

Pacific Women in Leadership Weekly Digest

MARSHALL ISLANDS PRESIDENT HILDA HEINE RECEIVES EWC'S WOMEN OF IMPACT AWARD



At a celebration at the East-West Center in Honolulu Friday evening, the Center was delighted to recognize Her Excellency Marshall Islands President Hilda Heine with its 2024 Women of Impact Award.

As the first woman to lead an independent Pacific Island nation in modern times, Heine has become a symbol of gender equality and women's empowerment across the Pacific. In addition, she has had significant successes as a leader in education and made important contributions to climate change advocacy.

"To be counted among the previous recipients of this award is indeed an unexpected honor," Heine said in her remarks accepting the award "on behalf of those who have come before me." She added: "If there is anything my career has taught me, it is that positive impact can be made only through building community and building bridges. There is that Western saying, 'No person is an island.' It's a concept that our islander cultures have known for millennia, and that my mother and father taught me as well: We are only as strong as our communities and our kinship to one another."

-SCOOP

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EXPERTS ASK IF COP MEETINGS ARE DELIVERING FOR THE PACIFIC



Pacific Polytech organized a panel discussion on the effectiveness of Conference of Parties meetings, where experts and officials discussed the ongoing challenges and opportunities presented by these global climate summits.

Independent expert on climate change, energy, and environment, Dr. Mahendra Kumar, points out the disparity between international commitments and actual outcomes.

He notes that despite the growing number of countries attending COP meetings, global emissions continue to rise.

Fiji Council of Social Service Executive Director Vani Catanasiga adds that while COPs have historically provided a platform for our voices to be heard on the global stage and allow us to advocate for climate justice and to emphasize the disproportionate impacts that climate change has on countries like ours, the question that one must ask is whether we are ensuring the right voices are truly being heard.

"It is critical that our representatives focus on high-priority issues for the region, such as loss and damage, climate finance, and addressing climate-induced displacement. We have an opportunity here to form strategic partnerships and secure specific commitments that address our unique needs. Last year's experience underscored that poor pre-COP coordination can lead to missed opportunities."

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ANOTHER WOMAN TAKES COMMONWEALTH SG ROLE



Commonwealth leaders convened in Samoa on the final day of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) Saturday and announced Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey as the incoming Commonwealth Secretary-General.

This pivotal decision marks another milestone for women in leadership as Botchwey steps into a role currently held by Patricia Scotland, the first woman to serve as Secretary-General since her election in 2016.

Scotland expressed her heartfelt congratulations to Botchwey through her official social media channels, stating, "It is my honour to pass the baton to my dear sister, Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, who will succeed me as the next Commonwealth Secretary-General. She will be uniquely blessed, as I have been, to hold this office and serve our precious Commonwealth."

Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey currently serves as Ghana's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, responded with gratitude.

"I'm honoured and humbled by the trust of Commonwealth leaders," she stated. "A lot of work lies ahead. But together, we shall work for a New Commonwealth that works for all its citizens. The work indeed lies ahead."

The 61-year-old Ghanaian politician was first appointed as the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration in 2017.

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