [illegible] Women's health issues, education, housing and the

support services [illegible] to women. In the political sector, affirmative actio

by relevant NGOs [illegible] with the assistance from international organisations

men's participation [illegible] at the decision making levels.

perceptions, [illegible]

1.11 Restructuring ingrained policies and practic [illegible] assumptions [illegible] about women [illegible] society at large required much attention from the Ministry and wo [illegible] Women, not only in the Fiji Islands but in the Pacific took the respo [illegible] themselves to change the current environment to enhance and deve [illegible] In the early 1990s and prior to the Beijing Conference, both Government and the NGO community in the Pacific were involved in a series of [illegible] at community, [illegible] national and regional levels, engaging many women [illegible] policies that involved them as women and as active [illegible] economic, political and social processes of change [illegible] the UN Fourth World Conference on Women and the [illegible]

formulating [illegible]

pants in the [illegible]

process was [illegible]

the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1993. A number of United Nations Conventions which were extended to Fiji Islands by Britain before

[illegible] Fiji Islands after independence and most notably [illegible] the Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and [illegible] Children, 1921; the Convention on Women's Political Rights, 1955; [illegible] on the Nationality of Women, 1959; the Underground Work (Wom[illegible] 1955; and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (95)

(v) National Initiatives

14. Secondly, significant strides have been made at the national [illegible] and equal participation of women has not been merely as a result o[illegible] *Platform for Action* but as a natural development of good governance. In th[illegible] Government has been more conscious of the need to address women and gender issu[illegible] concerns and the necessity for more transparency and accountability in all its actions. The initial follow-up activities from the *Beijing Platform for Action* are grounded in Government's policies on Women-In-Development (WID) which are se[illegible] out in the document "Opportunities for Growth", 1993. Government's efforts are [illegible] policies; strengthen the [illegible] analysis on gender gaps and for the for[illegible] ation with a view to safe[illegible] coordination of women's activities; an[illegible] ained in the 1997 [illegible] guarding women's human rights. This [illegible] "Development Strategies" that states that Government's policies and stri[illegible] include:

- ensuring a gender-balanced partnership at all levels of decisi[illegible]
- striving for equal partnership in political, economic and socia[illegible] development;
- promoting equal opportunity in employment;
- assisting disadvantaged women and young women in their c[illegible] activities;

Ministerial Committee on Women to ensure that there is a sector wide coordinated implementation of the defined priority areas.

(vi) Greater gender perspective in legislation

1.16 The vision of more equity, non discrimination and respect for human rights is found not only in national development plans and Government policies but is grounded in the 1997 Fiji Islands Constitution which provides in its Human Rights

1.19 The Ministry for Women and Culture has been advocating for the use of gender inclusive language in legislation. Submissions have been made to the Fiji Law Reform Commission and to other Ministries to adopt this approach. There is [illegible] accordingly. [illegible] indication that conscious efforts will be made to [illegible]

B. [illegible] Policies to enhance women's participat[illegible]

1.20 [illegible] and deliberate efforts have been made by Government and the NGO community to accelerate women's development. Further improvements in national policies were adopted in 1993 by the Fiji Islands Cabinet to increase the participation of women on all public boards, committees and councils by 30% to 50% in the next five years. Since then, changes are evident and concerted efforts have been made by Government to identify women to serve on boards, committees and councils. By 1998, women made up 16% of the total membership of such decision making bodies. There are obvious problems in implementing such policies but the trend has been towards concerted efforts to bring about more gender responsiveness. [illegible]

[illegible] positions of power and [illegible] Fiji Island women have made some [illegible] decision-making in the political arena. In the recent elections (May 1999) 8 women were both elected in the House of Representatives with 5 women holding Ministerial positions, one of which holds one of the two positions of Deputy Prime Minister. In the Senate (Upper House) there are a total of 5 women appointed by the President [illegible] Turaga and the Government whilst the Leader of the Opposition is yet to make a final announcement of the Opposition appointments to the Senate. [illegible]

[illegible] There are no discriminatory policies in the Fiji Islands preventing girls from taking advantage of primary and secondary education and most have achieved [illegible] over the past decades although the pattern of equal access to an[illegible] males and females in secondary education does not translate in[illegible] higher education due to economic and cultural factors. In Fiji [illegible] addressed this gender imbalance by [illegible] proceed to Form 7. More recently a[illegible] female share of overseas scholarships in Fiji Islands rose from 26% in 1987 to [illegible] 1% in 1996 (Helu 1998). Although gender inequality in access to education has been addressed to a great extent, there are some schools and vocational programmes that are gender specific (see Critical Concern B). The Government has a number of strategies to ensure quality education for all and in the next five years will provide free education up to the completion of secondary schooling and will ensure that the number of scholarships are distributed equitably. [illegible]

1.23 Current government efforts to ensure safe and adequate water supplies, [illegible] participation in rural areas, will ease the burden on women who often walk long distances to fetch water and to do the household washing. Parasite contamination [illegible] during the reporting period in 1998 has focused Government's attention [illegible] upon increasing resources to provide safe and adequate water supplies. [illegible]

will also make concerted efforts in assessing the impact of development on women and involve women in development decision making.

1.24 Fiji Island's policies on trade, foreign market investments, global competitiveness and foreign exchange are expected to provide greater investment and create new employment opportunities for both men and women. There are both gains and negative effects, particularly for women in some manufacturing industries where [illegible] wages are low and where there's a lack of adequate washroom and child care facilities, although this year a child care facility has been established with the assistance of NZODA at a garment facility in Kalabu. Nasinu Water will reduce [illegible] this is a major step forward and it is likely that [illegible] job losses during [illegible]

1.25 Government has this year put in place a Equal Employment Opportunity Policy (EEO). It was initiated by the Public Service Commission and currently being piloted in 5 Ministries. The current policy provides a general guideline and sets the standard from which different Ministries and departments can formulate their own EEO policies. The Police Department has however formulated an EEO policy in 1994 applying to the Police Force.

C. Obstacles and barriers to women's equal and active participation

1.26 However, much remains to be done as there continues to be a low level of [illegible]

minimum wage has not been discussed as yet) has caused concern in the garment industry sector as the minimum wage could be set at a level which may effect the viability of the industry.

1.30 Structural adjustments in key industries, privatisation and the selling off of national assets for debt servicing may bring about general growth to the economy but has at the same time placed many more into the unemployed category, causing misery to some families. Employed women also tend to suffer most from retrenchments and business closures. Although it is the long term vision of Government to be less dependent on foreign aid, and to provide a self sufficient economy, it also recognises the need to protect the vulnerable groups in the community such as the small farmers and women workers.

1.31 There is generally a division of labour in some industries, mainly based on

The health indicators have been improved over the years and there is
recognition that more needs to be done. Statistics indicate that 33% of women are
anaemic and 20% of infants suffer from malnutrition and this contributes significantly
to high maternal and child mortality. The Government has focused attention recently
on providing an affordable, comprehensive national health service and will ensure that
life saving drugs are brought within the means of the poor. The proposal to remove
Value Added Tax (VAT) from basic food items and medical supplies has been under-
nent. discus

d encroaching development has implications for the
versity. Some study has been made in the Fiji Islands on
f development upon women but more in-depth studies are
of the environment. With women's close contact with the
through gardening, food gathering and gleaning on the foreshores,
ore susceptible to environmental changes and development.
al degradation leads to contamination of fresh water supplies and food
which people depend. Environmental degradation is also closely linked

35
enviro
assessi
requir

health of women and
t in the capital Suva live
houses are not only
heads of households but it
eady limited living space
ty which was established
annum income bracket
milies who are not able to
rently running at 11%. The Housing
trend is to bring down the housing

deteriorating standards of living are major ih
families. It is estimated that more than 15%
squatter settlements and single room lead-
occupied by families on low income and by
also by the extended families adding more p
and on the family's financial resources. The
to provide housing for those within the $3,5
who do not benefit from the Co
service the Housing Authority lo
Authority is reviewing policy in t

nterests and concerns
of Women, Culture
as in the Ministry of
of the Ministry of
ure was changed into
Women, Culture and

PART 2

FINANCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL MEASU

2.0 The government department mandated to
of women is the Ministry of Women and Culture
and Social Welfare. In 1994 to (August) 1997, th
Education, Science and Technology. In 1997
Information. By April 1998, the Department of W
a Ministry. In June 1999, it was changed into th
Social Welfare.

THE NATIONAL BUDGET

[illegible] determine government's commitments in relation to promoting
s equality and advancement at all levels, it is important to determine the
ship between the commitments made and the resources allocated to
ish the range of objectives to eliminate barriers and abolish restrictions
for this area. One of the most important resource is the national budget which
xamined from the year 1996.

Financial allocations to the Ministry of Women and Culture

1996

2.2 *(i) Funds allocated by Government*

In 1996, the sum allocated to the Ministry was $[illegible]. This figure represented a *total operating budget* of $783,700, and a *capital budget* of $250,000 including the sum of $115,600 for *value added tax* (VAT).

2.3 In addition, the sum of $28,000 was allocated by Government for grants to women's organisations. In 1996, there were 14 women's organisations who receive grants for projects and programmes totaling $28,000. The grants approved fo [illegible] organisations ranged between $[illegible] and $[illegible].

(ii) Funds allocated through bilateral [illegible]

The sum of $[illegible] was allocated for development projects to women's organisations (available on request) under bilateral agreements with the New Zealand [illegible] NZODA) and the Australia Government (through AUSAID). The NZODA [illegible] 1,000 of the total figure. Some [illegible] provided $125,000, whilst AusAI [illegible] tion of $79,070.33. The projects [illegible] organisations was benefited under Au [illegible] tions under funding allocated by AusAI [illegible] carried out by the wo [illegible] empowerment to influence the Post Beijing [illegible] included the following [illegible] training, tailoring projects, sewing projects [illegible] Plan of Action, include [illegible] omen's activity centre, work on disability [illegible] training/day care centr

young women's sexuality/sexual health, training of trainers for rural women and environment based project.

6 was $176,226. This fund was utilised by the Council of Women, for its Workshop in Politics on Fiji's Initial Report to CEDAW, the [illegible] (WOSED), [illegible] and the post-Beijing National [illegible]

2.5 ... The funding by [illegible] Women's Crisis Centre [illegible] Project (WIP), and the [illegible] programme, Micro Enterprise [illegible] Action Plan.

1997

2.6 ... *(i) Funds allocated by Go[illegible]*

[illegible] figure [illegible] expenditure [illegible] The total allocation made by Government for 1997 was [illegible] represented $783,700 for operation costs, the sum of $225,10[illegible] and $57,700 for VAT.

[illegible] grant for [illegible] projects

27 ... In 1997, the sum of $28,100 was allocated by Gov[illegible] women's organisations. In that year, 8 organisations were [illegible] and programmes ranging from $2,000 to $7,000.

2.6 ... *(ii) Funds allocated under other ministry and [illegible]*

[illegible] the Women's [illegible] AID allocated [illegible] provided by [illegible] benefited from [illegible] funding and they carried out various projects which included village health [illegible] activities, facilities and village footpaths [illegible]

For development projects, the sum of $225,097 wa[illegible] organisations, upon request. NZODA allocated $175,[illegible] $50,000, for women's development projects. The even[illegible] AusAID was $39,584.07. There were 8 women's orga[illegible]

[illegible] 426 Wa[illegible] [illegible] work in [illegible] and the [illegible]

2.9 ... Out of the sum of $175,097 provided by NZODA [illegible] utilised. This was largely used by the Ministry for Women a[illegible] WOSED to undertake the review of the Worker's Co[illegible] Employment Act.

1998

2.10 ... *(i) Funds allocated by Government*

[illegible] urc [illegible] 300 [illegible] [illegible] for VAT.

[illegible] for [illegible] ents [illegible] ling $21,000. The grants allocated were between $3,100 and $7,000.

2.11 As in 1996 and 1997, the sum of $28,100 was allocated [illegible] grants to women's organisations. In 1998, 4 women's [illegible]

2.12 (ii) Funds allocated through bilateral aid

The sum of $333,623 was allocated for women's organisations for development projects and this was available upon request. NZODA contributed the sum of $233,623 and AusAID provided $100,000. The sum of $185,639 was utilised under

2 the NZODA funding for the review of laws; the drafting of legislati

The WOSED programme; work associated with the Women's Co

purchase of books and materials for the Ministry's library.

2.13 Over the three years (1996-1998), the sum allocated by Govt

to women's organisations has not increased. It has remained stagnant

the increasing number of women's organisations, together with the

2.14 Whilst various organisations have been

under the AusAID and NZODA grants, it appears th

been under-utilised. For instance, in 1997, NZODA al

development projects, of which only $88,426 was

Information on funding is disseminated to women's

2.15 It can also be seen that the Ministry for Wo

ns available

the funds have

of $175,097 for

and the way the

be revised

is largely reliant

nts given by AusAID and NZODA for its work on the report to CEDAW

000, the WOSED programme and the activities

committee on the W

to be undertaken on the women

ous could be utilised by women's organisations for

ograth's.

ibe by the Ministry for Women and Culture towards the

Plan of Action: 1999-2008 and planning to influence the

f Action by various Women's NGO's.

of "the" bila

developmen

2.16 "Fiji

formulation

post Beijing

1996

Empowerment

n of Action" (AusAID)

$5,000

Women's C

to influence

Post Beijing

$2,420

Empowerment

Fiji Plan of Ac

(Ba Province

	$29,430
	Nil
	$35,000

ds spent by the Ministry for Women and Culture
if one examines the national budget for the past

(Department of Wo

1997

1998

*National Plan of A
(Ministry for Wome

* The amounts list
towards its post Be

their main task is to look into the detailed implementation of the *Women's Plan of Action*.

2.21 The Task Force on Mainstreaming is made up of Ministry of National Planning (Chairperson), Ministry of Finance, Public Service Commission, Ministry [illegible] Council of Women, University of the South Pacific and UNIFEM.

2.22 The Task Force on Women and the Law is comprised of the Fiji [illegible] Commission (Chairperson), the Ministry of Justice, Legal Aid Commission, [illegible] of Labour and Industrial Relations, Fiji Women's Rights Movement, Rape Crisis Resource Team, Institute of Justice and Applied Legal Studies and [illegible] Society.

2.23 The Task Force on Micro-Enterprise Development is made of Ministry of [illegible] (Chairperson), Ministry of Commerce, Local Government Association, [illegible] Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Fiji Development Bank, [illegible] Soqosoqo Vakamarama and Women in Business.

2.24 The Task Force on Shared Decision-Making is made of Public Service [illegible] Commission (Chairperson), Ministry of Public Enterprises, Ministry of Fijian Affairs, [illegible] Department of Multi-Ethnic Affairs, Ministry of Local government, National Council [illegible] Employers Federation, [illegible] of Women, Fiji Trade Union Congress [illegible]

2.25 The Task Force on Violence [illegible] Women and Children is comprised of [illegible] Department of Social Welfare (Chairperson), [illegible] Ministry of National Planning, Ministry [illegible] of Health, Ministry of Education, [illegible] Commission, Ministry of Home Affairs, [illegible] Women's Crisis Centre, [illegible] Disabled [illegible] Women, Fiji Council of Social Services and the Fiji National [illegible] Persons.

2.26 The Secretariat of all the above-mentioned mechanisms [illegible] Ministry for Women and Culture.

2.27 Since the [illegible] been established towards the follow-up of other [illegible] Global United Nations [illegible] es. In Fiji Islands case, there have been definitive [illegible] Steps in the setting [illegible] ps following the UN World Summit for Children [illegible] in September 1990 [illegible] Women's Policy Committee was established in April [illegible] Summit 1991 [illegible] ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. The committee [illegible] comprised of representatives from the Ministries of Health, Education, Youth and [illegible] Sports, [illegible] Social Welfare, Finance and Economic Planning, the Attorney-[illegible] General's Office, National Food and Nutrition Committee and the Ombudsman's [illegible] Office with the assistance of UNICEF Consultants produced a [illegible] Situation Report on Children in the Fiji Islands and the *National Policy* [illegible] *Action for Children*.

2.28 The National Children's Policy Committee was later called the Co-ordinating Committee on Children. It was established in 1993, the same year Fiji Islands ratified [illegible] Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Terms of Reference of the Committee [illegible] recommend ways in which the Fiji Islands can incorporate the provisions of the Convention into Fiji Islands Laws, programmes and practices. Membership of this Committee now comprise representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry for Women and Culture, Ministry of Justice (Attorney General's and Director of Public Prosecution Office), Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forests, Ministry of National Planning, Ombudsman Office, Public Service Commission, Save the Children, Fiji Council of Churches, Women's Crisis Centre and the Fiji National Council of Women (joined in 1998).

2.29 Four Sub-Committees have been set up: the Legal, Education, Health and Family Welfare Sub-Committee. The National Planning Office acts as Secretariat to the Committee and UNICEF provides technical assistance when required.

2.30 The Ministry for Women and Culture also works in close collaboration with other Ministries through membership of the following [illegible]

Committee on the Rights of the Child
Fiji National Food & Nutrition Committee
[illegible] Advisory Group
[illegible] Committee
[illegible] Education
[illegible] Committee
[illegible] Training Board
Fiji Police [illegible]
Breast Feed[illegible]
Human Res[illegible]
Ministry of [illegible]
Pov[illegible]
Clo[illegible]
Future Co[illegible]

2.31 (a) Gender Budget Initiative

[illegible] the Fiji Islands in order [illegible]

The Government's Strategy to Ensure [illegible]

proposed that the Task Force on Mainstreaming of Women and Gender Concerns
comprising of government and NGOs will play an advisory role in monitoring the
project.

2.33 National Women's Advisory Council

al Women's Advisory Council was announced by The establishment of
e 12 member Advisory Council, appointed for a Government on 13 A
by the Minister for Women and the Ministry for period of two years.
women and culture will act as the Advisory Council's secretariat. The
Council is to provide a forum where the Minister for Women and Cult
women, representatives of women's NGO's and gender specialis
community. The Council's main task is to advise the Minister on
programs, projects, legislation, regulations, and other issues and impact on
women and gender. It will also act as a national consultative mechanism for
the review of the *Women's Plan of Action 1999-2008* and on other emerg

PART 3

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

3.0 Gender inequality, unequal access to resources and to the acces
process influences all aspects of life. The task of mainstreaming women's concerns in all
critical areas identified by the *Beijing Platform for Action* requires a m
approach and a range of strategies including strong support from Gove
government sectors, regional and international agencies together with
ommitments made, women's participation made available to specialis
d evaluation at all levels requires consta

e Government, NGOs and other Part 3 describes a
s identified in the *Beijing* development players that addresses the
multi-year multi-sector programme of women's concerns
ted the Beijing Conference are concentrated in the following 5 main

d gender concerns in the planning process and (a) Mainstream
in all policy
dvantageous to women. (b) Review of la
ufees to develop women's micro-enterprises. (c) Allocation o
ncouraged to review lending policies to financial ins
oung women who lack traditional sources of disadvantag
collateral.
d assisting (d) Gender balance partnership at all levels of dec
ments and fifty per cent of representation, participation, t

promotions at all levels of Government to women on merit and as appropriate and encourage the same in the private sector.

(e) Campaign to promote a sound and stable environment that is free of violence especially domestic violence, sexual harassment and child abuse.

The policies and activities that challenge male dominance, inequitable procedures in order to bring about changes to improve women's status and their active partic in all sectors are not limited to the above five areas of commitment. The strateg objectives in all twelve critical areas of concern as set out in the *Beijing Platfor Action* will be addressed in order to measure the degree and the difficulties of compliance with them.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES ON FIJI'S COMMITMENTS TO THE BEI PLATFORM FOR ACTION

3.2 This Part describes the main actions carried out by Government and th Government Organisations in implementing policy decisions taken to improve women's equal access and opportunities as well as to implement the actions se the *Women's Plan of Action 1998-2008*. The strategic objectives as contained i *Beijing Platform for Action* will be used as the basis for analysis although it is sures taken to [illegible] recognised that at this stage of development in the Fiji [illegible] some sectors to accelerate women's advancement are s [illegible] of commitment, whilst in others, data and information indicate varying [illegible] degrees of progress or establishment. There are however some sta [illegible] *for Action* such as the development of [illegible] presented in the [illegible] implementation or are not as yet in [illegible] where actions or reforms are at its ea [illegible] place.

nrise

ogramme

they are

3.4 In Fiji Islands, the implementation of some of these obje
closely linked to the work undertaken by Government through t
Development and monitoring through Tables Co
Although some of these programmes were initiated in

are at these level of poverty. *A Strategic Plan for the New Century* (p.43) sets out the following policy objectives to alleviate poverty:

- To break the cycle of poverty through employment and the creation of income and subsistence generating opportunities.
- To utilise micro enterprise and informal enterprise development supported by micro finance, as a key anti poverty strategy.
- To create conditions to ensure that the offspring of the poor do not enter into a life of poverty once they reach working age.
- To encourage the institution of traditional support mechanisms for disadvantaged.
- To provide Government financial support as seed capital to those are unable to provide their basic needs due to age, disability, or fa responsibility.
- To encourage the use of civil societies in poverty alleviation prog

The key performance and accountability indicators include:

- an increased and better distribution (geographical, urban/rural) of self employment
- increased employment opportunities for women
- number of micro-enterprises having 1-4 employees to increase to 70% of registered businesses with paid employment
- reduced levels of school drop-outs below Form 6 by 10 per cent annually;
- provide access to basic health services for au
- promotion and encouragement of savings of

The development plan "Problem" based chapter on all sectors such a agriculture, fisheries, trade, industry and tourism and to mainstream women to participate more fully and to share equally in the benefits of development sence of national social security benefits such as old age pensions and benefits, micro-enterprise development is seen as the benefits of develo

ire skills in small business enterprises; capacity building, financial

lf employment seeks to encourage people to be responsible for their

d to meet their basic needs. Institutionalising and mainstreaming economic, social and industrial sectors, allocating resources for gender

Action 1996-2005 the livelihood of women and their families. The

nterprise development. provides a description of the sectors that could n

and those which provide access to credit facilities.

All-Island Conference on Poverty, Social Exclusion and Gender Equality

Although this response may have the potential to eradicate poverty in some

Although the availability of small business and other

opportunities for employment is geographically uneven and it appears to

impact on rural poverty and on women who live in scattered Island comm

a number of factors such as low [illegible] women. The disadvantage for w
facilities from the banking sectors [illegible] levels of education, the obstacles
s work with the poor and those [illegible] and financial houses because of
without tradable collateral, social attitudes and expectations about the role of women
and existing institutional barriers to their equal employment. Important sectoral
strategies, described below, have been implemented to enhance women's skills and to
[illegible] into the development process.

(b) Micro-Finance Coordinating Unit

3.13 This Unit was established by the Ministry of Finance in 1999 following the National Micro-finance Workshop and consultation organised by the Ministry and the United Nations Development Programme. The Unit is currently receiving inquiries and applications from organisations and individuals to set up micro-finance

raining and support agencies in other sectors such as:

There a

usiness Advisory Unit of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry
es. This Unit was established in 1991 and provides training
uch topics as "start your business and improve your business".

Enterprise Development Programme is a Pacific Regional
ded by UNDP, UNIDO and ILO. This programme provides
e and training to develop national support systems for small

Hans Seidel Foundation works collaboratively with the Fiji Credit
Union League to provide training to Credit Unions which typically serve
programmes offered

(d) The Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS) provides training to NGOs and in particular to school managers and community leaders.

(e) The Vocational Programmes offered in some secondary and junior secondary schools provide training to school students in micro-enterprise development, including business finance, costing, pricing, marketing and community responsibilities.

Other programmes/projects

a number of other programmes which address the need for self reliance and

(a) The Poverty Alleviation Fund

special area of

(i) The Fiji Islands Government began addressi

stimated in 1977 and projected

1991 Updated a poverty alle

more developmental approach to

set of recommendations des

endation to establish a Poverty

deal with problems of the p

to establish small businesses or

Alleviation Fund would pro

improve livelihoods

(ii) Another study, the Fiji Poverty Study was undertaken jointly by the [illegible] Government of Fiji Islands and the United Nations Development Program [illegible] in 1996. The Report, published in 1997 describes in detail the [illegible] poor in the Fiji Islands and the need to improve their welfare. [illegible] of Social Welfare has the prime responsibility to assist those [illegible]

[illegible] are concerned in those who are [illegible] Access to the Poverty [illegible] assistance scheme. Whilst there have been [illegible] difficulties, there have been a few successes such as the training of staff [illegible] administer the fund; the building of over 1000 new houses for poor families [illegible] and the development of small business enterprises [illegible]

(b) Youth Employment Options Centre

[illegible] conduct a one [illegible] The Ministry of Youth, Employment Opportunities [illegible] week business training course at the Options Centre [illegible] assists in other [illegible] Youth centres such as at Tutu, Sote, Sigatoka and [illegible]

(c) Financial assistance from the Department of [illegible]

[illegible] assistance is provided by the Department of Co-operatives as working [illegible] capital to registered Co-operatives. About 4% of registered Co-operatives are [illegible] by women.

[illegible] Business Loan Scheme

[illegible] scheme, operated by the Ministry of Urban Affairs provides interest free [illegible] loans to help them develop small-scale enterprises.

(e) [illegible]

[illegible] This is a self-help community group project consisting of 32 low income households [illegible] in a squatter settlement outside Ba. The project is supported by the Ministry [illegible] of Women and Culture, the Ministry of National Planning, UNDP and the Ba [illegible]

3.21 The review of appropriate legislation, regulations and administrative practices as required by *Strategic Objective A.2* is of special concern to the Ministry of Women and Culture. The Ministry has taken steps and made submissions on the review of the Employment Act and the law on compensation to ensure that the special circumstances of women are taken into account. Concerted efforts are being made to [illegible] laws and procedures and in particular to assist women [illegible] make suon [illegible] it. Although none of the formal banking institutions impose [illegible] when tryn [illegible] men and women, there is evidence that women are [illegible] different t [illegible] minal with the [illegible] disadvantaged in a number of ways and especially wi [illegible] culture of banks and the ways banks require business [illegible] of 3 years and [illegible]

3.22 The effects of policies to alleviate poverty pas [illegible] ework of macro [illegible] the series of processes and policy interventions withi [illegible] een underway to revitalise the economy and [illegible] and micro-economic refo [illegible] ti 2 to 3 years from now. Clearly, these will [illegible] to alleviate poverty will [illegible] ons for women. [illegible] have substantial and sign [illegible]

[illegible]UCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN [illegible] CRITICAL [illegible]

[illegible] ectives outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action [illegible]

3.23 There are [illegible] namely: [illegible]

- nsure equal access to education; *Strategic* [illegible]
- ruticate illiteracy amongst women; *Strategic* [illegible]
- mprove Women's Access to Vocational Training, *Strategic* [illegible]
- and Continuing Education; *Science* [illegible]
- evelop non-discriminatory education and Training; *Strategic* [illegible]
- llocate sufficient resources for and Monitor *Strategic* [illegible]
- [illegible]

Strategic Objective B.6: Promote Lifelong education and training for girls and women. [illegible]

A. Innovative policies, programmes, projects and good practices

3.24 The Fiji Islands has put in place innovative and non-discriminatory provisions [illegible] education in its Constitution (Amendment) Act 1997 which states in section 19 [illegible] that: [illegible]

"(1) *Every person has the right to basic education and to equal access to educational institutions.*

(2) Every religious community or denomination and every cultural or social community has the right to establish and maintain places of education and to manage them, whether or not it receives financial assistance from the State.

(3) The admission policy of a place of education referred to in subsection (2) may be administered on the basis of the need to maintain to maintain its special character [illegible] but, subject to this, those concerned in its management must ensure that it is [illegible]

to all qualified students without discrimination on any ground prohibited by this Constitution"

3.25 Empowerment through education and to improve the quality of life is a basic goal. Although education is accessible to both males and females at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, women's access to education continues to be hindered by family economic, social and cultural factors. In Fiji Islands, there are mainstream educational facilities, special schools, vocational and technical schools. In addition, there are 4 teacher training institutions as well as the University of the South Pacific where training is conducted at the under-graduate and post graduate levels.

3.26 Education provided by Government [illegible] in the 1995 Ministry of Education [illegible] ary schools, 148 secondary schools, 34 [illegible] technical and vocational institutions and 16 special schools. Through this p[illegible] primary school education is accessible to almost all children in Fiji Islands. [illegible] however, a small number of schools that are gender specific. There is a high [illegible] school attendance but there is a tendency for figures to drop in the secondary [illegible] tertiary levels due to a number of factors such as financial hardship. Education [illegible] for secondary and tertiary levels of education. Government however provide[illegible] assistance by way of grants to not government schools in the form of salary [illegible] building grants and remission of school fees.

3.27 Teacher training is provided by the Lautoka Teachers College, Corbu[illegible] Fiji College of Advanced Education and Fulton College. The Fiji Institute of [illegible] Technology and the Fiji National Training Council offer certificate and diplo[illegible] courses in a variety of technical and vocational fields. Vocational programm[illegible] also offered in 29 secondary schools. The Fiji School of Medicine, the Schoo[illegible] Nursing and the School of Agriculture are also open to both males and femal[illegible] [illegible] University of the South Pacific is a regional University serving 12 member countries in the Pacific region and offers courses at under graduate and post graduate levels to both males and females.

Special Schools

3.28 There are 16 special schools which provide education to those with disabilities. Special education programmes are provided for the physically [illegible] those with vision and hearing [illegible] handicapped, the intellectually handic[illegible]

accessed in the urban and rural [illegible] Annual Report indicate that th[illegible]

expected to come under review with the proposed establishment of an independent

cation by females may be hindered by
emales when there is a shortage of
form 3 upwards and it is estimated
tem each year. Those most affected
r further education or employment

iddle level of management, there is
gement levels of schools and other
teachers also face a number of
side their home base as married

en to enter certain professions such as
ades. Women were generally
l studies. In the last few years there
institutions to encourage interested
, law, architecture and engineering.
l trade courses at the Fiji Institute of

urban areas is a serious problem. Students are generally placed with relativ
do not have the space to accommodate them comfortably. The lack of suc
have surmounted et

ational standards and achievements of female
nts. The capacity to respond to this problem rests with the educational
ution.

B. Obstacles encountered

3.30 (i) Equal opportunities a
cultural factors, where males are
funds. Overall enrolments tend t
that around 13,000 students leav
would be female children as any
would be limited.

(ii) Although female teachers are
less access by female teachers to
educational institutions. Single f
difficulties with regard to housin
teachers generally take preceden

(iii) There has been a natural rel
in science and technology due to
streamlined into teaching, nursin
appears to be concerted efforts n
women to enter such fields as m
More and more women are unde
Technology.

(iv) The lack of hostel facili

C. Commitments to further action and initiatives

(i) The Task Force on Women and the Law has identified a number of areas to
ove women's access and opportunities to education. Equal access to education,
ugh less serious today, women continue to face difficulties as improved
ational status does not always mean an improved opportunities in the
opment and decision making process. Although there are focal agencies for both
al and non-formal education, the Task Force on Women and the Law has
ified a number of obstacles to women's education and have suggested the
wing strategies to deal with them :

(a) teenage and unwanted pregnancies and early marriage of women

(i) Improvement in the educational status of women and ensuring that women also benefit equally from education, and a number of programmes would need to be implemented such as formalised sex education in schools. The recent problems associated with abandoned babies and teenage pregnancies have called for the need to increase the level of awareness through sex education amongst school children and in teacher education programmes. Education on human sexuality is to be provided to both male and female students.

(ii) Early marriage for women provides for a longer reproductive fire-span and the greater likelihood of larger families through both first and [illegible]

marriage for women in the Islands is 16 years and for men 18 years. [illegible] which is coupled with consent requirements before the marriage can [illegible] take place. One of the recommendations in the Family Law Reform [illegible] which has been recently approved by Cabinet is to increase the [illegible] minimum legal age of marriage for women from 16 years to 18 years. [illegible]

(b) gender awareness

(i) A continuing problem limiting women's participation is the cultural [illegible] male dominated and changes to tertiary institu[illegible] incorporate gender and women's studies could [illegible] accelerate women's entry into the various fel[illegible] Gender bias can also be eliminated through pub[illegible] to raise the general public's consciousness of w[illegible]

(c) Innovative measures or steps to be taken to b[illegible] choices at all levels of education

(i) Career guidance and the dissemination of in[illegible] well as the adoption of a quota system to encou[illegible] and to pursue studies in technical fields would h[illegible] imbalance in certain fields. This applies to both [illegible] disabled women.

Future Directions

3.32 The future directions in the field of education is outline[illegible] speech to Parliament on the 15 June 1999. The priority initiati[illegible]

(a) the establishment of an independent Education Co[illegible] current system of education in consultation with all sta[illegible]

development of education to meet the needs of people in the medium to long term.

(b) Children in rural areas will be given improved access to pre-school. More resources will be given by Government to schools for children with special

education [illegible] extended to Forms 3 and 4 by the year [illegible]

Forms 5 and 6. For students faced with financial difficulties [illegible]

education, the Government will set up a fund that will [illegible]

the costs of their tuition, which students can repay later. While tuition [illegible]

education is a major set-back, expenses relating to books, uniforms, [illegible]

boarding fees and transport often impede access to education [illegible]

(c) The Government will continue to upgrade and improve teacher training and working conditions. A Board of Teacher Registration will be set up to monitor teacher quality and professionalism.

(d) In the interests of equity, special attention will be given to improving [illegible]

the indigenous Fijians [illegible] services and facilities in Fijian sc[illegible]

increase their participation [illegible] through improved performances [illegible]

in commerce and the professions.

[illegible] will focus on raising [illegible] (e) The National Substance Abuse [illegible]

and abuse of alcohol. [illegible] educational awareness on the effe[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]dergoing special education training at the Lautoka [illegible] 3.33 [illegible]

[illegible] graduate in 1992 and it is expected that more teachers [illegible] teachers [illegible]

[illegible] will be trained [illegible]

[illegible] school counsellor positions created in recent years to [illegible] 3.34 [illegible]

cover a range of [illegible] conduct counselling in schools throughout Fiji. Sc[illegible]

child abuse. It is [illegible] issues including drug and substance abuse, teen-ag[illegible]

[illegible] school he[illegible] expected that school counsellors will be ap[illegible]

future.

CRITICAL CONCERN C: WOMEN AN[illegible]

3.35 The strategic objectives identified in the Beijing Platform for Action m[illegible]

Strategic Objective C1: Increase women's access throughout the life cy[illegible] appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related [illegible] services.

Strategic Objective C2: Strengthen preventive programmes that promot[illegible] women's health.

Strategic Objective C3: Undertake gender sensitive initiatives that addre[illegible] sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), HIV/AIDS, and sexuality and reproducti[illegible] issues.

Strategic Objective C4: Promote research and disseminate information on women's health.
Strategic Objective C5: Increase resources and monitor follow-up for women's health.

A. Innovative policies, programmes, projects and good practices

3.36 Health is a basic human right and meeting the health needs of women must be taken into account at all stages of their life cycle and not confined to maternal health.

the past three decades, the Ministry of Health has focused mainly on adult women and contraception and has not adequately addressed the needs of younger women and men nor the cultural, sexual and social context of family planning services.

3.41 Steady progress has been made towards the control of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and measles but on the other hand, diseases of the heart and the vascular system, diabetes and cancer have been on the increase for both sexes. Human immuno-dificiency virus (HIV) infection/acquired immuno deficiency syndrome (AIDS) are on the rise with 49 reported cases in Fiji Islands from 1989 to June 1999 of which 14 are females (Ministry of Health).

3.42 Although medical services can be accessed from most parts of Fiji Islands, poor levels of women's health can be attributed to a number of factors and high upon the list is women's disregard for their own health in order to meet their family needs. Lack of rest, inadequate nutrition and delays caused by a number of factors to seek medical attention or advice for injuries, domestic violence or pregnancy related matters are factors that affect women's health in terms of morbidity, mortality, life expectancy, nutrition status and others.

3.43 The capacity to deliver health services in rural areas has had a number of difficulties over the years as some rural health centres cover large geographical areas. Medical staff at such centres are required to travel to villages and settlements and during these times, there is little or no service at the health centres. Lack of equipment and medicine in some health centres, particularly in the outlying islands and lack of transport to main centres also seriously affects access to medical services. In large centres and hospitals, congestion and overburdened staff have raised serious concern

- regulate the labelling of tobacco product containers;
- restrict the nicotine and tar content of cigarettes;
- restrict smoking in public places and on public transpor

Community health workers

3.48 Community leaders and voluntary health workers have bee
the first line of health care to their own communities and are paid i

ide

al community health centres have been refurbished and equipped through bilateral
ors from Australia, Japan and New Zealand. The training of community health
rkers has been implemented by the Ministry of Health since the 1980s.

Other current programmes implemented by th

ent health and sexually
reas:

d adolescent health for

plement these policy

3.49 The following on-going activities focu
transmitted diseases have been implemented i

- production of policy guidelines on
  the health sector;
- training of health care staff in skill
  guidelines;
- development of resource kit for adolescent health activities and services in this area;
- training of peer educators to disseminate information to prevent teen-age and unwanted pregnancies, abortions, sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS and promotion of safe sexual practices;
- establish Adolescent Health Clinic in the city of Suva with plans to expand this service to other centres;
- training of Community Based Distributors of Contraceptives in collaboration with the Reproductive and Family Health Association with funding from UNFPA has occurred. This training is the first of its kind in

ng Management of Sexually Transmitted

implement

Infections.

3.6 Obstacles encounte

resources in this area to ensure sustainability. The level of
positive health and contraceptive practices among adolescence is more
improve with the recent focus on adolescent health by the
Ministry of Health.

3.51 Limited resources in the form of skilled personnel, facilities, equipment, supplies and transportation although improvement is envisaged with the training provided by the Fiji School of Medicine in the form of medical and health professionals.

3.52 The urban influence on our life-styles, lack of exercise and obesity has contributed to the high incidence of cardiac disease, diabetes and cancer [illegible] d has led to low [illegible] Anaemia has been identified as a major problem affe productivity on the part of some women in the work

C. Commitment to further action and initiatives

mber of priority [illegible] 3.53 The Task Force on Women and the Law hav areas for action and these include:

cing and [illegible] *(a) the promotion of breastfeeding, m improved maternal and child health services*

(i) In this outlined objective, the enactment of a Family Violenc and a Code for the Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes in promo breastfeeding are means to enhancing the health of w children. The review of law and policy on tuba) (gali conducted in the planned period. The strengthening o Family Planning Services and to expand the counselling services on issues such as abortion, infanticide, HIV/AIDS and various forms of disability will be implemented in all communities in Fiji Islands.

(b) establish initiatives that will positively enhance women's health

(i) These initiatives include the establishment of creches, nurses spaces and facilities in or near work places; the expansion of counselling centres and crisis centres in both rural and urban areas; and the allocation of funds for pre-school facilities.

(c) to promote the family well-being

(i) An integrated health care service for maternal and child health and for the care of the disabled and the elderly is a core strategy to improving the family health status where family members are more sel reliant in looking after their own family health needs.

Future Directions

3.54 The Government aims to provide for better health care through a comprehensive and affordable national health service. The President's speech to the opening of Parliament on the 24 June 1999, outlined that immediate emphasis will be given to improving the delivery and quality of medical and health care service; that

essential drugs and medicine will be made available at hospitals and health centres at

ness to be raised on adolescent health, and the health of women and men

egic objectives in the

3.55 The Beijing Platform for Action lists the
Platform of Act

Strategic Objective D.1: Take integrated
violence against women.

Strategic Objective D.2: Study the causes and consequences of violence
against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures.

Strategic Objective D.3: Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of
violence due to prostitution and trafficking.

A. Innovative policies, programmes, projects and good practices

3.56 Violence against women was viewed by authorities in Fiji Islands as a
domestic issue and that it should be resolved by the family. This is still the view held
in many quarters despite strong advocacy from the NGO sectors, especially the
Women's Crisis Centre and the Fiji Women's Rights Movement to have domestic
violence recognised as a criminal offence. The Fiji *Women's Plan of Action* identifies
Violence Against Women and Children as a critical area of concern and seeks
Government action to seriously tackle this problem. For women who encounter
regular acts of violence, there is little community support by way
and financial assistance. The fear and injuries sustained through
often exclude women from participating actively in the developm
perpetrators of violence against women are generally males , whet
relatives, acquaintances or strangers.

3.57 In the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), violenc
was seen as an obstacle to the achievement of gender equality, dev
peace. It was further noted that it "violates the rights and principle
regard to equality, security, liberty, integrity and dignity which sh
applied to all human beings." The Beijing Platform for Action fur
violence against women as a critical area of concern.

3.58 The causes and consequences of violence against women
from women's own experiences. The roles played by men and wo
traditional beliefs and cultural practices nevertheless are dominat
over women. In most families these are rigid norms surrounding
women which are strengthened by customary practices. Women
men for a variety of reasons. Despite these cultural conditioning

on by the

eliminate violence against women is an issue of high

Government and the NGO community

No Drop Policy

September 1995 when the Fiji Police

es of domestic violence. The result of

nce against Women will now be

media experts that there are

ically convicted of

3.59 A significant step forwa

adopted a "No Drop Policy" on

This policy has meant that all reporte

investigated and charges laid. It appe

cials on the policies as well as the dynamic associated with

Unit

1995, a Sexual Offences Unit was established in the Southern Division

epartment. This Unit is also responsible for cases from the Northern

Unit handles specific cases of sexual assaults and abuse and also makes

Social Welfare and the Women's Crisis Centre for

referrals to the

house mother for 2 years. Presently, 5 young women can be accommodated at the half-way house at any one time.

[illegible]

Crisis Centre (FWCC) women began in the early [illegible] 3.64 [illegible] the increasing number of abused and battered women and [illegible] provides a great deal of work in bringing domestic violence into the [illegible] children [illegible] use the [illegible] public via through their education and prove awareness [illegible] the problem of violence against women and children. Through their [illegible] resources and network they assist victims of domestic violence and have over [illegible] years advocated for changes in legislation, procedures and practices. FWCC has been working with women's organisations in other Pacific countries to [illegible] programmes [illegible]

3.65 Religious organisations have also been providers of refuge for women [illegible] children escaping situations of domestic violence. They are also involved in [illegible] counselling to women and their families.

3.66 The Salvation Army and the Anglican Church through St. Christopher House also provides free safe shelter and counselling for victims of domestic violence.

- the use of cultural and traditional practices of apology and forgiveness (*bulubulu*) which tends to disallow appropriate punishment to be meted out to the perpetrator of the offence;
- lack of gender and rights awareness by the victims, their families and their communities;
- [illegible] of information and counselling services for the victims and perpetrators of the offence; and
- [illegible] of knowledge by both men and women to link all aspects of violence with women's health and well-being.

C. Commitments to future actions and initiatives

3.69 The Task Force on Violence Against Women have drawn up a[illegible] implementation plan for the year 1999 as follows:

(a) Strategic objective 1: To establish and support crisis interve[illegible] of violence [illegible]

objective, the following actions have been planned: [illegible] In orde[illegible]

register for service providers and resources to be made [illegible] them. This responsibility is to be carried out by the [illegible] Women and Culture. [illegible]

[illegible] NGOs by the Ministry of Women and Culture [illegible]

- A systematic referral system to be established [illegible] violence to appropriate agencies for proper co[illegible] social and health [illegible]

[illegible] training needs for the providers of counselling [illegible] stigated and assessed for the purpose of [illegible] in the year 2000. [illegible]

[illegible] en Government and NGOs on the provision of [illegible] of violence is to take place during the planned [illegible]

- Con[illegible] shel[illegible] peri[illegible]

(b) Strategic O[illegible]

[illegible] civic education to be included in the school [illegible]

- the institut[illegible] curricula.

[illegible] actions for this particular area and these include [illegible] curricula and especially the family life education [illegible] nt should include conflict resolution and anger [illegible]

There are a oth[illegible] the examinatio[illegible] programmes. C[illegible] management and the curriculum should be reviewed for [illegible]

education on a regular basis. The In-Service and Pre-Service trainings for

A. Innovative policies, programmes, projects and good practices

3.71 Fiji's experiences in armed conflict has been mainly external through direct involvement in armed conflict in the past but since the Malayan Campaign, its main [illegible] contributed to those parts of the world which are subject to civil or external [illegible] invasions. The Fiji Military made up of the Armed Forces and the Navy has been a [illegible] male domain since its inception. It is recognised that although the review of this se[illegible] will not be consistent with the strategic objectives as outlined in the *Beijing Platfo[illegible] for Action*, it will however provide some indication of what women have been able [illegible] accomplish to date.

3.72 Over the last 15 years, the Armed Forces have come under increasing press[illegible] to enlist service women. There was great reluctance at first as more resources such [illegible] [illegible] Leave arrangements had to be considered as marriages of service women and [illegible] maternity leave had to be taken into account. In 1988 [illegible] were [illegible] basis and 40 were enlisted with 7 successfully undertaking officer tr[illegible] [illegible] for more field and operational duties which required more physical [illegible] ing.

not until 1995 that service women were sent to peacekeeping duties. [illegible] decision was not taken lightly as experience had shown that added [illegible] as sexual harassment and assaults were likely to result in a male [illegible] vironment. In 1995, the first two female commissioned officers were [illegible] ced by successive female [illegible] posted to the Sinai for a 6 months tour o[illegible] gion. Male officers on the [illegible] officers. A female dental officer was also [illegible] board a term of 12 months. [illegible] other hand, were sent to both Sinai and [illegible] male officer and two senior [illegible] The current practice now is that [illegible] non-commissioned officers may be sent to Sinai. There are restrictive policies in [illegible] employing women in the infantry and the Military has recommended the recruitment of women [illegible]

[illegible] it living accommodation for them [illegible] men should not be allowed in [illegible] or employed as crew [illegible] les on board, not [illegible] of manual labour. [illegible] derate level [illegible] as the infantry battalions and the anti- [illegible] in patrol vessels because of the lack o[illegible] appointed to engineer units which req[illegible] that the number employed in Fiji mus[illegible]

3.74 [illegible] communication or being part of the medical team as a doctor, dentist or nurse. Some [illegible] commissioned female officers have served as company commanders having [illegible] overall charge of discipline and administrative matters for about 70 men. Others have [illegible] served as logistic and operation officers. Some female officers have served with [illegible]

terms in Sinai. This year four female officers have been earmarked for Sinai. There are some changes occurring in the Military as recently there was an advertisement

[illegible]

Medical Clinic employing 3 female officers as nurses (6), dental officer (2), physiotherapist (2), laboratory technician (1), administration [illegible] Infantry Battalion (1), and Army Headquarters (6). In Sinai there are 2 in the Army Training Group and 2 in the Military Police.

Fiji Police Force

3.76 There are 1909 persons employed in the Fiji Police Force [illegible] 164 women officers which is the equivalent of 8.6% of the total [illegible] officers are deployed in all sectors of the Police Force. From 1 [illegible] officers were part of the Fiji Police contingent to the United Nations [illegible] Croatia.

Self determination of non self-governing territories

3.77 The Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC) based [illegible] the secretariat for the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Movement [illegible] bies within the United Nations and the South Pacific Forum [illegible] the [illegible] determination of non-governing territories. It also disseminates [illegible] public awareness programmes on the situation of women in non-[illegible] e.g. West Papua, Kanaky, East Timor, Tahiti in regional and [illegible] PCRC also supports advocates of self-determination especially [illegible] k of PCRC is consistent with *Strategic Objective E.1 of the* [illegible] *Beijing Platform for Action*.

B. Obstacles encountered

3.78 The most difficult problem faced [illegible] cted with the Armed Forces [illegible] with young children to support on their own and family break- [illegible] result of difficulties and frustration women often face as sole [illegible] left with [illegible] up some [illegible] caregiver [illegible]

[illegible] that support and counselling services to assist women to [illegible] bies need to be provided as the health costs and the social aid [illegible] 3.79 [illegible] fulfil [illegible] es in dysfunctional circumstances are quite high. There are [illegible] women such as those [illegible] counselling services available in the community [illegible] provided by the Department of Social Welfare, the Fiji Women's Rights Movement, the Women's Crisis Centre and other NGOs. Some women have taken advantage of these services [illegible]

Reduction in the military budget

3.80 As the Military Forces in the Fiji Islands is viewed as a source of employment the public consultation on this issue brought mixed reactions. The upperm appears to be that any reduction in the military budget would place more unemployment sector and as a consequence will diminish the family well

CRITICAL CONCERN F: WOMEN AND THE E

3.81 There are a number of Strategic Objectives set out in the *Beijing Platform for Action* for this sector namely:

Strategic Objective F.1. Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.
Strategic Objective F.2. Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade.
Strategic Objective F.3. Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low income women.
Strategic Objective F.4. Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks.
Strategic Objective F.5. Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination.
Strategic Objective F.6. Promote harmonisation of work and family responsibilities for women and men.

A. Innovative policies, programmes, projects and good practices

3.82 The size of Fiji Island's labour force is determined by the size of its population in the 15 years and over age bracket and the extent to which people in this age bracket [illegible] The Census Report 1996 shows that there were 97,7[illegible] [illegible] out of a total of 248,101 in the 15 and over age bracket [illegible]

The Labour Force Participation for 1996

	Female	Male	Total
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	97,718	200,052	297,770
[illegible]	53,015	166,299	219,314
[illegible]	7,663	9,602	17,265

le represent those in the 15 years and Up-Wards age bracket.
ort 1996, Bureau of Statistics

umber of concerns facing women in this sector and although the
have been set by Government to address these concerns, there
that need to be addressed.

ent is a problem for both women and men alike. Based on the
nder divisions of roles placing men in the head of the household
e whilst the reproductive and homemaker role falls into the
omen tend to participate less in the labour markets. Some changes
ur where more and more women for a variety of reasons are
useholds and dominant breadwinners.

sistance of the
cht opportunities
ortunity (EEO)
of the Advisor is to
) programme. The
Social Justice
values. These
10 of the State

The EEO provides
recruitment, promotion,
nd discrimination on the
ge. It also sets out a set of
rms of discrimination and
plemented in stages.

opportunities for employment is spelt out in the *Women's Plans of Ac*
Government documentation such as *Opportunities for Growth* and va
policies.

3.87 Women make up 46% of those employed in the public service.
there are 14% of women at the senior executive level, with 13% at the
Substantive level. There are only 2 female Permanent Secretaries within
service. Currently, the Public Service Commissio
Australian Government is developing a policy on
(EEO) for the State as an employer. The Equal E
/Equity Advisor has been engaged and one of the
incorporate gender perspective into the civil servi
Constitution of the Fiji Islands embodies in its Bi
provisions (Chapters 4 and 5) that fairness and eq
principles are adhered to by State Services as out
Services provision of the Constitution.

3.88 The EEO policy has been developed with
that all eligible persons must have equal
transfer and training on the basis of merit
grounds of gender, race or national origin
actions and programmes that identify and
harassment in the workplace. The EEO p
commencing with "ethnicity" and "gend

- Equal Remuneration Convention 1951 No.100;
- The Abolition of Forced Labour Convention 1957 No.105;
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 No.111;
- The Minimum Age Convention 1973 No. 138.

[illegible] actions have been outlined by the Task Force. For Islands focus on a [illegible] economy has wide implications for human resource development. Men as well [illegible] to play their roles in keep the economy active and viable. The [illegible] *Women's Convention* requires all appropriate actions to be taken to [illegible] discrimination against women in economic life.

B. Obstacles encountered

3.95 There are a number of obstacles faced by women in the econ[illegible] these include:

- the lack of knowledge by women of their rights (e.g. mate[illegible] leave and annual leave conditions) in the workplace;
- no specific legislation dealing with sexual harassment [illegible]
- the lack of transport for shift workers, particularly during [illegible] employment;
- lack of training opportunities.

C. Commitments to further action and initiatives

3.96 In order to redress the barriers women face in the employme[illegible] number of strategic objectives selected by the Task Force are as follo[illegible]

(i) Ratification of ILO Conventions 100 and 111

The ratification of these two conventions is necessary [illegible] ensure equal remuneration for work of equal value an[illegible] not discriminated against in employment. This will re[illegible] disparities associated with gender. It is common pra[illegible] in some sectors of the economy are paid lower wages [illegible] fewer benefits to men occupying the same position. [illegible] the ILO conventions will require changes in the law [illegible] harmony with the principles in the Conventions. These [illegible] are part of a total of 7 Conventions identified by the I[illegible]

[illegible] to the rights of human beings [illegible]

[illegible]ment and Industrial Relations Law *(ii) Revi[illegible]*

Expanding the definition of "worker" in the Industrial Relat[illegible] include domestic workers and workers with disability will b[illegible] women in these categories within the scope of the law as lab[illegible] have provided little protection for them in the past. A new [illegible]

is suggested to set minimum conditions for employees engaged in professional undertakings. Community awareness and education programmes and mass media campaigns to be undertaken on labour and industrial relations law especially on the rights of workers and the effect of breaches of these laws. The review of the Employment law has been undertaken by the Ministry of Labour and the Fiji Law Reform Commission has conducted research on child labour to improve the provisions relating to the employment of children.

(iii) Facilitate Innovative Measures or Steps to Broaden Women's Choices

Women's choices can be increased in a number of ways through flexible hours of employment, split employment system and providing child care facilities in the workplace which will reduce women's absenteism at work. Other actions could include a quota system to [illegible] building, civil engineering and sciences); the health [illegible] in the workplace to address all the concerns of [illegible] and [illegible] ment of a mechanism to hear complaints and [illegible] orkplace, and the establishment of a Code of [illegible] h issues of sexual harassment and unfair treatment.

[illegible] ter issues should be formulated and training [illegible] yer and employee should be developed [illegible] forcement of rights through the courts.

the Formulation and Implementation of a [illegible]

[illegible] ntation [illegible] they equal [illegible] planned period [illegible]

[illegible] CISION MAKING [illegible] members to the then [illegible] al rights to vote and [illegible] ht to vote, stand for [illegible] s representation [illegible] d [illegible]

(v) Data [illegible] Human Resources Development Plan

Survey, analysis and data collection are [illegible] Human Resources Development [illegible] programmes to enhance women's [illegible] participation in Trade Unions [illegible]

CRITICAL CONCERN G: WOMEN IN POW[illegible]

397. Fiji Islands first went to the polls in 1963 [illegible] Legislative Council. Men and women of all ethn[illegible] successive constitutions since then have guaran[illegible] and be elected into public office. In spite of these g[illegible] in public office and participation in national affairs [illegible]

3.98 The *Beijing Platform for Action* lists the following strategic objectives:

Strategic Objective G.1. Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making.

Strategic Objective G.2. Increase women's capacity to participate in decision making and leadership.

vative polices, programmes, projects and good practices

and Committees

The prevailing bias that favours males is reflected in the low participation of women at the decision making levels of public and statutory bodies. Figures from the Service Commission [illegible] women's [illegible] 1998, women's membership of Boards stood at 16%. The [illegible] participation is noted in areas that are consistent with wom[illegible] Boards of Old People's Homes, Hospitals and Health Cen[illegible]

[illegible] 1995, the Fiji Islands Council took more affirm[illegible] women's participation at all levels of decision making should be increased from 30% [illegible] 50%. This is a significant step forward as some boards, committees, councils and [illegible] posts in the civil service and the private sector which are dominated entirely [illegible] of males would now need to take steps to involve women at management and [illegible] executive levels. As a result of this policy decision, the Ministry of Women and Culture was charged with the responsibility to maintain a Nomination Register [illegible] women nominated to serve on Boards, Committees and [illegible] Councils.

ils and the Great Council of Chiefs or Bose Levu Vaka Turaga *Municipal Councils, P*

[illegible] 115 serving on [illegible] 1997, there were only 7 women out of a t[illegible] jurisdiction [illegible] Municipal councils. A separate government adm[illegible] affairs of each [illegible] applicable to Fijians only divides Fiji Islands into [illegible] province is run by a Provincial Council appo[illegible] 483 members of the 14 [illegible] 1997, there were only 31 women out of a tot[illegible] Council of Chiefs also known as the Bose Levu Vaka Turaga [illegible]

Management and Executive Levels: Civil Service

3.102 In terms of senior or managerial positions in Government, th[illegible] out of a total of 160 officers who are in the management cadre. This [illegible] 14%. To-date, there are 2 female Permanent Secretaries and three De[illegible]

Parliament

3.103 Changes in the perception of women and stereotyped assumptions made of women as well as legal and other changes have become necessary to increase women's participation in public life. In the 1999 general elections, 27 women contested the elections out of a total of 251 candidates. Of the 27 women candidates, 8 were elected. Three women have been appointed Cabinet Ministers, one also holding the title of Deputy Prime Minister and 2 as Assistant Ministers. In the Upper House, where the Senate is comprised of 38 senators, there are currently 5 women appointed, one of whom is the Vice President of Senate. This number could increase as the nomination of senators from the Leader of the Opposition is yet to be finalised. Although this is an improvement over the last elections where there were only 2 [illegible] representation.

3.104 In addition to Government's initiative to involve women in the decision making levels, the Fiji National Council of Women and UNIFEM had made significant contributions. The Women-in-Politics project of the Fiji National Council [illegible] of women was launched in 1999 to promote and prepa[illegible] national government elections. The preparation of the [illegible] others, voter education, assertive public speaking and [illegible] programme ended in June 1999. A Women's Caucus, a[illegible] established at a Fiji National Council of Women's Wo[illegible] UNIFEM provides training for the Women's Caucus o[illegible]

[illegible] ted by women to the decision making levels is [illegible] uthorities. It is mandatory for appointing [illegible] for Women and Culture in the appointment of [illegible] Committees, Commissions and Tribunals, but it [illegible] t in every case.

[illegible] and initiatives

[illegible] nd the Law and Balancing Gender in Decision [illegible] objectives and action plans to enable women to [illegible] share equally in political and decision making powers a[illegible]

[illegible] kills and [illegible]

(i) Training in communication, presentatio[illegible]
Political Education

[illegible] improve the skills of women. Legal literacy is also considered [illegible] important tool to teach women the constitution, local and national [illegible] laws. (Ref. Strategic Objective 3.0 in the Plan of Action for Women [illegible] and the Law, *Women's Plan of Action 1999 - 2005*)

B. Obstacles encoun[illegible]

3.105 The major ob[illegible] the lack of support fr[illegible] authorities to consult [illegible] suitably qualified wo[illegible] practice consultation [illegible]

C. Commitments to [illegible]

3.106 The Task For[illegible] Mak be outlines a ru[illegible]

(ii) developing support mechanisms and to influence the political process

Influencing the political process through the dissemination of information on a range of issues including law and policies are designed to change entrenched attitudes and conservative political cultures. Gender equality policies and non discrimination as prescribed in law may go along way to changing voter attitude. Strengthening and establishing women's committees in key organisations and providing funds to support women candidates standing for political office and appropriate affirmative actions would give women greater opportunities to secure their proper place in the political arena.

(Ref. Strategic Objective 3.0 in Plan of Action for Women and the [illegible] in *Women's Plan of Action 1999 - 2008*)

(iii) influencing the court processes in shaping the court's and the [illegible] gender consciousness

[illegible] women and the Laws is [illegible] The planned action by the [illegible] improve the gender competency of judicial officers and among [illegible] gender sensitised training for members of the judiciary.

[illegible]

Women's equal participation in [illegible] boards, councils and committees at relevant sectoral and regional levels [illegible] Incorporate legal pro[illegible] the Public Enterprise Act, General Orders etc [illegible]

(Ref. Strategic Objective 1.0 in Plan of Action for Balancing Gender [illegible] Decision-Making in *Women's Action Plan 1999- 2008*)

(v) Update and Publish the Nomination Register

This is to be done on a regular basis by the Ministry for Women and [illegible] Objective 1.0 - Plan of Action for Balancing [illegible] Con[illegible] Making and in *Women's Plan of Action 1999* [illegible] Gen[illegible] 2008

[illegible]

[illegible]TITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE [illegible]

[illegible] promotion and advancement of women is [illegible] concerns can be effectively dealt with in a [illegible] The integration of women into the mainstream of [illegible] Government at various levels. A number of [illegible] the commitments made in Beijing and the Pl[illegible] [illegible]. The strategies are expected to reform the [illegible]

CRITICAL CON[illegible] ADVANCEMENT [illegible]

3.07 A national [illegible] necessary to ensure [illegible] systematic and co[illegible] development has b[illegible] strategies have bee[illegible] *Women's Plan of A*[illegible]

current systems, which has challenged politicians, policy makers, and planners at all levels to consciously include women and gender concerns when making decisions. The *Beijing Platform for Action* prescribes 3 strategic objectives to be adopted by participating countries as follows:

Strategic Objective H.1. Establish or enhance national mechanisms and other government bodies.

Strategic Objective H.2. Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects.

Strategic Objective H.3. Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.

A. Innovative policies, programmes, projects and good practices

13.108 There are a number of mechanisms that have been instituted to ensure equal [illegible] development. The Ministry of [illegible] Women and Culture to implement [illegible] policies on women and to serve as the [illegible] community on issues affecting women. [illegible] women's concerns are channelled [illegible] local point between Government and [illegible] the general intergovernmental sett[illegible] through other mechanisms such as:

- The Ministry for Women and Culture [illegible]
- The Women-In-Development [illegible] which ensures that women are [illegible] the national political, economic and social development of Fiji [illegible]
- The National Women's Advisory [illegible] established by Government in August 1999 acts as an advisory forum [illegible] for Women and Culture.
- The gender Focal Points appointed [illegible] secretary level in the 17 Ministries and Departments of Government [illegible]
- The Development Sub-Committee [illegible] Permanent Secretaries of Government Ministries [illegible]

[illegible] of Ministers of Government [illegible]

3.114 As gender focal points for the 17 Ministries and Departments of Government, the Deputy Secretaries have been further directed by Government:

1. to ensure the implementation of the WPA by facilitating the integration of the identified priority actions into their Ministry's policies and programmes;

- development of sectoral indicators for Ministries for Health and Agriculture;

der awareness training in the following selected Ministries and for
ior officials in the Public Service:

y for Agriculture
y for Health
ies for Education
y for National Planning - sectoral planners
ent Secretaries, Deputy Permanent Secretaries and Heads of
nent;
Focal Points (i.e. Deputy Permanent Secretary)

egration of gender awareness training in selected Government training
courses which will be extended to other ministries.
be extended to other programmes.

e year include:

and compilation to include sex desegregated

trengthening Project in the Ministry for

ween government and Women's Ho

ing their membership into government

ces;

ernment decision-making and planning

ies and actions, it is expected that significant

nd to include gender perspectives in

Other actions to be unde

- the review of sectora data;
- the implementation o Women and Cultur
- the strengthening of government organis consultative commit
- the training of Wom processes.

3.119 Through these p improvements to balance ge

3.120 Women's concerns in the urban areas are channelled through various decision-making machineries such as the Ministries for Women and Culture and Social Welfare, Health, Education and other relevant Ministries or referred to appropriate Agencies or individuals. These concerns, where appropriate, are then channelled to

needs and these could cut across different sectors as no single sector can encompass or meet all the needs of women. On the other hand, there are many common needs of so particular needs such as for those women with disabilities, or for those who are single parents or for women who live in rural areas. It is a that irrespective of ethnicity, culture and backgrounds, the rights of all w be protected. As women also exist alongside the assumptions made abou women's inequality can only be addressed, if the attitudes and the assum of women are questioned, and their work and contribution receives equal stances those of their chosen

N RIGHTS OF WOMEN CRITICAL CONC

3.122 The *Beijing Platform for Action* identifies 3 strate

follows:

Strategic Objec

and protect the human rights of women through the full of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Strategic Objective 1.2. Ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice.

Strategic Objective 1.3. Achieve legal literacy.

A. Innovative policies, programmes, projects and good practices

3.123 Equality in law is a fundamental human right. The Bill of Rights in the Constitution (Amendment) Act 1997 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of gender. Section 38 provides:

> *(1) 'Every person has the right to equality before the law.*
> *(2) A person must not be unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly, on the ground of his or her:*
>
> *(a) actual or supposed personal characteristics or circumstances, including race, ethnic origin, colour, place of origin, gender, sexual orientation, birth, primary language, economic status, age or disability; or*
> *(b) opinions or beliefs, except to the extent that those opinions or beliefs involve harm to others or the diminution of the rights or freedoms of others;*
>
> *or any other ground prohibited by this Constitution.'*

f Independence Constitution of 1970 guaranteed to
mental rights and freedoms irrespective of race,
s, colour, creed or sex (s.3) protection from
sex was not specifically included (s.15). The 1990
against discrimination of the basis of sex for the first
nition in the 1997 Constitution (Amendment) Act to
on against gender, birth, sexual orientation, primary

3.124 Although
every person in
place of origin,
discrimination o
Constitution incl
time and further
prohibit grounds

language, economic status, age or disability. Persons are guaranteed the freedom to practice religion and politics except where considered harmful to others.

3.125 The Government, through the ratification of the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women *(Women's Convention)* and other International Conventions, and in view of the Human Rights Declaration is obligated to observe them and is committed to removing discriminatory provisions. Article 43(2) of the 1997 Constitution (Amendment) Act gives leeway to the courts to pay regard to public international law in interpreting the Bill of Rights provisions. The *Women's Convention* defines discrimination against women and establishes a framework of principles whereby women can achieve full equality. Fiji Islands [illegible] rticles 5(a) and 9 made during the time of ratification were removed [illegible] ring about consistency with the Constitution and Fiji Islands [illegible] the *Beijing Platform for Action*. [illegible]

[illegible] nment's commitment outlined in the Minister for Women and [illegible] speech to the opening of Parliament on 24 June 1999 endorses [illegible] sition to implement the obligations under the *Women's Convention* [illegible] *Plan of Action*. The commitment includes the removal of [illegible] ovisions in a range of laws including laws relating to the family, [illegible] criminal law, and the law on evidence. Other laws will be progressively reviewed to meet obligations under other international agreements such as the ILO Conventions.

3.127 The priorities for action approved by the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the year 1999 include the following:

- adoption of policies to engender the law-making process
- legal literacy programmes for women
- [illegible] for law enforcement officers and civil officials

[illegible] of ILO Convention 100 & 111 which deals with equal remuneration [illegible] scrimination respectively

[illegible] labour laws (ongoing work programme with the Ministry of Labour)

[illegible] programme with the Fiji Law Reform [illegible]

- review of family law [illegible] Commission) [illegible]

[illegible] committee is the responsibility of the Women and [illegible] identified by the Task Force to review and [illegible] the Law Task Force [illegible] scrimination, to make the law more accessible [illegible] update legislation, to [illegible] community, but in particular to widen women's access to the [illegible] gal measures such as legal literacy programmes. Part of the Task Force's [illegible] ort is recorded here whilst other actions are recorded under other critical [illegible] areas

B. Obstacles encountered

3.129 The major obstacles encountered is the lack of legal literacy and the awareness by women of their legal rights. There is lack of access to the legal system by women

[illegible]

[illegible] redress. The limited budget in the Legal Aid Commission poses a danger that [illegible] legal aid to women and children who seek assistance on family matters may decrease over time. [illegible]

C. Commitments to further actions and initiatives

3.130 The Task Force on Women and the Law programme of action includes the following:

(i) The Law Making Process

[illegible] the procedure for law [illegible] amendments to exist[illegible] change in the law. Th[illegible]

[illegible] *(ii)* [illegible]

[illegible] tives outlined by the Task Force are to:

[illegible] objective, a number of planned actions have been agreed [illegible] such as the formulation of policies which reflect gen[illegible] equal role of women in society. The Plan highlights the im[illegible] drafting guidelines which should include simple, gender ne[illegible]

[illegible] form should be reviewed for gender bias and general [illegible]

[illegible] ing the role of the Fin Law Reform Commission to [illegible] follow up on its reports and draft legislation and to [illegible] implementation of its reports is on the Task Force's [illegible] ratification of other children's and women's related [illegible]

awareness through the publication and dissemination of laws to the wider community. One of the strategic objectives of the Task Force is to have all laws reviewed on a rotating 10 year cycle or shorter.

(v) access to Justice

There are a number of barriers that impede people's access to justice and it especially applies to women. These barriers include the lack of capacity to seek legal advice due to their economic and social situation, legal costs, the difficulties and complexities associated with court procedures, lack of information and lack of knowledge on how to access the justice system to redress a grievance; and physical inaccessibility to legal services and resources. The strategic objectives outlined by the Task Force to improve access to the justice system include:

- *facilitate and improve equality of access to legal services*

  Legal literacy programmes and community legal education are crucial to understanding the avenues of access to the justice system. The education on legal rights and the remedies that can be obtained; and how to identify and deal with persons in authority and government agencies are all part of the process of understanding how to access the system. Legal literacy programmes are currently being [illegible] conducted by the Fiji Women's Rights Movement, the Fiji Young Lawyer's Association, the Regional Rights Resource Team of the British ODA and the Women's Crisis Centre. The Institute of Justice and Applied Legal Studies of the University of the South Pacific has engaged in 1999 a Fellow in Community Legal Literacy to review courses and prepare training modules as part of the University's work in legal literacy. Community legal information in all vernacular languages and the development and dissemination of legal pamphlets on the law and procedures can also be done through the Ministry of Women and Culture, the Fiji Law Reform Commission and other NGOs such as the Fiji Council of Social Services.

- *to develop legal aid* [illegible]

  Fiji's current legal aid programme gives priority to matters that concern most women such as family matters of custody or maintenance or where women are subjected to domestic violence. The next area of priority where legal aid is made available concern criminal cases where the crime is considered to be serious e.g. murder, manslaughter. The Task Force's plan of action is to advocate for increases in the national allocation of resources for legal aid in family matters; to develop a more accessible legal aid system for all; and to [illegible] ways and means to facilitate the [illegible] representation of the legal aid [illegible]

legal aid beneficiaries annually is part of the plan of action for this sector.

- *to facilitate and improve sensitised training of law enforcement and court officials in handling women victims and complaints*

Women's access to justice is also affected by the way women are treated by law enforcement agencies and court officials. The planned actions include the continuation of gender sensitisation training as a formal component of police training curriculum for all prosecutors. The Task Force recommends that the Police Force Recruitment Policy includes a gender component in order to increase the number of women police prosecutors. There is an increased number of women currently serving in the magistracy and this year the first woman was appointed to the High Court Bench. The 1993 Cabinet decision to increase women representation on Boards and Committees by 30% to 50% by the year 1998 has not been met but assurance has been given by the Minster for Women in her maiden speech on the 24 June 1999

[illegible] goal, [illegible] That more work will be [illegible] ticipation of women in public life [illegible] *Women's Convention* [illegible] diverse experiences into the [illegible] high priority to incorp[illegible] nature and face of politics. [illegible] political arena and the

family matters are the planned actions to eradicate inequalities.

In order to promote the well being of the family, A number of critical reforms have been planned for the year 1999 and these include the review and the reform of the existing law relating to the family and domestic relationships. This planned action has been completed by the Fiji Law Reform Commission and has been approved by Cabinet in 1999. The Office of the Attorney General has been directed by Cabinet to institute the drafting of a new family law for Fiji Islands which is now in progress.

Public awareness programmes on the reforms through seminars, lectures and meetings will be an ongoing action. In addition, parenting and family life skills training as well as counselling services in both rural and urban areas are to be expanded to include the care of the disabled and the aged. These programmes will be ongoing throughout the year.

- *establishment of a family court*

The recommendation to establish a specialised Family Court is part of the family law reforms which has been approved by Cabinet this year.

(vii) gender neutral language

As it is imperative that gender neutral language is used in law, the Ministry of Women and Culture and the Fiji Law Reform Commission monitor the language used in Bills and Acts of Parliament. The Ministry has been involved in the discussions on the family law reforms, the reforms of the law relating to children and the criminal law. The Ministry has also made specific recommendations on reforms of the Law of Evidence and have made recommendations [illegible] the removal of the victim's sexual history to be introduced in the court; the removal of corroboration; and the removal of the requirement by the court to warn on uncorroborated evidence by vulnerable witnesses.

CONCERN J: WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

Beijing Platform for Action prescribes the following strategic objectives:

Strategic Objective J.1. Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication.

Strategic Objective J.2. Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.

A. Innovative policies, programmes, projects and good practices

3.132 The media is a very powerful medium that shapes attitudes and promotes sex-role stereotyping in the minds of the public. Fiji Islands has the three forms of media, the print, audio and visual media. Most families in Fiji Islands have access to one [illegible] programmes are aired and newspapers are printed in the 3 main languages and are therefore able to influence the public more significantly. Although no national survey has been run on programmes on what people hear, read or watch most on Television and the other mediums, it appears that news, entertainment, soap operas, and sports [illegible] of the public and the way they behave [illegible]

[illegible] Media Watch is a Non Government organisation which was established in [illegible] with the main purpose of educating the public about the mass media [illegible] membership extends to both individuals and organisations. Since its inception, Media [illegible] has implemented a number of activities such as media awareness workshops in [illegible] to make informed choices over programmes and the medium through [illegible] programmes are presented.

3.134 Funding for activities is drawn from membership fees ($5 f[illegible] $10 for organisations) and from international agencies such as the [illegible] of Christian Communication (WACC); NZODA, Bread for the World ([illegible] church based NGO) and the Canada Fund. A Coordinator has been [illegible] implement more media literacy training programmes and public av[illegible]

The Fiji Media Council

3.135 The Fiji Media Council (formerly the Fiji News Council) is [illegible] to receive complaints about the media but it does not have a "moderating" role. The [illegible] impact of the media, not just the mainstream media, but also new forms of communication would need to be addressed as access to the internet brings [illegible]

Obstacles encountered

3.136 It is expected that Media Watch and the Fiji Media Council with more support [illegible] will play key roles in the future. There are however a number of concerns [illegible]

c portrayed as glamour objects to sell cars, boats, or any other
ine, food and toiletries whilst men are cast in roles of selling
's clothing and boots amongst other things. At this stage, there
erted efforts made to change some of the more offensive ways in
trayed in advertisements.

3.137
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which

3.142 As there is a low level of awareness in the media of women's concerns, there is a need to actively advocate for the media to present a more balanced image of women and that women's point of views are given greater visibility. A number of strategies could be considered and these include:

a) encouraging women to participate in formulating any policies that will reduce discrimination against women;

b) [illegible] *Media Watch, the Fiji Media Council* and the *Ministry of Information* to actively advocate for the media to present a more balanced image of women and to accurately portray her abilities in the wide variety of roles she plays;

[illegible] advertisements;

[illegible] reviewing and revising media related legislation and policies to remove discriminatory provisions and gender bias;

[illegible] to upgrade the media curriculum in the University [illegible] strictly enforcing the prohibitions against pornography;

[illegible] training at all levels of the media on gender sensitivity, the use of non-sexist language [illegible] and report writing;

[illegible] training programmes, workshops, seminars and other forums to train [illegible] including advertising and management training to maximise skills in the media to deal with and advance the concerns of women. This should be [illegible] by the Ministry for [illegible] Medical [illegible]

[illegible] of the com[illegible] to monitor [illegible] conducting [illegible] women use[illegible]

[illegible] establishing a [illegible] perspective and ge[illegible] the objec[illegible]

The media [illegible] continually reinforced. As media is an evolving industry, both media organs and their audience (listeners/viewers/readers) need to be proactive together to achieve the aims and objectives as set out in critical concern K.

CRITICAL CONCERN K: WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

3.143 The 3 strategic objectives set out in the *Beijing Platform for Action* are as follows:

Strategic Objective K.1 Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels.

Strategic Objective K.2 Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies [illegible]

[illegible]

Strategic Objective K.3. Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

A. Innovative policies, programmes, projects and good practices

3.144 The Department of the Environment in the Ministry of National Planning, Local Government, Housing and the Environment is responsible for the overseeing of

in the form of technical assistance by the South Pacific Regional Environment
[illegible] Programme (SPREP), The University of the South Pacific (USP), GreenPeace, the [illegible] [illegible]
ue: Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC); and [illegible] World Wildli
The priority issues for the Department of the [illegible] other internat
ntation to conclude the *Fiji Sustainable Bill*, enforcing [illegible] Environment

3.154. Since its inception, WIFN have successfully implemented the following activities:

- the publication of a book and bi-annual newsletter;
- village based training workshops on marine management;
- research on the involvement of women in fisheries;
- [illegible] of trailer;
- [illegible] and networking with other environment related NGOs such as SPACHEE, WWF and the Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific and other national agencies.

B. Obstacles encountered

3.155. Women in village communities have taken active part in the maintenance of the surrounding environment and the ecosystems of which they are a part. On the other hand lack of proper management of the environment would adversely affect the [illegible]ic needs of a family thought exposure to health hazards caused by pollution, [illegible] contaminated fresh water supplies and poor situations. Similarly, women's actions on [illegible] environment such as the cutting and gathering of wood for fuel may degrade the [illegible]vironment and the management of waste and the disposal of such products as [illegible]astic bags, syrofoams and other non-degradable materials also causes serious [illegible] problems to the env[illegible]

3.156. There are a number of obstacles faced by women which could contribute to their poor living conditions.

1. lack of involvement and participation in development of the local environment. Any development would affect the way women are expected to cope with meeting their families' basic needs eg. coastal zones development, mining and quarrying [illegible] forestry development for revenue [illegible]

2. Development plans are designed without due regard to gender dimensions e.g. land subdivisions without [illegible] to be loss of resource supply for food and other traditional uses.

3. Low participation of women in "natural resource" related occupations such as forestry mining, technicians, engineers, land-use planners, agriculturalists, marine scientists and environmental lawyers.

4. Lack of involvement of women in decision making relating to environmental management.

C. [illegible] 1990-1999

[illegible] to further achieve sustainable development and to [illegible] process would need to be [illegible]

3.157. To ensure women's participation [illegible] equally enjoy the benefits of development [illegible] pursued:

[illegible] gender concerns in all phases of natural resource [illegible] development;

[illegible] provisions that adversely affect women;

c) promoting the participation of indigenous communities in the evaluation, planning and development of marine resources within their geographical areas as any development could increase the burden on women who may have to travel longer distances to collect food and fetch water. Enhance avenues for women's effective involvement in decision making in resource management in indigenous communities;

[illegible] encouraging and assisting women of traditional [illegible] manage their 'qoliqoli' and to establish or reinforce pro[illegible] traditional conservation measures;

[illegible] women's groups to promote community awareness of the destructive [illegible] on marine biodiversity by land-based activities and unsustainable coral [illegible] fishing;

[illegible] and supporting women's community based initiatives to restore [illegible] ecosystems especially those which are important for subsistence [illegible] requirement;

[illegible] that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) be carried out for all [illegible] resource related development, taking into account women's traditional [illegible]

[illegible] in Fiji, review biological [illegible] establishing a data base of inva[illegible] effects of invasive and introduce species control and eradication e.g. mongoose [illegible] [illegible] Ovalau, Gau, Ka[illegible]

[illegible] of biodiversity and undertake [illegible] reviewing current published tradi[illegible] ledge recognised and protected [illegible] coordinated programme of collecti[illegible] be developed as intellectual prope[illegible]

[illegible] "tapu" and other conservation and protection measures of marine [illegible] resources to assist women in planning long-term resource [illegible]

promoting awareness raising and educational programmes on gender issues [illegible]

encourage women participation and reverse the stereotyping of sex-roles in natural resources related employment [illegible]

encouraging and supporting community based natural forest restoration initiatives [illegible]

en government (Department of the Environment)
and international organisations in promoting
omen's active participation in natural resources

epresented on the National Council for Sustainable

m) promoting stro
and non-gover
sustainable dev
related develop

n) ensuring that w
Development.

THE GIRL CHILD

rable group who bear the consequences of family
of street children, the rise in juvenile crime,
offences against women and children, gender
have prompted calls from members of the
ore comprehensive policies, programmes and
The girl child as well as other members of the

traumas. Women as well as female children disproportionately bear most of the
stresses in the family. The loss of a mother or the departure from the family home of a
parent places extra burdens on female children in the family to care for younger
members and to attend to all the household chores. The pressure on female children

CRITICAL C

3.158 Children c
dysfunction. The
juvenile delinquen
inequalities prevail
community and N
resources to deal w

Strategic Objective L.9. Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl-child.

A. Innovative policies, programmes, projects and good practices

3.160 There continues to be low levels of awareness in the public consciousness of the pressures that are exerted on families as matters pertaining to families are considered to be in the private domain. Thus the effects of social, economic or other development factors and policies could bring about pressures and emergences that seriously pose difficulties for families. There is also little appreciation of the burdens that fall on female children during family hardship.

3.161 The Fiji Poverty Report 1997 (p.38) indicates that 33% of the 44,800 households lived in relative poverty which is a cause for concern not only for economic and social security but also for the stability and well-being of the family. Financial hardship, and poor living conditions are major causes of family conflict and although there are severe stresses on families, one of the most pervasive forms of gender inequalities arise from the unequal responsibilities taken on by family members. Women and girls, though they have the primary responsibility of housework and family care, they are also engaged in some form of income earning activity.

3.162 There is also increasing concern in the rise of single parent fa particularly women headed households consisting of widowed, divor unmarried or abandoned women and girls. Although there is some fi assistance available from the Department of Social Welfare, this is i maintain a family and points to the need to initiate measures to ensur being.

3.163 The abuse of female children has become a major cause for c indicated by the figures below:

Child Abuse Cases (Sexual Abuse) 1995/1996/1997

Offences	1995	1996
Attempted rape and rape	9	17
Indecent assault	16	18
Defilement of a girl under 13 years	18	15
Defilement of a girl		
Total	102	124

* Source: Fiji Police

children;

strengthen the services of the Department of Social Welfare, Women's Crisis Centres and other Non Government Organisations to provide immediate assistance to female children;

c) develop community services and provide information on how to upgrade skills of female children who for one reason or other had her education terminated at an early age;

d) as Fiji is a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the review of laws relating to children undertaken by the Law Reform Commission has been in process of such laws as adoption, sexual offences against children, drugs and [illegible] children, and child labour.

Concluding Comments

(6)70. The long list of policies, measures and programmes put in place to improve the position of women in Fiji Islands demonstrates that the transition from old human resource planning to new forms where women's equality of rights and [illegible] opportunities are specifically taken into account will be a long and complex process in [illegible] areas, so far only the policies have been laid down but where policies have been implemented, commitments tend to vary. The range of policies and programmes [illegible] shows that Fiji Islands is ready to take advantage of a number of

APPENDIX I

Re: Terms of Reference (TOR) for Inter-Ministerial Committee on Women

At the Cabinet meeting of 3 November 1998, it was agreed that the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Women be set up and whose major role is to oversee and co-ordinate the implementation of the Women's Plan of Action (WPA).

Membership

- Ministry of National Planning
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Regional Development
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Health
- [illegible] Ministry of Justice and Social [illegible]
- [illegible] Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations
- Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Co-operatives and Public Enterprises
- Ministry of Communications, Works and Energy
- Ministry of Local Government, Housing and Environment
- Ministry of Home Affairs
- Ministry of Youth and Sports
- Public Service Commission
- Solicitor General – Fiji Law Reform Commission
- Bureau of Statistics

The role and functions are to:

APPENDIX II

Re: Task Force & Membership

Five Task Forces are being set up in these areas:

- Mainstreaming of Women & Gender Concerns
- Women & the Law
- Micro-enterprise Development
- Shared Decision-Making
- Violence against Women & Children

Membership will include all stakeholders including the relevant ministry-department, representative from the MWCA, non-government and civil society organisations and experts in the specific area. The Task Forces may co-opt other members depending on the need that arises.

Membership

Mainstreaming of Women's and Gender Concerns

1. Ministry of National Planning : Chair
2. Ministry of Finance
3. Public Service Commission
4. Ministry of Regional Development
5. Bureau of Statistics
6. Soqosoqo Vakamarama
7. National Council of Women
8. USP
9. UNIFEM
10. Ministry of Agriculture
11. Ministry of Health

Women & the Law

1. Fiji Law Reform Commission : Chair
2. Ministry of Justice
3. Legal Aid Commission
4. Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations
5. Fiji Women's Rights Movement
6. Regional Rights Resource Team
7. Institute of Justice and Applied Legal Studies
8. Fiji Law Society

Micro-Enterprise Development

1. Ministry of Commerce : Chair
2. Ministry of Finance
3. Local Government Association
4. Ministry of Education
5. Ministry of Youth and Sports
6. Fiji Development Bank
7. Soqosoqo Vakarama
8. Women in Business

Shared Decision-Making

Ministry of Public Enterprises

ry of Fijian Affairs

tment of Multi-Ethnic Affairs

ry of Local Government

nal Council of Women

rade Union Congress

mployers Federation

Against Women and Children

ment of Social Welfare – Chair

y of National Planning

2. Ministry of Health
3. Ministry of Education
5. Fiji Law Reform Commission
6. Ministry of Home Affairs – Fiji Police Department
7. Fiji Women's Crisis Centre
8. [illegible]

Council of Social Services

Women Council for Disabled Persons

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