

# Pacific Women in Leadership Weekly Digest

**'THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW:' MARSHALL ISLANDS LEADER RAISES THE ALARM ON ESCALATING NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**



Marshall Islands President Hilda Heine has issued a call to action to address the escalating crisis of non-communicable diseases in the country.

"This is no longer a future concern; this is the present, and the time to act is now," Heine said, keynoting the Health in All Policies Conference 2024 held on 28 November at the USP Conference Hall in Majuro.

Stressing the urgent need for transformative policy interventions and collective responsibility, Heine reiterated the Marshall Islands' commitment to universal health coverage.

According to statistics, NCDs are responsible for over 80 percent of deaths in the Marshall Islands and the trends are worsening.

Heine underscored the need for effective, sustainable and comprehensive policies that tackle the root causes of the diseases.

-RNZ PACIFIC

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## WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP THE GAME-CHANGER: DG FAERUA



Women in leadership is the game-changer.

The Director General (DG) of the Ministry of Justice and Community Services (MoJCS), Arthur Faerua, made the above remarks following the 30th review of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA+30), held from 19–21 November 2024 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Vanuatu joined other Asia-Pacific nations at this conference, which focused on addressing challenges in implementing the BPfA and reviewing progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

The country's participation provided an opportunity to assess its progress on the 12 key areas of concern outlined in the BPfA as part of the BPfA+30 periodical review.

"Vanuatu is committed to completing its BPfA+30 report, which was submitted in June 2024," said DG Faerua.

"Attending the conference was essential for comparing progress with other Asia-Pacific nations and identifying areas for further improvement.

"While we can sometimes be insular in our perspective, it's important to consider the broader regional context. This conference has allowed us to evaluate collective progress in the Asia-Pacific region and pinpoint areas where Vanuatu still needs to advance."

-VANUATU DAILY POST

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## FIJI PASSES LANDMARK CHILD CARE AND PROTECTION ACT TO STRENGTHEN SAFEGUARDS AGAINST ABUSE AND NEGLECT



Parliament has unanimously passed the Child Care and Protection Act that outlines what the country will do to promote the wellbeing of children and to protect them from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

It replaces the child protection sections of the Juveniles Act 1973 and intends to provide a more comprehensive framework for child welfare services, and in particular to better guide the work of the Ministry responsible for child welfare in preventing and responding to child abuse.

While tabling the Bill, Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection, Lynda Tabuya says this Bill commits them to protecting and supporting all Fijian children, but especially those deprived of parental care, and those who cannot remain with their families because of abuse or neglect.

Tabuya says the Act prioritises family preservation and family-based forms of care and explicitly acknowledges and reinforces the key role of parents, families and communities in raising children and protecting them from harm.

She says it also clearly presents the distinction between children in need of care and protection and children in conflict with the law as under the current child protection laws, the Government could only intervene once a child has been abused but this is too late.

-FIJIVILLAGE

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## WORLD'S FIRST RESEARCH CENTRE TO TACKLE ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN LAUNCHES IN AUSTRALIA



The ARC Centre of Excellence for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (CEVAW) – the first of its kind in the world – launched on Tuesday 3 December 2024.

Made possible through a \$35 million-dollar investment from the Australian Research Council, the Centre will address all forms of violence against women in Australia and the Indo-Pacific, investing in transformative research over seven years.

The Centre brings together 13 Chief Investigators from six Australian universities. Along with domestic and international partners across the Indo-Pacific region, they will lead research that will be key to informing policy and action to end all forms of violence against women.

Professor Jacqui True is the CEVAW Director and a Professor of International Relations at Monash University, the host institution of CEVAW.

“Systems and structures are failing women. But we don’t have the knowledge base to inform policymakers and advocates who can drive the systems-change to eliminate violence against women,” said Professor True.

“CEVAW will examine the structural drivers that cause and compound violence against women, and will pioneer new, evidence-based approaches to radically improve policy and practice across Australia and the Indo-Pacific.”

–MONASH UNIVERSITY

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## NEW SURVEY: STRONG SUPPORT TO RAISE MARRIAGE AGE IN SOLOMON ISLANDS



A new report reveals a groundswell of support for a proposed law change in Solomon Islands to lift the legal marriage age from 15 to 18 years of age.

More than 200 children, young people, and adults participated in a recent survey and strongly supported proposals to end child marriage and raise the marriage age.

One in five girls in Solomon Islands is currently married before the age of 18 and this rises to one in four in rural areas. Around 6% of girls are married before the age of 15.

Solomon Islands’ Law Reform Commission is currently reviewing the Islanders’ Marriage and Divorce Act, including assessing whether the marriage age needs to be raised to protect human rights.

The community consultation was carried out by World Vision, Save the Children, and ChildFund who have formed a coalition, known as Solomon Islands Endim Vaelens Agenstims Pikinini (SIEVAP), to help end violence in Solomon Islands.

World Vision’s Head of Advocacy and Justice, Rebekah Armstrong, says Solomon Islands government should heed the strong community support for a law change.

Read Report: [Make it 18](#)  
–SAVE THE CHILDREN

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