



"Working Together to Inspire Change"

Papua New Guinea Women's Forum

March 6 - 7, 2014

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Port Moresby

Recommendations and Key Messages

Creating the Right Environment for Change

- Speak with one voice: To quote Prime Minister Peter O'Neill, "when you speak with one voice, you have no idea how loud you can be."

Developing the Next Generation of Women Leaders

- Encourage mentoring. Leadership is a progressive thing, does not happen overnight. Young women need to be mentored so that they can develop leadership capabilities. Older, more experienced, women can do this formally or informally. Don't let cultural obstacles prevent this type of interaction and exchange.
 - Older women should be reaching out to younger women. They need to find the space and time for mentorship. You can be a mentor to others without even realizing it. Be open to this, and look for opportunities to help bring young women along.
 - Younger women should seek out mentoring opportunities. You cannot expect opportunities to be handed to you; sometimes you have to create openings.
- Create a National Network of Young Women Leaders and/or a National Foundation for Youth Leadership to provide a way for organizations and individuals to come together for mentoring and leadership opportunities.
- Build a network of fathers (sons, husbands and brothers) to champion their daughter's leadership.
- Create incentives in the public and private sector to bring more young women to the decision-making table.
- Include leadership and gender sensitivity training in the curriculum for secondary and tertiary education.
- Engage the media to profile successful women who can be role models for and inspire young women. Focus especially on women that have overcome challenges and how they did so.
- Create more opportunities for women to build their confidence through training, internships, and exchange programs.
- Create a program to encourage young women to sit on corporate and governance boards.

Women's Groups as Agents of Change for Peace and Security

- Best practice: The three key steps to peace-building are: consult with traditional leaders; conduct training and mediation for mediation officers; and reconciliation. It also is essential to provide capacity building and life skills training to affected young women, who are often displaced by conflict. Literacy training also provides an entry point to raise awareness on human rights and allows women in rural areas to document their stories as evidence.
- Develop a national policy and action plan on women in peace and security
 - Use the plan from Bougainville as a model and be sure to include broader gender equality issues, such as equal participation in politics, which affect all realms. A participant identified the need for an enabling law to oblige the government to support the peace process. The gender focal points in all the LLGs should help with reporting.
 - Respect all stakeholders. We all have a role to play and must respect each other to maintain peace and security in our societies. We need to include persons with disabilities in the peace process without harming or stigmatizing them.
 - Build a strong human rights network to support peace and security for women. There should be a stronger, more integrated dialogue between the government and civil society. In particular, NGOs and church groups filling the gaps deserve more support. Female leaders in peace and security must be creative and step out of their comfort zones to build a strong support network and bring about change. By working together with like-minded women advocates, leaders can identify more small village and church groups to expand the human rights support network.
 - Address the root causes of conflict and focus on recovery through economic empowerment. Women empower themselves and their families when they can sustain themselves financially. Men's buy-in is crucial for the success of economic initiatives in the rural areas.
- Government needs to pay more attention to tribal fighting issues in the country
 - The government should recognize the plight of internally displaced persons and address it as a serious national issue. Women want training on peace building, conflict resolution, and trauma counseling so they can provide counseling to internally displaced persons in their communities.
 - Increase the role of churches in the tribal peace process. Women and NGOs should work closer together with churches on peace and human rights issues at the village level.
 - Peace building in the highlands is challenging due to it being a male dominated society, thus women leaders have to work harder to men's respect and recruit men as partners, especially in traditional leadership settings where tribal chiefs are influential.
 - Increase networking efforts between police, health workers, and women's groups to support peace processes between tribes.
- Women's groups must improve their collaboration and coordination with men and with law enforcement
 - Communities should respect and use government's police services but need awareness campaigns and the services must improve. Communities feel police response is slow; police label abuse cases as "family problems," money wins cases, lack of paralegal

support disenfranchises female victims, and police often release perpetrators due to lack of jail space. There should be a desk for women and children, in addition to female police officers in every police station so that victims can feel safe. Community policing is also a best practice so that community leaders and police officers build a relationship and support each other. Police shortages and community non-involvement empowers perpetrators.

- Communities often work with the “quick response network” and use the village council. In other cases, women have worked closely with the police to develop a rapid response network in response to sorcery-related violence and have appointed a district person in each village to report problems.
- Women will have to work harder to engage men in their efforts to obtain better results. Men will be able to have a stronger influence over behavioral changes and to end discriminatory practices. Consult with tribal chiefs and engage men as partners at all levels of the process.

Investing in Women through Education

- Concerns:
 - Participants expressed an overarching concern about the education system in Papua New Guinea. There are not enough schools to support the growing number of students. The Infrastructure and quality of education is poor. Teacher quality is also low. The school curriculum is out of date and it needs urgent review and update. Participants perceive the education boards in the provinces as dysfunctional. The school system is not turning out graduates who are competitive in the marketplace
 - School-leavers, whose scores do not allow them to continue their education, do not receive any support to follow an alternative path. The system discards most students and they end up in unhealthy environments and paths of crime, gambling, alcohol, drugs, and prostitution. There is no systematic support for dropout mothers.
- Redefine and promote healthy gender roles; more mentors and role models are needed
 - Gender equality in all realms starts at home. For gender equality to prevail, we need to address gender stereotypes at home. Parents need to provide an environment that encourages young girls to take up fields traditionally dominated by men, such as information technology, engineering, and science.
 - During puberty period, parents and family support group need to encourage young girls to be strong and assertive; to be decisive and purposeful; to know who they are; and not to look down on themselves.
 - Young girls need role models at home through support and encouragement from parents; at schools from teachers and education NGOs, to encourage them to remain in school and strive for a better future
 - Ideas for action: Get together with young girls and celebrate successful professional women from PNG; show girls new academic fields to pursue (PNG Women in Engineering offered to do awareness on career paths at schools); host meetings at schools to discuss

gender issues openly amongst girls and boys; establish a monthly speaking circuit to the schools to emphasize mentorship by sharing women's experiences

- Incorporate entrepreneurship in the education curriculum
 - The formal school system should educate young people and young women to be employers not employees. This would support the government's agenda to increase local SMEs in the country.
 - NGOs and other organizations should create competitions for young people to present business plans and spur innovation. This can encourage young women to think seriously about entrepreneurship.

- Create more resources available to facilitate young women's education
 - Mobilize private sector partnerships to create more tertiary scholarships for young women
 - Engage the private sector to help female students forced to drop out by providing sponsorships to attend vocational and technical schools, i.e. by providing books.
 - Civil society and the private sector should collaborate to host career fairs and other activities that help young people find jobs and encourage those who should go back to school.
 - Establish a public-private partnership to subsidize day care costs for young mothers so they can continue their education and do not have to leave school.
 - More coordination between universities, government, and civil society organizations should be encouraged to identify gaps and areas of collaboration to increase scholarships and increase the number of slots in tertiary education.

- Provide young girls and women first-hand exposure to economically viable fields to help them explore their talents and interests to select jobs they enjoy
 - Extractives sector needs tradespeople and apprentices to support operations over next 10 – 20 years
 - Create opportunities for internships and apprenticeships to provide work experience opportunities to young people. Find solutions to the cost of living concerns to make it possible. Internships would increase the likelihood of permanent job offers for young people who perform well.
 - Engage the private sector in developing human capital, especially in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). Private sector institutions should establish mentorship programs for their interns, give preference to young women, and involve men and women in mentoring.
 - Celebrate successes of women in STEM fields and encourage them to offer internships to more young women
 - Orient young people who move to urban areas on how to sustain themselves when they move into cities to look for jobs.

- Review the national education system through the gender lens

- Open ten more TVET schools in all provinces to provide job skills to students who had to leave formal education
- Policymakers and private sector need to prioritize the skills needed in order to align the professional and vocational training that should be provided and ensure women have access to those vocational and job opportunities; for example, tourism has a high potential
- The school fee education subsidy should be extended to private institutions as well so that students can receive a voucher and apply it to private schools of their choice
- Gender budgeting is urgently needed; the implementation of existing policies around gender equity is still missing
- Increase agricultural training and better integration of women into the agricultural economic value chain critical. Use the land to create individual and small group opportunities, then scale it up
- Develop a database of young professionals at the local level to form advisory committees to LLGs (best practice from Enga province)
- Citizens and civil society leaders need to be more actively involved in women's education
 - Local citizen groups need to be more proactive in identifying educational, scholarship, and business employment opportunities. Groups are often vocal in complaining but slow to take greater ownership of their own successes and failures.
 - Communities need to do a better job of holding their elected (and selected) leaders accountable
 - Different women's groups need to collaborate rather than working independently to support young women through education opportunities.

Helping Women Lead Healthy Lives

- New challenge: There has been an increase in preventable lifestyle diseases in Papua New Guinea. These diseases are linked to food, education, and addictive habits such as alcohol and tobacco. Lifestyle diseases are now the number two or three killers in Papua New Guinea. As the inflow of money increases, people will be eating less and less healthy.
- Fund and train more public health professionals
 - The costs to meet the National Health Plan 2011-2020 and the National Health Service Standards were determined and budgeted; but the accompanying Human Resource Plans have not been.
 - Community Health Workers were trained years ago but their training is outdated and do not receive refresher trainings or other training opportunities.
 - Stakeholders need to determine what is needed throughout the country and where
 - Recommendation: recruit retired medical figures to help educate and train the new generation.
 - Recommendation: partner with universities to encourage more young students to choose the medical field and provide scholarships; offer more practical training opportunities and continuing education opportunities

- Prioritize maternal health and address gender roles
 - Maternal death rates can be reduced through increased emphasis on family planning.
 - Men are decision makers and gatekeepers to health and family planning; we should engage them in family planning activities. The need for checkups is slowly getting across but we need men to support and encourage women to seek preventive health care services.
 - We need high-level obstetrics care in rural areas. Community health posts need delivery and child immunization equipment. Currently, the community health posts do not have midwives and as a result, women are dying. In the meantime, we should train the villages on how to give village births. Currently, Central Province is doing this and it is very successful. At the same time, we need to train more midwives by building more training centers.

- Improve women's access to health services through infrastructure
 - The needs of women are not being met and as a result, the needs of the community are not being met. Services are not getting to the 80% of women that reside in rural areas. Women must be healthy and empowered. When they have access to health services, they are more likely to attend school and increased education leads to increased development.
 - We need community health posts at the ward level throughout the provinces. Improve access to services by fixing broken roads and improve transportation options, including more airports in rural areas.
 - Preventative care is vital. It is cost effective and decreases the burden on society. Since health services are not reaching the rural areas, the public does not know or does not practice the necessary preventative screenings.

- Create a well-coordinated and sustainable approach to health care delivery; scale-up successful models
 - Health is everyone's business, it does not just involve doctors, and there must be partnerships between the government, the private sector, and the community.
 - We need a platform for continued dialogue with National Health Association; have a town hall with the government to learn what the government is doing.
 - Government and NGOs need to map out who does what so programs and activities do not step on each other's toes. Stop compartmentalizing and start coordinating.
 - There will never be enough support from the government, so it is important to create innovative public-private partnerships for long-term sustainability. There needs to be a plan to continue the service after sponsors leave.
 - Create an enabling environment: identify resources and people that are in the community, give them an incentive, train them
 - We must address poverty, as it is the root of all of our health issues. Diet, income, and access to services lead to an unhealthy community.
 - Need to get everyone on board with a two-system health approach. This approach includes national hospital system and a rural/provincial health delivery system. Western

Highlands and Eastern Highlands are currently operating this two-system approach and the goal is to get every province on this approach as soon as possible.

- Doctors are not in the rural areas because of lack of funding. There is a lot of waste and the money is not being spent on what it was intended to be spent on. The community must demand better from the government and hold their leaders and public service professionals accountable.
- We need better coordination between health, law and order, and education. This is the people's responsibility not only the governments. We are trying to provide health centers but people are demanding compensation for putting for putting a health facility on their land. There must be a community driven demand for the role of the government. Communities should not expect handouts because it creates dependency.

The Role of Men and Youth in Combating Gender Based Violence

- Focus on addressing the perceptions of gender roles and the issues of power as root causes
 - Violence occurs at all levels of society and communities often accept it and in turn, condone it. Youth in PNG are engaging in violence much earlier than in the past. Half of 10,000 men reported committing rape as teenagers.
 - The definition of gender roles start at home and parents instill stereotypes through expectations and the way they treat their sons and daughters.
 - Many rural male populations feel disoriented as globalization influences PNG's traditional culture. The country's society should consider change the redefinition of the male role model from the "big man" to a more modern, "equal partner" definition. To support men who want to change their attitudes and behavior while maintaining their community's respect, media and society have to highlight positive examples of fathers and male leaders. Men listen to other men. What do men want? How do men want to be valued?
 - Understand men and power relations: the current system teaches men that they have power over women and their bodies, so they perform policing to keep women in their place. Men who are jobless, who do not achieve the "big man" status feel disenfranchised and engage in behaviors that reinforce violence such as alcohol or drug addiction. Due to socioeconomic realities, the typical suburban home in PNG may have up to 35 people who are part of the extended family, which can cause power conflicts among men and an unsafe environment for women and girls.
 - Best practice: Use sports to eliminate gender based violence; sports help by changing conceptions of masculinity. You can also let young boys, girls play sports together and they learn to respect each other based on sportsmanship and character not gender.
- Create more programs or devote more resources to assist perpetrators for lasting behavioral change
 - Violence is interconnected and does not happen in a vacuum. Perpetrators likely experienced violence throughout their lives as children. Mental health (including fear, possessiveness, jealousy, insecurity, and low self-esteem), drug and alcohol abuse, and poverty are other causes of violence.

- Provide services for the perpetrator in parallel to the victim so that he gets needed therapy and behavior change lasts longer. If he does change, he can become an influential advocate against violence.
- Increase efforts in prevention, healing therapy, and transformation to break down the “big boy” mentality and break down the stigma of men in family violence issues.
- Government should collaborate with churches and schools to help bring about behavior changes
 - Churches can play a role in getting men to talk so they do not feel left out.
 - Need role models at the national level. Can the Prime Minister be a champion for women’s rights?
 - Frame the dialogue properly. The choice of words is important.
 - There should be a stronger focus on gender-based violence prevention measures. Men should be taking the lead, taking ownership of the collective effort of projects against violence. Address the education gap of women who do not know their rights through the school system.
 - Create a clearing-house for information and data; mainstream best practices; strengthen referral system; and consider organizing a national forum for men against violence

Getting Women into Business

- Improve women’s access to finance
 - A risk guarantee fund would be useful given the culture towards credit where land security is also unavailable and credit must be based upon past business performance
 - Use of startup capital, innovation grants, and venture capital
 - Find mechanisms to address financial security issues and collateral; raise awareness and ensure there is a transparent application of rules and processes when public funds are involved; there is a current tendency not to repay debts to government rendering government credit schemes ineffective
 - Start access to finance with the basics at the grassroots level: promote bank accounts; and make it easier for women to formalize their businesses.
- Improve financial literacy and mentoring to promote SMEs
 - Embed in the national policy and national education schemes starting from an early age and with a focus at community level
 - Fund local training initiatives to promote financial literacy at regional and local levels, including within the school curriculum and, together with further business training in technical and vocational institutions, including use of /radio/ video/ SMS channels, rather than purely written materials, for reaching out to local communities
 - Women's groups should improve information sharing [e.g. develop and share a 'toolkit' or 'notebook' on how to start a business] and work more closely together through networking and joint initiatives, to learn from each other, not excluding by looking at best practices from other countries.

- Lower the costs of doing business and make it less complicated to run a business by implementing regulatory reforms and investing in infrastructure
 - Improve access to technology by lowering the costs of internet and online banking
 - Increase access to market information and surveillance
 - Invest in infrastructure to improve access to markets
 - Participants emphasized the need to support the growth of small locally owned businesses through enabling policies and reduction in costs (tax policy).

Trailblazers – Discussion on Women’s Political Participation with Current and Former Female Members of Parliament

- Encouraging young women to get involved in politics
 - Young women must build strength throughout their lives and become agents of change for the next generation. Get into politics when you are younger rather than older.
 - Young people are hungry for a mentor, for someone to whom they can relate. We should challenge the male politicians to become mentors. Even though we are old we should mentor younger women while we still have time.
 - People are not born leaders; it takes a situation to spark your leadership qualities. To be a political leader you need to be in the community and be passionate about serving the people.
 - Courage, all types of courage, leadership courage, fellowship courage, is what empowers women to make significant contributions to their communities
- The pros and cons about reserved seats for women in Parliament
 - It does not take hundreds of women to create change – it only takes a handful of women to create change.
 - A young woman noted that the core issue is that women do not vote for women candidates; if it were so, reserved seats would not be necessary. She said, “if men can stand for election, we can stand for election and get voted in...we need women to vote for women.”
 - According to Minister Kouza, the way to 22 women in Parliament is through the Deputy Governor seats – to work on the legislation and policy to support this. “That is how the three of us are prepared to assist because you also need to get support for the budget,” she said. “The Minister for Health Michael Malabag has said he will give its support to the 22 reserved seats and the PM said yesterday that he was supportive of 22 seats. But us women cannot stand up in the house and ask for that – we need the support of the leadership in the house and then we will make it happen,” she added.
 - Reserved seats have many limitations in Bougainville. In Bougainville, the constituency members have the upper hand in deciding what to fund. The three women have to negotiate with the constituency members to get funding. In Bougainville, we must work more to develop more women to contest the constituency seats. In Bougainville, we need to get more women into the constituency seats.
- How to win elections
 - Strategically analyze the reason for running for office.

- You need to be in your electorate to run for elections.
- Respect male counterparts in politics.
- Winning as a woman is a victory for all women
- In politics, your personality can be more influential than money
- Create and maintain your moral standing in the community.
- It is important to have the support of your family, to be known in your constituency, and to have the determination to move forward.
- The performance of the current female MPs will impact the constituency's trust in female politicians at all levels
- Be aware of the challenges a female MP faces once elected. She has to attending to different interests: party policies; electorate's service needs, needs of women, national issues, and committee responsibilities.

Harnessing the Power of Technology to Empower Women

- Increase awareness of innovative ways in which technology is helping women's wellbeing
 - Digital and mobile technologies and the Internet have enormous potential for women's empowerment, providing women with opportunities to find and share information, access educational and health services, generate income, interact, collaborate, network, and have their voices heard. Yet a lack of access to technology and technical training, autonomy and adequate infrastructure (often coupled with the high costs of connectivity) prevent many women from fully benefiting from the use of digital and mobile technologies and the Internet. The foundation to empowerment is education and financial capacity. Therefore, those living in urban areas are at an advantage.
 - Technology and cultural identity: Women are now not only recipients, but are also communicators. Some view technology as threatening cultural identity but more awareness and education can show people how technology can be used for positive professional and human development. Stella Magazine focuses on the positive and enlightening stories and promoting them via social media.
 - Mobile phones and SMS technology is advancing health: People are using Front-line SMS in Madang to remind AIDS Victims to take their AVR treatments and disseminate health information. Phones are saving lives during childbirth by connecting nurses with more experienced health workers in provincial hospitals. Women often use the SMS feature in times of domestic violence or accusations of sorcery call a friend or women's network to contact police.
 - Private sector is using technology to help communities. For example, "Peace Maker" offers lower fees to NGOs. Another other example is Digicel's free Meri Seif Line for intervention in domestic violence cases
- Make better use of mobile technology
 - Mobile technology is more available in remote and rural areas now that the use of solar chargers is expanding and cell phones are more affordable. Radio broadcasting remains the main medium for information and communication for remote populations.

- Mobile banking has huge potential in the country. Several services are now available to send money to relatives in different locations, to save money, and store money on their phones.

Introduction: Power in Numbers – Working Together to Inspire Change: Overview of the Women’s Movement in Papua New Guinea – Julie Bukikun, Senior National Program Specialist, UN Women

In 1994, the World Bank published a historical report called Gender Analysis of PNG to understand the challenges and improve its assistance to PNG. This report documented the following developments:

- In the 1950s-60s, women started to organize themselves formally. It is the first time it was documented, but we know that as women we have always been organized - our mothers, communities, our ancestors started organizing before this time. However, during this time it was first recorded through the work done by missionaries. Missionaries started organizing women’s groups to help women be better housekeepers, mothers, and wives. When the colonizers came, they were looking for men for jobs like interpreters, guides; and women were taught basic household chores, how to cook, bake, and clean. You can see here that we have our own culture, but some things were introduced. In addition, when colonizers came in traditionally women-led societies, it caused a disturbance, because they only spoke to men. That is when power imbalance started to happen. Therefore, there was also an outside influence on gender roles and relationships. When traders and administrators came with the mindset of men leading the household, they were only talking to and employing men; women started to feel an imbalance then.
- In the early 1970s, women started being educated and in 1972, the Government launched an Eight Point Plan. The seventh point of this plan called for recognizing women’s participation in socio economic activities.
- In 1974, Mrs. Tamu Dirum was appointed as an adviser for women’s affairs to the Prime Minister. The Women’s Unit was established within the Department of Decentralization and there was at least one women’s officer in each province.
- In 1975, PNG gained independence and became a member of the UN. This was also an international women’s year. One of the women’s leaders, Delma, was appointed to coordinate the PNG singloben in the first international women’s year. In PNG, it was commemorated by the First National Convention for Women. Another convention was held in Rabaul 1976. In 1978, Dame Rosa Tokel established her own office and started to run programs.
- By 1979, the National Council of Women was established, the first body to represent women. It came to existence because most of the women at that time were illiterate; they faced

problems with accessibility and communication. NCW became a voice for all women in the country.

- In 1980, the Department of Community and Family Services was created.
- By 1984, government introduced the first national program for women's development, aimed to organize and mobilize women all over the country, and consistent with Constitution goals 1 and 2 and the seventh point of the Eight Point Plan. Government also gave K100,000 to these programs.
- In 1987, there were intensive consultations, around women's organizations, to develop a national women's policy. In 1991, the National Executive Council endorsed the national women's policy, and there was a big convention in Goroka where NCW elected its first president.
- In 1995, women were organizing all over the world and 100 women from PNG went to the Beijing convention where the platform was agreed on the principles of the rights for women in the countries around the world. PNG representatives came back and completed a platform for action. PNG rectified the CEDAW, which calls for extensive equality. PNG did not report to the UN until 2010.
- Recommendation: PNG's civil society and government actors need to monitor how PNG is doing against international commitments and what changes are happening to improve women's lives.

Introduction: Power in Numbers – Working Together to Inspire Change: Snapshot of the PNG Government's Gender Policy and Review of the Successes and Challenges Facing the National Council of Women -- Gayle Tatsi, Director, Office for the Development of Women

- If our issues do not translate into government policies, they mean nothing. The women's policy is only the second policy we have had since independence. In 1990, the first policy was endorsed, it had a mainstreaming approach, which means that a range of public, private, community agents are responsible for ensuring they were making and budgeting women's plans and programs. However, until now they have not achieved it. Some successes of the policy are mobilization and networking. The policy was revised in 2008-2009 and renamed as the National Policy for Women and Gender Equality. The policy is due to be reviewed in 2015-2016. Objectives of the current policy are to build partnerships, be mobilized, and organized; build on partnerships built over the years. We want to implement gender equality at different levels of government and communities. The policy addresses five key issues: women's role in food production, income generation, national resource management, community organizations, and domestic responsibilities. All issues are essential for sustainable development. The aim is to improve and strengthen position of all members of the community. Men and women, both as agents of change.

- From the perspective of the Office for the Development of Women, the areas that need urgent attention are the following: 1) gender based violence because it is wide spread and crosscutting, affecting affects other matters such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, land/property rights, and sexual orientation, etc. 2) The escalating law and order issues, including tribal fighting. 3) Women’s health because services are very poor quality in PNG and women need healthcare that is accessible and affordable. 4) HIV and AIDS also requires urgent attention because women and girls are more vulnerable and girls have more difficulty negotiating safe sex. 5) Education and training to enable people to make informed decisions, communicate ideas properly, and to empower communities so they can get involved in activities and address the issues in the villages. 6) Cultures and traditions; PNG has very strong cultural norms, traditional values and obligations. Women are often at the crossroads between traditional and modern values. The policy promotes elimination of practices that discriminate against women. 7) Women’s economic empowerment because communities are not isolated anymore, they are integrated into the monetary economy, and therefore income-generating opportunities are increasing. However, many families are still poor, due to urban migration, early school dropouts, and poor living conditions. Women’s contribution to the national economy is very high, but the labor remains undervalued and unaccounted for in the national development process. 8) Fisheries – women play vital role in securing and processing fish. The policy supports this sector. 9) Decision making – political representation is low at 0.9. At the lower level in 1995, LLG improved the situation for women by nominating the seats. 10) Agriculture - 80% of women produce about 80% of food in consumption.
- Women with disabilities deserve and need more attention. The national women’s policy recognizes the Assembly for the Disabled Persons. The Department of Community Development (DCD) has a disability office headed by the assistant secretary. Elderly women and displaced women also need special consideration because they are most affected by natural disasters and climate change. The national policy also looks at the reintegration and rehabilitation of displaced women. DCD will be providing pensions for elderly and displaced women.
- Before the National Council of Women (NCW), women were organized through churches. When the National Council of Women act was passed in 1979, women had an opportunity to reorganize or realign without having a church affiliation. Some research studies show that churches can be reinforce unbalanced gender roles that can lead to women’s suppression. From 1975 to 1985, there was a global women’s movement. In PNG, the NCW is an umbrella organization for all women civil society organizations. Its Act was revised four years ago to make the organization more inclusive, allowing individuals, without other group affiliations, to join at the local council level. The role of the NCW is to promote networking among women; establish partnerships to strengthen NCW at different levels; promote and advocate for change; advocate the advancement of women’s status in the country; raise awareness on the rights of women. NCW’s highest decision-making body is the National Women’s Convention, below are NCW executives, and then the council made of provincial presidents.

- The Gender and Development Branch was formerly the Women’s Division, established by the government in 1983. One of the strategies was introducing the National Women’s Training package. This initiative appointed 20 women’s officers in all provinces, responsible for women’s programs. When the LLG act was passed in 1995, these positions were eliminated. In 2002, the DCD the integrated community policy established the gender development branch to enhance community development. The role of gender branch was to promote mainstreaming at the community level and looking at social justice and community issues.
- The Office for the Development of Women (ODW) was established in 2005 to focus on all government policy making. It is supposed to be located in a central agency where it could receive prominence and the resources needed to assist with women’s programming. The office became operational in 2009. ODW’s role is to provide policy advice on gender implementation mainstreaming, research, monitoring and evaluation, coordination; monitor PNG’s commitment, and implementation of international obligations and conventions; build partnerships with organizations; and ensure the government is sensitized to the needs and aspirations of women.

Power in Numbers – Working Together to Inspire Change: Small Group Work Recommendations

- Developing the Next Generation of Women Leaders:
 - Young leaders need to take the lead and follow up. Young leaders will organize young women leaders who will convene a meeting with the existing women’s groups. They will also proactively seek mentoring and internship opportunities.
 - Young women leaders call for a national policy change that would require corporate boards and nongovernmental organizations to have a minimum of one to two young women represented on their boards.
 - The three women parliamentarians should to hire young women leaders as interns and as legislative aids. They should also create ongoing training programs to give young women opportunities and skills to be at the table as policy makers, to draft laws, budgets.
- Women as Change Agents in Peace and Security:
 - We need coalition building. We have women’s organizations running in parallel.
 - Gender policy is not as successful as it could be. We propose the Office for the Development of Women (ODW) could be more effective as a standalone mechanism and reporting directly to the Minister of the Department of the Community Development.
 - Develop national PNG action plan on women’s peace and security.
 - Government of PNG must officially recognize tribal fighting as conflict.
- Investing in Women through Education:
 - Full sponsorships to women should be available for domestic and international opportunities.
 - Sponsorships for male-dominated fields should be prioritized

- There should be a bi-annual review of the duplications of the free education policy. There is a serious problem with overcrowding at schools; it is clear the teacher to student ratio is too high and the country needs more teachers.
- The participation and obligation of the community in the educational system should be revitalized
- The Gender Policy should be adequately budgeted and funded.
- Health:
 - Deal with the immediate situation and come up with something in the future to address the systematic issues.
 - Implement the healthy island concept, which is already successful in the central province. It was not extended to the other provinces. Implement the healthy island in the communities and then work with the government to expand it out further. Push government to overcome the lack of resources and implement it. Increase the percentage of funds going to the healthy island concept by recommending that each MP contribute 20% of the national incentive fund towards the healthy island concept.
- The Role of Men and Youth in Preventing Gender Based Violence:
 - We need political will; the Prime Minister could be the political champion on this issue.
 - We need a coordinating body to coordinate what is happening, a map of who is doing what and where, etc. The coordinating body would collect data, monitor, and report.
 - Create a national plan to ensure proper and sustainable funding; ideally, it would have an annual budget based on what the NGO coordinating body identifies. This will also allow everyone to plan programs.
 - The coordinating body also needs to focus on communicating the impact at the grassroots level.
- Getting Women into Business:
 - Include entrepreneurship in the academic setting to train future generations and encourage more locally owned businesses that include women and families. Train the trainers to ensure they understand the local context, especially the realities of the rural sector of the country.
 - There should be a wider consultation with women and awareness campaigns regarding the government's SME policy to ensure women's interests are considered.
 - Change the policy to allow GSIP women 20% with accountability.
 - Improve women's access to markets. There is a lack of infrastructure maintenance, and low electricity and road coverage. The accountability lies with politicians and that is why we need more women leaders within the LLGs to improve the situation.
 - Support for the supply chain: we need to create subsidies for copra, cocoa, and fresh vegetables. Mothers want to increase their production, including fish products. We need to eliminate monopolies.
- Harnessing the Power of Technology:
 - Women's groups should use technology to improve women's status.

- Women can use mobile phones for different things: For example, rural women should use phones as a medium of networking. Use mobile phones as legislation – if the arrests need to happen, we can send a SMS a warrant to police. Women can use mobile phones as a prevention device for health. For example, SMS technology is used to assist in health and security areas.
- Women can use mobile phone technology for data collection to do rural assessments and surveys. Use SMS and internet to collect data.
- There should be a central database for women to access policies.
- There may need to be a review of legislation to understand the guidelines for the use of technology.

Wrap-Up Session: Panel Findings and Recommendations

- Developing the Next Generation of Leaders:
 - Young women want to take over the process of leading the future of PNG. They want to take over the agenda and have already put in steps in place. They are suspicious of vague ideas that older women and men have generated. Young leaders want tangible steps put in place now.
 - Young leaders will convene group of young women leaders in two weeks. They will create peer-to-peer mentoring groups to set agenda. Then will invite leaders of women groups and call upon those leaders to mentor them and to place them in internship positions in their organizations.
 - Young leaders call upon leaders of government to hire them as interns in the office of the Prime Minister and the office of the Wife of the Prime Minister. They also call upon the parliamentarians to hire them as legislative aids or interns so they can learn the procedures, how to run a campaign, and raise funds. Young leaders call upon the leaders of corporations to hire them and place them on their leadership board. There should be a provision that all boards have at least one person under 30 years old on their corporate board.
 - Young leaders request the PNG Women’s Forum organizers to make sure one third of the participants are under 30.

- Women as Agents of Peace:
 - Women are effective peacemakers and champions of human rights.
 - Women organizations have played a crucial role in peace building in Bougainville and can offer best practices for other regions of the country, such as the highlands, also experiencing conflict.
 - Develop national PNG action plan on women’s peace and security.

- Investing in Women Through Education:
 - Under the free education policy, the government should give vouchers so students can choose to attend private schools
 - The gender roles that parents promote in the home need to change to encourage young women to pursue academic fields traditionally dominated by men

- Accommodations for young mothers, such as access to subsidized day care, should be provided to allow them to continue their education
- Develop programs to expose young women to new job fields and help them develop those skills
- Integrate entrepreneurship into the national curricula in order to encourage more job creation and address the unemployment problem.
- Open more TVET schools to fulfill the demand and provide job skills to school-leavers.

- Helping Women Lead Healthy Lives:
 - There are endless health challenges that directly affect women. What do we prioritize?
 - Communities need to be strong in demanding policy implementation
 - There are existing models that are working well; for example, the healthy island model.
 - Women's groups need to work together to involve men as advocates for resources.
 - Provincial health authorities are the future. The role of community is vital. Advocate to prioritize the importance of the provincial health authorities. Acknowledge what is working.

- The Role of Men and Youth in Preventing Gender Based Violence:
 - There is clearly a need for people to tell their stories. There is a lot of emotion and passion regarding GBV.
 - How do we frame this issue of GBV? See the diversity of men.
 - There was a proposal for a coordination mechanism. Where are our strengths? Need to identify the gaps.

- Getting Women into Business:
 - The costs of doing business in PNG are too high. Need better government to fix costs of business.
 - Only 10% of local business is local, need to increase that percentage.
 - Need better access to getting things to market. Infrastructure and knowledge are lacking. Need electricity. Need for startup capital. Many women are starting with nothing.
 - Need to work together instead of competing. Financial literacy and understanding in a critical factor. We need to drive our own agenda, not be dependent on the expatriates.

- Harnessing the Power of Technology:
 - The discussion focused on cell phones. NGO's use of cell phones proved to be vital.
 - Participants raised concerns over the issue of pornography. Ability to access pornography potentially leads to greater incidents of violence and sexual abuse.
 - Participants reported some marriage breakdown due to technology. Parenting is vital. Limit child's access.
 - April seminars are coming up regarding mobile phones access by rural people.

Closing Remarks: Honorable Powes Parkop, Governor of the National Capital District

- The Governor's administration focus areas are environmental sustainability and social justice
- Organizing women's groups and combining energy will lead to a more prosperous nation.
- The topics of the forum are wide ranging and broad. Two days is not enough to have a proper dialogue. The goal is not a deep dialogue but to take the forum and the topics as a reminder for the nation of how significant women's issues are to the country's development.
- When measuring progress in PNG, it cannot just look at GDP. Instead, consider the increased number of voices that are finally being heard as the proper measurement of development.
- Although we have struggled with the topics raised in this Forum for many years, what is new is the forum itself. Bringing various groups together to work together is new.
- The way forward is through networking.

Closing Remarks: Honorable Charles Abel, Minister for National Planning

- The high attendance of public figures at this event shows how important this issue is to our public leaders and government. For example, PM, parliament people, governors, secretaries. This is a clear signal the government sees you, acknowledges you. It should lead to follow up and requisite actions.
- We need to continue promoting women in leadership. There is still a huge disparity between women and men in parliament; the proposal for 22 reserved seats needs more support for constitutional action. I am very proud to have three women in parliament. Having two women in cabinet positions is groundbreaking. Women in Parliament bear a heavy responsibility. No matter what, the public judge them unfairly. It is very important that we support them so they can succeed and demonstrate to the public that they are able to perform their functions and thus, further this agenda. If they fail, it can lead to reinforcing negative perceptions.
- Polygamy is wrong. Sorcery as an excuse to attack and it is simply wrong and I strongly condemn it with the strongest of words. Amendments to the penalty codes related to crimes related to gender can serve as a deterrent.
- We should emphasize family planning and birth control. We should promote women choosing their own mate. When women are more educated, they are able to contribute more to society, which will in turn lead to more development for the country.