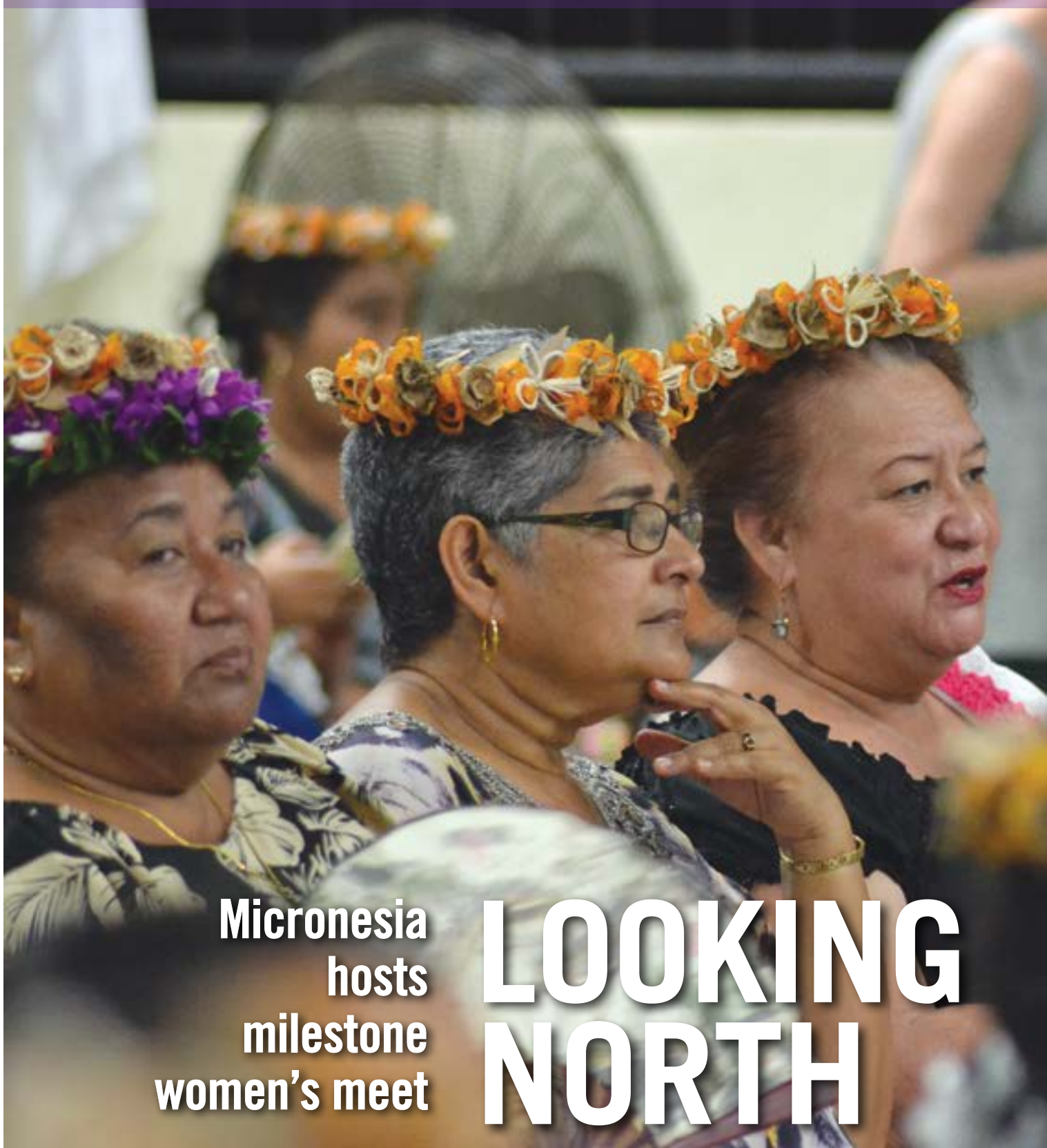


Beneath Paradise

VOLUME 2 | ISSUE 3 | OCT/DEC 2014

THE MAGAZINE OF THE PACIFIC WOMEN'S NETWORK AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



Micronesia
hosts
milestone
women's meet

LOOKING NORTH

Milestones for network



Shamima Ali

A milestone was reached in October 2014 for the Pacific Women's Network Against VAW when I was invited as the keynote speaker at the 3rd Micronesian National Women's Conference in Pohnpei.

The Micronesian conference was a key event because it signified the expanding reach northwards of the Network, the increasing awareness of women's rights and the work towards eliminating violence against women.

FSM President Emanuel Mori's presence at the conference also pointed to the growing recognition among Pacific leaders of the importance of women's human rights and gender-equality to national success.

Also in October, the first regional training for Pacific police officers was facilitated by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and funded by the Australian Federal Police.

In a significant event, 30 police officers from 10 Pacific countries attended the 10-day workshop in Nadi.

One of the workshop's aims was to sensitise police officers to develop better responses to reports of violence against women and girls.

The feedback from officers was positive with many saying they had never seen women's rights from the perspectives taken at the workshop. Some participants within the space of a week went from blaming women for domestic violence to understanding the dynamics at play and speaking the language of women's rights. In September 2014, Fiji held its first general election in eight years returning the country to democratic rule. While there were some problems and opposition parties claimed discrepancies on the whole the election took place smoothly and the incumbent government was given a democratic mandate.

Finally, the Australian Ambassador for Women Natasha Stott Despoja visited the FWCC in November 2014. Her visit was a reminder that women's human rights is pervasive across the world. She reminded us that while Australia may be a funder of the work for women's human rights and the elimination of violence against women, it still has its own issues to confront when it came to women's human rights and gender equality. In many ways, Pacific women's organisations are showing the way for our counterparts in Australia in best practices when addressing issues of gender and women's human rights.

We farewell and thank our communications officer Roland Koroi who left in December. Thank you also to Ricardo Morris who helped compile this edition.

From the FWCC and the Pacific Network Against VAW, we wish you a prosperous and violence-free 2015!

Beneath Paradise is the quarterly magazine of the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women, published by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre as the Network's secretariat. The FWCC has published a newsletter for the Network since its founding in 1992.

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International Events



Male advocate Tura Lewai of Fiji is interviewed in India during the workshop.

INDIA

Male advocates attend India symposium

Four male advocates of the Pacific Network Against Violence Against Women attended a symposium on gender justice in New Delhi, India in November. The participants – two from Fiji and one each from Tonga and PNG – have been part of the FWCC's male advocacy training program for the past six years.

They attended the 2nd MenEngage Global Symposium from 10-13 November 2014. The symposium's theme was 'men and boys for gender justice.' The four male advocates were Tura Lewai and Pram Reddy of Fiji, Melkie Anton of PNG and Tito Kivalu of Tonga. FWCC Coordinator and Pacific Network chairwoman Shamima Ali said the four men had much to contribute at the symposium sharing their experiences and the work that they do as male advocates in their countries.

"These four male advocates are very well versed with the language of women's human rights because they've been through all four stages of our male advocacy training, so speaking about gender equality for women and how men can contribute to that is exactly what they were there for," Ali said. She added the male advocates also hoped to learn from other advocates and activists who attended the symposium.

REGION

Despoja 'proud' of Tongan crisis centre

The Australian Ambassador for Women and Girls Natasha Stott Despoja visited the Women and Children Crisis Centre (WCCC) in Tonga in July and observed some of the work there that Australia is helping fund.

A member of the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women, WCCC has been instrumental in lobbying for a new family law and stronger systems to support victims of violence. Despoja was in Tonga to participate in the Pacific Women Policy Makers' Dialogue when she visited WCCC.

Ahead of the dialogue the ambassador visited the Women and Children Crisis Centre (WCCC). It was an opportunity for the director, 'Ofa Guttenbeil-Likiliki, and the staff of the WCCC to participate in an interactive dialogue about the one-stop-crisis model and the newly implemented Family Protection Act.

"I am happy and proud that my government supports this centre," Despoja said. The Pacific Women's Policy Makers' Dialogue discussed strategies to overcome barriers to women's leadership in the Pacific and identify opportunities for women policy makers to increase the impact of their leadership. The dialogue was part of an Australian Government strategy to engage with women leaders in the Indo-Pacific region. The event was the first in a series of dialogues with women leaders in the region across a number of sectors,

including women in business and civil society. The dialogue was implemented under Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (Pacific Women), which is part of the \$320 million 10-year initiative to improve the political, economic and social opportunities for Pacific women. The Women and Children Crisis Centre has undertaken several initiatives in preventing violence against women and girls such as the Stay Safe Program in primary schools and the Male Advocacy Program (an initiative of the Pacific Network Against Violence Against Women also funded by the Australian Government) was also discussed with Ms Despoja and her delegation which included the High Commissioner to Tonga, Brett Aldam. Also participating in the visit was the then Tonga Police Commissioner, Grant O Fee who attended the dialogue visit to show his support and partnership with the WCCC in addressing violence against women and children in Tonga. The commissioner and the stationed officer at the WCCC contributed effectively to the dialogue in expressing their vision for a strengthened partnership with the WCCC. Despoja expressed her gratitude to the director and the staff of the WCCC and was in particular proud and happy that the Australian Government was supporting the program of the WCCC which also comes under the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development initiative.

NEW ZEALAND

Shamima Ali attends discussions in New Zealand

Fiji Women's Crisis Centre Coordinator Shamima Ali visited New Zealand in late August for a series of discussions in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. Ali's first stop was Fickling Convention Centre on 21 August where she spoke at a forum on "Creating Change - What is working to prevent family violence in Fiji."

The forum was organised by New Zealand's Ministry of Social Development as well as the New Zealand Police and the Auckland Council. Around 80 people from the Auckland police, women's groups, government workers and academics as well as migrant groups attended the forum. She also met with members of the Fiji Community Association of Auckland. Ali participated at the New Zealand Human Rights Commission's Diversity Forum on Family Violence and Human Rights on 24 August in Christchurch. She also spoke to ethnic minority groups on strategies used in the Pacific to counter violence against women and girls and how culture and religion can also be incorporated into the process.

Another forum was organised in Wellington by the New Zealand Police and attended by a diverse group of around 60 people. Shamima Ali also visited a women's refuge in Porirua and observed an inter-agency case conferencing.



ON THE COVER

Shamima Ali, centre, chair of the Pacific Women's Network Against VAW was keynote speaker at the 3rd FSM National Women's Conference in Pohnpei in October.

The Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women members women's rights groups and agencies in Bougainville; Cook Islands; Fiji; Federated States of Micronesia; Marshall Islands; Kanaky; Kiribati; Niue; Papua New Guinea; Solomon Islands; Vanuatu; Tonga; Samoa. Send your Network News and photos to fwc@connect.com.fj

Ali keynote speaker at Micronesian women's meet



FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali (second from right) with His Excellency the President of Federated States of Micronesia Emanuel Mori (second from left) and First Lady Emi Mori (first from left), Samasoni Malaulau (right) formerly of New Zealand Police Prevention of Domestic Violence Programme and Leanne Lomas, gender adviser to the Australian Federal Police at a dinner hosted by the president for participants of the 3rd FSM Women's Conference at The Cupid, Pohnpei.

In a landmark event for the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women, Shamima Ali, the Network's chairwoman, was invited as keynote speaker at a major women's conference in the Federated States of Micronesia in October 2014.

This was the first time Ali of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre was invited to the north Pacific in her capacity as chair of the Network and coordinator of FWCC.

About 300 participants from the around country gathered at Kolonia, Pohnpei, for the 3rd FSM Women's Conference from 20-25 October 2014.

The conference was opened by traditional leaders and state governors. The FSM President, Emanuel Mori, urged women to support each other to succeed not only in the home, but also in careers outside traditional roles.

Referring to the conference theme of 'Maintaining our culture to inspire change', Ali emphasised it was important to know which parts of culture to preserve.

"Positive and life-giving aspects of culture and traditional practices should be revived rather than those that oppress and commit crimes on any section of society," she said.

"Some cultural practices in the Pacific are known to be derogatory in that it totally violates the rights of women. The right for them to be heard or the right for them to have a say in their homes or in their community or even at government level."

"These types of culture only deprives women of fully participating in decision-making processes and that needs to stop. In some places women are being more recognised but there are still some corners of the Pacific where these behaviours still exist."

Other speakers addressed various topics from women's role in the economy and small business enterprises as well as human rights and domestic violence.

Representatives from FSM's four states – Kosrae, Yap, Chuuk and Pohnpei – attended the conference.

This was the first time that Ms Ali and the FWCC was invited to the northern region of the Pacific.

"We are very grateful to have Ms Ali here with us. We have heard about the work of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre in the Pacific and back in Fiji so I'm positive that her contribution here will be well received," said Christina Kiki Stinnett, president of the Chuuk Women's Council.

"This is why we have conferences like this, to educate our women and to help them understand that they're capable of much more than just being housewives and I'm certain that Ms Ali will have a lot of advice for our women," added Stinnett.

"We had a meeting and were trying to see who would be best to come and be the keynote speaker and when Shamima's name came up, everyone agreed. It's very good to have her here and we are grateful that she accepted our invitation," said Janet Panuelo, President of the Pohnpei Women's Council.

Ali said she was grateful for the invitation to deliver the keynote address and she saw it as an opportunity to build relationships for the solidarity of women in the Pacific.

"This will definitely not be my last visit here to Pohnpei or to the Federated States of Micronesia. I have spoken to a few women who are very keen on having us here to conduct some of our trainings on human rights, domestic

violence and even our male advocacy program.

"Many women here have either heard about our programs or read about them and there were a few at the conference who have actually been through our training programs which is why the interest is there to have us in the north," she added.

Violence against women was at the forefront of discussions at the conference and Ali told attendees that it was a human rights issue and the best way to deal with it was through the democratic processes.

"It's very important that you women stand up and lobby for democracy and the rule of law. I know that FSM was, and in some places still is, a matrilineal society but through the advent of Christianity and colonisation, women have come to lose that power.

"Sometimes culture is used as an excuse not to address violence against women and girls in our homes and in our community. We need to revisit pre-colonial history where I believe there was much more equality and respect for women but unfortunately also, there's very little written about this," she added.

Ali also highlighted the work that's being done in the region by various members of the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women, which the FWCC chairs.

"Some examples are the one-stop shop in Tonga and the male advocacy program in Fiji. What we are doing is we are not only making it easier for survivors of violence to come forward and get the services they need, we're also training men from around the Pacific to learn and start speaking the language of women's rights. Not only that, there are other various programs in Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and PNG," she said.

3rd FSM National Women's Conference



Shamima Ali speaks while Marstella Jack looks on.



President of the Pohnpei Women's Council Susana Sohs promotes local products made by women.



Christina Kiki Stinnett president of the Chuk Women's Council, left, and Sirene Killion a regional training programme graduate.



Conference participants at a dinner.



FSM Postmistress General The Honorable Ginger Porter-Mida.



Conference participants from the various states of FSM

For the first time, the Pacific Women’s Network Against Violence Against Women was represented at the Federated States of Micronesia’s national women’s conference in October 2014. Shamima Ali, Coordinator of the Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre and Pacific Network Against VAW chairperson, was the keynote speaker at the event.



Susana Sohs gets active during the 3rd women’s conference.



An attentive participant at the national women’s conference.



Shamima Ali with SPC staff based in Pohnpei.



Evelyn Adolph, director of the office of statistics, budget and economic affairs as well as being the representative of the FSM government on the joint trust fund committee.



Conference participants from the various states of FSM



Conference participants from the various states of FSM

Seeker-Asher succeeds despite cultural stigma

One of the most difficult challenges for a working woman in the Pacific, especially in the Federated States of Micronesia, is having to balance work life with that of her cultural norms.

For those that manage to break the chains and venture into the western world, it becomes a lot easier to blend the two cultures together although returning home means confronting the many questions and criticism levelled at her by her own family.

Shanty Seeker-Asher, a 32-year-old mother of three, knows all too well how this feels, having experienced it first-hand.

Seeker-Asher, a native of Kosrae State in FSM spent her late teenage years in Hawaii pursuing her studies.

During her final senior year Shanty got pregnant with her eldest daughter and coming from a rich cultural and traditional background, getting pregnant without being married was not something to be proud of.

"It was quite difficult having to be a first-time expecting mum and then going to school and then underneath all that, worrying about what our families would think. But I was lucky because my husband was there to support me although we weren't married at that time. But soon after I graduated with my bachelors the blessing of marriage came and everything went smoothly from there," said Seeker-Asher.

She got a job with a real estate company in Honolulu where she worked for the next four years before deciding to complete her studies and go for her masters.

"Again during the final years of my studying I fell pregnant to my second daughter so you can imagine how difficult it was for me. I had to juggle three things, being pregnant, being a working mum and then studying.

"Sometimes I'd have work from eight to five and then classes from five-thirty to nine every day. I was just lucky to have my husband there to support me all the way. He was a chef but back then he wasn't working and this in itself was not something that was common back home," she added.

In the Pacific, men have been known to be the sole breadwinner for the family while women were to look after the family and their home and it was quite unusual for the trend to be reversed.

"It's happening all around the world and for the Pacific, I believe it's slowly changing. The mind-set is changing, allowing women to work and also provide for their families."

Seeker-Asher and her family came back home to Kosrae where she now works as a consultant under the Ministry of Justice.

"For us, coming back home was a huge challenge especially for me. We spent over 11 years in Hawaii and we were used to the lifestyle we had where both my husband and I would contribute to the welfare of the family and with him being a chef, he loved cooking and for my family seeing him in the kitchen was a no-no," said Seeker-Asher.

She said she would get a scolding from her parents, especially her mother.

"My parents were very traditional and we were brought up seeing our mother in the kitchen although my dad would help her out every now and then but the kitchen belonged to her and she was always there preparing our meals and watching over us. So for my mother to see my husband in the kitchen was something totally new and almost a crime," she says laughing.

But she says she wasn't prepared to come in between her husband and what he loved doing.

"He loves cooking and I was never going to ask him to stop. I mean he was doing something that was good for the family and I love his cooking so why should I stop him?"



Shanty Seeker-Asher

First woman, local holds AG post in Kosrae

Kosrae State in the Federated States of Micronesia has one of the youngest attorneys-general to hold the post.

Lorrie Johnson-Asher, 38, is also the first woman and first local to hold the Attorney-General's post in Kosrae State.

The journey to that position was not an easy one. Johnson-Asher attended different schools in Pohnpei, Saipan, Chuk and Yap. She proudly refers to herself as a "Micronesian child."

The Pohnpei native went on to obtain her undergraduate degree in pre-law in Florida and her law degree in Vanuatu before achieving her LLM at the University of Hawaii.

In 2003, Johnson-Asher began her venture into the legal field and has never looked back. It was during those 11 years that Johnson-Asher encountered some of the most difficult times, being a young female lawyer in a society dominated by men.

"I love my job and I wouldn't trade it for anything but I do admit the journey wasn't at all easy," says Johnson-Asher. "Most of the time I was looked down upon because I was a woman or some even saw me as this little girl who didn't have the right to speak on important issues.

"It was because of the way our society was, and still is in some cases, where men are the ones always making the decisions and are the only ones speaking on important matters," she said.

But Johnson-Asher was not prepared to let these obstacles prevent her from pursuing her dream of becoming one of the best in her field.

"Oh, that never really bothered me. It did a little but I kept telling myself I had to do this for the women, especially those in little communities in Kosrae who were still struggling to find their voices and that sort of inspired me and kept me going," she said.

Johnson-Asher began her career at the Pohnpei State Supreme Court and then on to the Pohnpei State Attorney-General's office. She attributes her success, in part, to the experience she gained while working at these places.

She says dealing with discrimination for being a woman over the past 10 years has made her thick-skinned and more than ready for her current position.

The State of Kosrae's cabinet has about 12 members with Johnson-Asher the only woman.

"Being the only woman in one of the most important houses in the State of Kosrae where decisions are made and where discussions and debates happen isn't easy. There have been many times when I have been pressured into signing off on certain policies and decisions that I disagree with but I have never given in.

"I have always held my ground and in most cases I use my knowledge from my legal background to counter these situations and I have always succeeded. For me, if I become the Attorney-General but give in to every demand in cabinet which I think is not right, then I have been defeated and I can no longer be an example to the women in my society," said Johnson-Asher.

"I must admit, though, that I am very grateful to the current governor for allowing me to work under his administration. For allowing me to be the first woman and the first local to take up this job and I intend to do my very best.

"I'm also grateful to the other cabinet members who despite everything, they do listen to me when I speak and I know that they do respect me, may be not as much as I would prefer but it's definitely improving."



Lorrie Johnson-Asher

Fiji NGOs present shadow human rights report

A delegation from the NGO Coalition on Human Rights attended the Universal Periodic Review of Fiji's human rights record in Geneva on 25 October 2014 and presented its own findings and recommendations, which were acknowledged by many state parties.

This acknowledgement was welcomed by the coalition which raised serious issues concerning the status of human rights and constitutional governance in Fiji.

Representing the Citizen's Constitutional Forum (CCF), the Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM), the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC), Save the Children, FemLINK Pacific, the Ecumenical Centre for Research and Advocacy (ECREA), Socio-Economic Empowerment Program (SEEP) and the Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG), the CSO Coalition had earlier submitted a statement as an alternate report to the official Fiji Government report.

In its joint statement, the CSO/NGO Coalition raised concerns on these issues:

- Free and Fair Elections – including the impact of restrictive decrees on the general election;
- The Constitution making process for the

2013 Constitution;

- The 2013 Constitution – including the derogations in the Bill of Rights and immunity provisions;
- Independence of the judiciary – non-compliance with recommendations made in the first UPR session.
- Freedom of expression, association and assembly – including media censorship, Media Industry Development Authority and the Public Order (Amendment) Decree
- Human rights violations experienced by human rights defenders and civil society organisations
- Torture and ill-treatment
- Freedom of Religion
- Non-compliance of the Fiji Human Rights Commission with Paris Principles
- Women's rights – including the high incidence of violence against women
- Rights of the child

In addition to its joint submission, a CSO/NGO Coalition delegation attended Fiji's UPR. The delegation comprised Rev Akuila Yabaki and Sina Mario of CCF, Vandhna Narayan of

FWCC and Michelle Reddy of FWRM.

Prior to the UPR, on 28 October, the CSO delegation presented at a side event organised in conjunction with Amnesty International. The side event was well attended with delegates from the Permanent Missions of Pakistan USA, UK, Switzerland, Australia, the Solomon Islands and Swaziland attending.

Also present were representatives from YWCA, Amnesty International, Justice, Oceanic Rights, UPR Info and OHCHR. The Permanent Mission of Fiji to Geneva was also invited to the side event and was represented by the Deputy Head of Mission, Namita Khatri, who was accompanied by members of the Fiji delegation to the UPR, led by the Attorney-General Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum.

The side event was a follow up to a presentation made during the UPR pre-session on Fiji on 6 October 2014 by Daiana Buresova of FWRM and Sina Mario of CCF. The UPR pre-session is the only opportunity that national and international CSOs have to speak and raise concerns about the human rights record of States. States are also able to interact with CSO representatives. Countries represented at the pre-session were: Angola, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cote d'Ivoire, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Kuwait, Namibia, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain and Switzerland. International NGO's which gave insight into Fiji's human rights record were: Centre for Civil and Political Rights, Reporters Without Borders, Child Rights Connect and the International Lesbians Gay Rights Association.

It is gratifying to note that the interventions and recommendations made by various countries in response to the Fiji Government statement picked up on the issues raised by the NGO Coalition. In particular, comments focused on:

- Allowing Special Procedures Mandate Holders to visit Fiji to monitor compliance
- The need to reduce/eliminate violence against women in Fiji, with appropriate legislation and support services
- Ensuring freedom of expression and association, with a free media and guaranteed trade union rights.
- The need for an independent judiciary
- Ensuring an independent and effective National Human Rights Commission, fully compliant with Paris Principles

The recommendations made during the second cycle of the UPR have largely acknowledged the concerns raised by the CSO Coalition and reflect the International Community's concern at the derogations from and abuses of human rights in Fiji, as well as the lack of credible accountability mechanisms.

Fiji has accepted 98 of the 137 recommendations, including engaging with Special Procedures Mandate Holders and ratifying core human rights instruments, but has not accepted the recommendation to establish a constitutional commission or review the Constitution.

The next State mid-term report is due 31 March 2015.

Despoja visits FWCC

Australian Ambassador for Women and Girls Natasha Stott Despoja reminded staff at the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre of the importance of women in the success of a nation when she visited on 27 November 2014.

"The key to prosperity in any nation is women," Ambassador Despoja told the staff.

She told those present that no country was perfect in how they deal with women's issues, but that did not mean they should give up the fight.

Ambassador Despoja said she had visited different places to see the work being done for gender equality and although Australia had some good stories and research, they had not got it right on gender equality yet.

"Not when Australia has got 31 per cent representation in parliament, not when there's one woman in Parliament, not when we have high rates of violence, one in three women experiencing some form of violence in my community and culture," said Ambassador Despoja.

"Not when there is a gender pay-gap that's the same as it was about 40 years ago. So we're all in this together and it's about how we partner and how we learn but remembering at the end of the day that it's about rights."

FWCC Coordinator Shamima Ali took the ambassador on a tour of the FWCC building, briefing her of the work being done by each department and the services provided.

"I'm very happy to have Ambassador Despoja here at the FWCC. For the past 25 years the Australian government has given us over \$15m in funding which we are very grateful for," said Ali.

"This relationship has allowed us to do the work that we do in assisting women who suffer from violence and now with Ambassador Despoja taking the lead role in reaching out to organisations like us, we definitely look forward to working with her in the area of gender violence and gender equality in the future."

Ambassador Despoja acknowledged that the work they're doing isn't easy.

"I never underestimate the difficulty in the work that you do. It doesn't matter if you're doing the auditing or the paper work or indeed the counselling and the rest of the services, this is tough stuff and it can take its toll on the women and men that are involved in this space. You hear a lot of stories and you experience some of it first-hand yourselves. So I never underestimate the extraordinary commitment and I'm glad to see that," she said.

The ambassador said she was looking forward to working with the FWCC in the future.



Australian Ambassador for Women and Girls Natasha Stott Despoja meets FWCC counsellor Mere Vunibaka during her visit.

Fiji holds momentous march

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign in Fiji culminated in a march through Suva on 10 December 2014 to mark World Human Rights Day. About 200 people joined the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre in the NGO Coalition on Human Rights march to mark the day and the end of the annual 16 Days campaign.

It was Fiji's first march in eight years under a democratic government.

The march went through the city's central business district with participants making calls for women's rights and human rights for all, freedom from violence and fear, freedom from discrimination and good governance.

Holding placards and banners, the women, men, young people and children brought traffic to standstill as police escorts cleared the way.

The march ended at the Suva Civic Centre where an exhibition on human rights was set up by participating organisations.

Leaders of representative groups also addressed the crowd. Citizens' Constitutional Forum executive director gave a briefing on Fiji's universal periodic review of its human rights record that had taken place in Geneva.

Perhaps the groups that travelled the furthest to attend the march were the Green Cross Association, which advocates for greater reliance on herbal remedies for less serious health issues, and the Naitasiri Rural Women's Association, from the highlands of Viti Levu.



Participants of the World Human Rights Day march through Suva in Dec which marked the end of the 16 days of activism campaign.

Tuvalu passes family protection act

Tuvalu's Parliament unanimously passed the country's *Family Protection and Domestic Violence Act* on 18 December 2014 after its second and final reading in the House.

The act provides for greater protection from violence within domestic relationships to ensure the safety and protection of all people, including children, who experience or witness domestic violence. The act recognises that domestic violence, in all its forms, is unacceptable behaviour and a crime.

Violence against women and within the family is a human rights violation, depriving women and children of their right to a safe and secure family life.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community's Regional Rights Resource Team (SPC RRR) has been providing support to the Government of Tuvalu through the drafting of the Bill in 2011, as well as providing a set of drafting instructions on violence against women legislation that is compliant with global human rights standards, and supporting community and national consultations on the Bill in 2013 and 2014.

The Tuvalu 2007 Demographic and Health Survey reported that four out of 10 women have been subjected to some type of physical violence, with their current husbands or partners being the main perpetrators. Women whose husbands drink alcohol excessively are far more likely to experience physical, emotional, and sexual violence than those whose partner does not drink. Around half of all reported acts of physical violence were reported by women aged 25-29 years.

Inadequate laws and policies fail to protect women and their families, and impact adversely on the development of a country. The passing of the *Family Protection and Domestic Violence Act* is a milestone for Tuvalu.



Tuvalu women in a community setting.



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* List any requirements of trainee regarding health, diet, language, etc in an attachment to this application. Also attach a one-page summary with more details of the applicant's work and interest in working on violence against women, and include a brief statement of your position on women's rights.

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