

## UN rep: Change lies with individuals

THE UNITED Nations has reaffirmed its commitment to achieving gender equality, but Papua New Guineans are reminded that the responsibility and opportunity for the biggest change lies with each individual.

During his opening address at the Papua New Guinea Women's Forum in Port Moresby, the UN resident coordinator in PNG Roy Trivedy highlighted the need for every citizen to strive for improvements in equality.

"The responsibility sits with every one of us, in every part of our life. Through mentoring, coaching, supporting and creating opportunities, all of us can contribute to strengthening women's empowerment and leadership," Mr Trivedy said.

The Women's Forum, which coincides with Sunday's International Women's Day, this year, focuses on the theme "Stronger Together: Partnering for Equality for Women" - a theme which Mr Trivedy said was particularly relevant.

"We know that no single institution, discipline or group can achieve equality for women in society. We have to work together - women and men, boys and girls - to achieve the changes that we all want to see."

"We also have to work at different levels to achieve gender equality - with families, communities, at local, provincial, national, regional and international levels."

First celebrated back in 1911, International Women's Day is a reminder that while some of the challenges faced by women have changed over time, the need for commitment and action has not.

"International Women's Day provides an important opportunity for people globally to come together to celebrate and promote the achievements of women, in every sphere of life, and to re-confirm our commitment to empower women and girls," Mr Trivedy said.

He said this year marks the final year of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).



SECRETARY General for the Pacific Islands Forum Meg Taylor (second right) surrounded by women who attended the first day of the women's forum in Port Moresby.

## Women's forum begins in Moresby

BY GORETHY KENNETH

THE 2015 Papua New Guinea (PNG) Women's Forum kicked off on a high note in Port Moresby yesterday, attended by more than 600 participants.

The forum, co hosted by the United States Embassy in Port Moresby and the PNG Government has also seen women from all over PNG and the world converged at Crowne Plaza for the three-day conference starting yesterday.

Secretary General for the Pacific Island Forum, Dame Meg Taylor was the guest speaker with Rear Admiral Cari Thomas, one of the highest ranking officers in the US Coast Guard, who told the inspiring story of how she made it to the top in a male-dominated profession and shared her strategies for overcoming gender barriers.

Tertiary institutions representatives from all over PNG are also part of this session. Linda Babao, wife of Prime Minister Peter O'Neill, Eastern Highlands Governor Julie Soso, Internal Revenue Commission boss Betty Palaso, Community Development Secretary Anna Solomon and her team and women leaders from the provinces were in town for the three-day conference.

Education Minister Nick Kuman and Secretary Michael Tapo were also at the forum to present education issues on the topic decreasing barriers to education for girls.

US ambassador Walter North welcomed all participants yesterday, congratulating each and every one of them for making it to the forum.

This year's Forum is focused on advancing gender justice and economic opportunity for women.

There will also be a seminar on best practices in business management that will give PNG business women and NGO leaders tips and tools to be more successful in their work.

# Peace walk marks Women's Day

MORE than 200 people in Port Moresby took part in a Peace Walk as part of the International Women's Day (IWD) celebrations.

The IWD falls on March 8 every year and the walk was to celebrate the advancement of women and girls in Papua New Guinea and was organised by the Soroptomist International Club of Port Moresby, a not-for-profit organisation.

Participants included children. The walk began at IEA Ela Beach sports oval, went up the hill at Lawes Road, down to Konedobu and then to town before ending at IEA sports oval.

The five-kilometre walk

### At a glance

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY:** Was first celebrated back in 1911 and falls on March 8 every year. It is a reminder that while some of the challenges faced by women have changed over time, the need for commitment has not.

**PEACE WALK:** Organised by Soroptomist International Club of Port Moresby begun at IEA Ela Beach Sports oval, up Lawes Road, down to Konedobu and ended back at IEA sports oval. The five-kilometer walk began at 6.45 am and ended at 7.45 am.

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Following the walk, SIPOM supporters provided BBQ and drinks for participants.

Guest speakers on the day were the UN resident representative Roy Trivedy and US ambassador Walter

North, who both spoke on the many challenges facing women and girls as well as the progress they have made.

The president of SIPOM Seema Dass-Raju, through her working committee, organised this event

to coincide with the IWD. Visitors and participants came from organisations such as the United Nations, WHO, American Embassy, Australian and PNG Defence Forces, Women on the Move, mothers from Safe City Safe Market at Gordon, female employees of Esco Limited, Deevon Events and Multimedia Productions and many other supporters of SIPOM and others who wanted to celebrate IWD.

The event was made possible through generous donations from business houses and individuals and SIPOM say they look forward to hosting another IWD event in 2016.

**The bottom line** International Women's Day was first celebrated back in 1911.

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