



NATIONAL POLICY TO ELIMINATE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS 2016 TO 2020



SOLOMON ISLANDS



National Policy to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls 2016 – 2020

Solomon Islands

Ministry of Women Youth Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA)

Solomon Islands

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Foreword

“This government has chosen to begin to address [violence against women and girls] so that our children will experience less of it in order that our grandchildren might see none of it”. Martin Luther King

These words, written six years ago as part of the Prime Minister’s Foreword, in the first ever National Policy on Eliminating Violence Against Women 2010 remain as relevant and as strong as ever.

Today the Democratic Coalition for Change Government (DCCG) reiterates this earlier commitment and promise, to continue the work that has been started, by presenting the revised National Policy and Strategic Action Plan 2016-2020 to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls. As the Minister for Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA), it is my immense honour and pleasure to be part of this chapter of our history.

This National Policy and Strategic Action Plan has been put together through extensive consultations with development partners, government ministries and agencies, non-governmental organisations, faith-based organisations, the private sector, as well as women, men, girls and boys of different abilities and backgrounds. The Policy sets out the priorities of our nation, with regards to ending violence against women and girls, as well as a road-map over the next four years which will also set the basis for future work by Government beyond the 4 years. May I take this chance to thank and acknowledge UN-Women through the joint UN/SIG partnership programme for providing the necessary funding and TA support to review and develop the revised National Policy and Strategic Action Plan. Tagio tumas.

As we move into the next phase of implementation, our actions will be guided and directed by our own achievements and successes so far. The Family Protection Act 2014 is a great example of our achievements. It has demanded us to pay increased attention to its implementation and enforcement to ensure that the Act serves its purpose.

On the other hand, there will be persistent and emerging issues which will continue to demand us to be creative, innovative and strategic in our approach. The EVAWG Policy & SAP is therefore, a renewed call to continue our commitment and strong partnerships - government, development partners, private sector, and civil society, including faith-based organisations. Together, we can move mountains.

May I end by thanking our stakeholders sincerely and acknowledge the many innovative and outstanding interventions that you have undertaken alongside the MWYCFA to implement the EVAW Policy 2010.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to my staff of the MWYCFA and in particular the Women’s Development Division (WDD) for their vision, dedication and support. In spite of the complex nature of this task, you have risen to the challenge.

As was expressed by the then Minister for Women, Hon. Johnson Koli MP as he took charge of the 1st Policy on Eliminating Violence against Women 2010: “Let us move on now, together, to implement this policy”.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Freda', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Honourable Freda AB Tuki Soriamoua

Minister

Ministry of Women, Youth, Children & Family Affairs

Acknowledgements

As with every impressive accomplishment, there are dedicated individuals and groups behind it.

It is to each and every one of you, that this page is dedicated.

You may not fully appreciate what your contribution has meant. You may think that it was trivial and perhaps did little to serve its purpose. You may even think that you were just part of the crowd during the consultations and it was just nice to be around like-minded people. Whatever role you played and whatever form and size it came in, that was truly noble in our eyes. We could not have come this far and accomplished another milestone without you putting a hand in the process.



It is therefore with great pride that the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA) presents the revised *National Policy to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls and Strategic Action Plan 2016 – 2020* (EVAWG Policy & SAP); a simple gesture to show you that our mission has been accomplished. Through this revised Policy, the vision that we all share which is to see no more violence in our homes, in our communities and in our society has been given renewed energy and hope. It is based on this assertion that I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the following:

1. The UN-SIG Joint Programme on Ending Violence against Women and Girls (UN-SIG JP) for providing the financial and technical support;
2. Government ministries and agencies, Development Partners and agencies, Civil Society organisations and members of the private sector for your guidance and advice; and for sharing your experiences and views at the consultations;
3. Provincial focal points and stakeholders who contributed in the consultations;
4. Individuals who have shared their personal experiences and from which the EVAW can be approached realistically;
5. The consultancy team that was made available to the ministry and whose expertise has resulted in a truly fine product
6. The MWYCFA staff and in particular staff of the Women's Development Division for their great leadership in moving and managing what is often an overwhelming mission.

Apart from desk reviews and research, we conducted extensive consultations in Temotu, Isabel and Honiara – collecting the experiences and views of stakeholders, including government, donors and development partners, non-governmental organisations, churches, community and women leaders, young women and men, as well as children. The experiences and views shared have enriched the focus of this revised Policy, its objectives and outcomes.

The process of the policy review has been a collaborative effort, a standard which we set to achieve results during the implementation of the first EVAW Policy 2010-2013. This revised Policy and Plan draws its strength and direction from these collective efforts, which I am pleased to say have seen positive results:

- The passage of the Family Protection Act 2014 (FPA) and the strong coordination between government ministries, donors and development partners and Civil Society Organisations including

Faith Based Organisations pre and post FPA implementation.

- A robust SAFENET Referral Network;
- Establishment of coordination mechanisms for victims/survivors of violence in Isabel and Choiseul Provinces;
- Mainstreaming of EVAWG into the health sector through the New National Health Strategy 2016-2020;
- Active work of NGOs in raising awareness on EVAWG and the FPA;
- The increasing donor investment in EVAWG;
- New Community policing and conflict resolution programs focused at the community level; and
- Gender Based Violence integrated into the Health Curriculum and is to be rolled out by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD).

Thank you ALL for your ongoing support and commitment. We do look forward to continuing our partnership in the next phase of our journey – the implementation of the revised Policy. Finally, we have in front of us a Policy and Strategy that speaks to the realities and stories of the many women and girls who continue to experience violence. We hope that all those who have been involved in addressing these needs, and who have contributed to the development of this Policy and Strategy 2016 – 2020, will have their confidence justified in the positive impacts brought about by every effort that stems from the implementation of this Policy and Strategic Action Plan on Eliminating Violence against Women and Girls 2016-2020.



Ethel Falu Sigimanu
Permanent Secretary
MWYCF

Acronyms

ARCC	The Advisory Reporting and Coordination Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Development
CSSI	Correctional Services Solomon Islands
CSO	Community Sector Organisation
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EVAWG	Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls
FHSS	Family Health and Safety Study
FPA	Family Protection Act 2014
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEWD	National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy
JIMS	Justice Information and Management Systems
MASI	Media Association Solomon Islands
MEHRD	Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development
MHMS	Ministry of Health and Medical Services
MJLA	Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs
MWYCFA	Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
NDS	National Development Strategy 2016-2035
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NSO	National Statistics Office
NTF	National Taskforce
PACMAS	Pacific Media Assistance Scheme
RSIPF	Royal Solomon Islands Police Force
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls

Glossary of Terms

Violence against women and girls

The United Nations defines violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life” (General Assembly Resolution 48/104 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993).

Gender based violence

The terms ‘gender-based violence’ and ‘violence against women’ are frequently used interchangeably in literature and by advocates, however, the term gender-based violence refers to violence directed against a person because of his or her gender and expectations of his or her role in a society or culture. Gender-based violence highlights the gender dimension of these types of acts; in other words, the relationship between females’ subordinate status in society and their increased vulnerability to violence. It is important to note, however, that men and boys may also be victims of gender-based violence, especially sexual violence.¹

Domestic violence

Defined by the Solomon Islands Family Protection Act, 2014 as: “...conduct committed by a person (the “offender”) against another person with whom the offender is in a domestic relationship, or the threat of such conduct, that constitutes any of the following: physical abuse; sexual abuse; psychological abuse; economic abuse. A person is in a “domestic relationship” with another person if— they are or have been family members; or they are the parents of a child or are persons who have or have had parental responsibility together for a child; or they are or were in an engagement, courtship or customary relationship, including an actual or perceived intimate or sexual relationship of any duration; or one person is a domestic worker in the other person’s household.” (Section 4-6)

Gender

Refers to the socially constructed roles held by women and men in a specific society, including their responsibilities, behaviours, and attitudes towards each other. Even if they sometimes looked “natural” those roles are learned and could be different from one society to another and are changing over time.

Gender equality

Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women’s issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.² (OSAGI, 2001)

1 <http://endvawnow.org/en/articles/295-defining-violence-against-women-and-girls.html?next=296>

2 Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. (2001) *Gender Mainstreaming: Strategy For Promoting Gender Equality. Factsheet.*

I. Introduction

In the *National Development Strategy 2016- 2035* the Solomon Islands government commits to “create a modern, united and vibrant Solomon Islands founded on mutual respect, trust and peaceful coexistence in a diverse yet secure and prosperous community where tolerance and gender equality are encouraged and natural resources are sustainably managed.” The Strategy further identifies gender equality priorities through detailed reference to the *National Gender Equality and Women’s Development (GEWD) Policy*, *Disability Strategy*, and *Children’s Policy*. The *National Gender Equality and Women’s Development Policy 2010-2020* provides the framework to implement Solomon Island’s international and regional commitments to gender equality.

The National Policy to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls 2016-2020 corresponds to *Outcome 4: Preventing and responding to violence against women and girls*, of the GEWD Policy. Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls is key to meeting all gender equality outcomes in the GEWD policy including: *Outcome 2: Improved Economic Status of Women; Outcome 3: Equal participation of women and men at all levels of decision-making, governance and leadership; Outcome 5: Increased awareness and recognition of the role of women in peace and security; Outcome 6 Increased access to education and providing a supportive school environment; and Outcome 7: Improved Access for Women’s Right to Sexual and Reproductive Health.*

Solomon Islands Government recognises the growing gender inequalities and high prevalence of violence against women and girls and commits to several global and regional commitments to gender equality. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals call for the elimination for all forms of violence against women and girls and have specific targets (5.2 and 5.3). The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED) and the Revised Pacific Platform for the Advancement of Women (RPPA) are the overarching international and regional commitments by the Solomon Islands Government that require action to stop violence against women.

This is the revised *National Policy to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls*. The first policy was implemented from 2010 to 2015. In 2016, the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA) conducted a review of the National EAW Policy 2010 through a series of consultations with women and men across the country. The main findings of the consultations that have informed this policy are:

Good practice in the implementation of the *National Policy on Eliminating Violence Against Women 2010*

- Strong coordination on the drafting of the *Family Protection Act 2014* between government ministries, development partners and CSOs including FBOs
- Emerging good practice regarding referral and multi-sectoral coordination with SAFENET that requires further support
- Coordination mechanisms for victims/survivors of violence in Isabel and Choiseul Provinces
- New national health strategy mainstreams EAWG into the health sector
- NGOs active in awareness raising on EAWG
- Increasing donor investment in EAWG
- New Community policing and conflict resolution programs focused at the community level

- GBV Curriculum is complete and needs to be rolled out by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD)

Areas for improvement

- There have been major challenges of implementation of the EVAW Policy and NAP especially in provinces and remote areas; and lack of knowledge that the policy or FPA exist in rural areas;
- Law enforcement and support services, especially in provinces and remote areas are not available to many rural women;
- There was not a dedicated government budget to implement the previous policy;
- The National Taskforce has not functioned effectively in promoting coordination and governance of the policy;
- Implementation where it has happened, has been ad-hoc and not effectively tracked and reported by MWYCFA and there is a need for monitoring tools;
- Greater coordination is required for key messaging; particularly for awareness raising about EVAWG and the FPA;
- Men's programs focused on male champions rather than behaviour change programs;
- Weak Inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in EVAWG related programs and activities.

The CEDAW concluding observations for Solomon Islands (2014)³ noted the progress made in eliminating violence against women and girls, particularly in the passing of the *Family Protection Act 2014* and the implementation of the *National Policy on Eliminating Violence Against Women 2010* and made the following recommendations to strengthen approaches to eliminating violence against women and girls, particularly for women and girls in the provinces and with disabilities. CEDAW recommends that Solomon Islands Government to:

“Adopt comprehensive policies and programmes to protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities, ensuring their right to inclusive education and their equal access to employment, health care, housing, safe drinking water, sanitation and other services, and promote their autonomy and accessible community services. It also calls on the State party to develop partnerships with civil society and community based organisations and international stakeholders to identify women and girls with disabilities in the State party who are facing discrimination based on their disability and other grounds, as well as isolation, confinement and different forms of physical and psychological violence. (Recommendation 42, p.13) and Design strategies to address the situation of women in the provinces, and continue strengthening the participation of women’s civil society organisations in the design and implementation of public policies with the aim of reaching women living in remote areas.” (Recommendation 19(b), p.5)

³ United Nations (2014) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: *Concluding observations on the combined initial, second and third periodic reports of Solomon Islands.*

New government legislation, strategies and plans have been developed since the policy was created in 2010 that demonstrate the commitment of the government to eliminating violence against women and girls (EVAWG) including: *The Solomon Islands National Development Strategy 2016-2035* has a stronger focus on gender equality and the implementation of the *Family Protection Act 2014 (FPA)*, which provides greater legal protection for women and children. *The Solomon Islands National Health Strategic Plan 2016-2020* also has a stronger focus on eliminating violence against women and girls at the provincial level and the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIFP) have recently developed a *Crime Prevention Strategy 2016-2018* focused at the community level and identifies family violence as a priority. This policy also aligns with the *National Trafficking and People Smuggling Action Plan 2015-2020*, *Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan 2016-2020*, *The Family Protection Act 2014* and *The National Disaster Risk Management Plan 2010*.

What do we mean by violence against women and girls?

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) refers to violent acts that are primarily or exclusively committed by men against women and girls. VAWG is any form of violence against women and girls that does, or is likely to, result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, including threats of violence and arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (UN Declaration on Violence Against Women 1993). Forms of VAWG include, but are not limited to:

1. **Sexual offences:** Sexual offences covered under the Penal Code which was amended in 2016 includes: rape, including marital rape, non-consensual sexual intercourse with a person with a disability and offenses related to child commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking.
2. **Domestic violence:** Domestic Violence is one form of violence against women and girls defined as the following under the *Family Protection Act 2014*:
 - *Physical abuse:* conduct causing bodily pain or harm to the person or danger to the person's life or health; and includes assault;
 - *Sexual abuse:* conduct of a sexual nature that abuses, humiliates, degrades or otherwise violates the dignity of the person;
 - *Psychological abuse:* conduct that degrades or humiliates a person, including any of the following: insults, ridicule or name calling; obsessive possessiveness or jealousy, which constitutes a serious invasion of the person's privacy, liberty, integrity or security; harassment; stalking; intimidation;
 - *Economic abuse:* any of the following: unreasonably controlling behaviour which denies the person financial autonomy or prevents them from taking part in decisions over household expenditures or the disposition of joint property; withholding financial support reasonably necessary for the maintenance of the person or of the person's household; the unreasonable and unilateral disposal, retention or subtraction of moveable or immovable property in which the person has a material interest, or damage to or destruction of their personal property, so as to interfere with their use of such property.

According to the *Family Protection Act 2014*: 'Domestic violence may consist of a single act or a number of acts that form a pattern of behaviour, even though some or all of those acts' when viewed in isolation appear to be minor or trivial acts.' (p. 13)

In many cases women experience multiple forms of violence. Violence against women and girls is a form of Gender

Based Violence and can also include:

- Violence against women and girls with disabilities;
- Commercial sexual exploitation of women and girls⁴;
- Cultural and religious practices: early marriage, accusations of sorcery, abuse of bride price⁵ using religion or culture to keep a woman or girl in a subordinate position;
- Technological abuse: which is the sharing of sexual images of women without consent, using social media to humiliate or harass a woman or girl;
- Violence against women and girls during or after armed conflict or emergency⁶.

4 The Solomon Islands Government has a *National Trafficking and People Smuggling Action Plan 2015-2020* which details outcomes and activities relating to commercial and sexual exploitation of women and girls.

5 SPC (2009), *Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study: a study on violence against women and children*, p.155

6 The Solomon Islands Government has a *National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security 2017-2021* which details outcomes and activities relating to violence against women and girls during or after armed conflict.

II. Policy Statement and Operating Principles

The Solomon Islands Government will exercise leadership to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls and support advocacy at the local, provincial, national, regional and international levels, in collaboration with all political, community and church leaders, the media and civil society including the private sector.

The Solomon Islands Government will take positive measures to:

- address the social, political, legal and economic inequalities that cause, condone and perpetuate violence against women and girls;
- address the risk factors that can trigger violence against women and girls;
- strengthen prevention efforts that address discriminatory social and cultural norms and practices and;
- uphold and raise awareness of women's rights and the responsibility of Solomon Islands' citizens to respect these rights.

This policy is guided by the following principles:

- Understanding and acknowledging fundamental human rights. Women and girls are entitled to zero tolerance of violence. In addition, they are entitled to:
 - » **Recognition of their diversity:** Recognition of women in their diversity, including young women, elders, women with disabilities and rural women;
 - » **Special recognition of women and girls in the remote and outer islands:** Women and girls in the outer islands need to be given special consideration in all Policy outcomes and actions given the relative lack of access to opportunity, goods and Government services;
- Importance of partnerships, stronger engagement and coordination between all line and sectoral ministries, outer islands governance mechanisms, civil society organisations and development partners;
- Acknowledgement of Solomon Islands' international and regional commitments on gender equality and human rights such as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat Declaration on Gender Equality

The Policy aims at eliminating violence against all women and girls in Solomon Islands. However, the Policy acknowledges that some women and girls face additional disadvantages due to additional factors including: women and girls living with disabilities; women and girls living in remote areas; age (adolescents and girls); and/or limited assets (unemployed women and heads of households). Government institutions and civil society organisations must prioritise women and girls facing greater disadvantages and pay particular attention to their needs, making sure they benefit from development programs and government services.

III. Purpose of the Policy

According to the *Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study (2009)*, 64% of women aged between 15 to 49 years of age who had ever been in an intimate relationship reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner, with 42% of women reporting experiencing such violence in the previous 12 months. The first Solomon Islands National Policy for Eliminating Violence Against Women (EVAW) was endorsed by our government in 2010 in response to the *Family Health and Safety Study (2009)* which was conducted by the Ministry of Women Youth and Children's Affairs (as it was called then) and the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office. In 2016, the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA) conducted a review of the National EVAW Policy through a series of consultations with women and men across the country.

As a result, the National Policy to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls 2016-2020 provides a framework to implement Solomon Island's national, international and regional commitments to eliminate violence against women and girls based on priorities expressed by Solomon Islands women and men.

Issues that require our full attention include:

- Violence against women and girls is much too common in Solomon Islands. Nearly two in three women between the age of 15 and 49 have experienced violence.⁷ Women and girls in Solomon Islands experience severe forms of physical partner violence (domestic violence) such as punching, kicking or having a weapon used against them.
- Violence against women and girls is condoned. The majority of women, 73% believe that a man is justified in beating his wife under some circumstances, in particular, for infidelity and disobedience.⁸
- 42% of young women who had their first sexual experience before the age of 15 reported that it was forced.⁹

7 SPC (2009), *Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study: a study on violence against women and children*, p 62.

8 Ibid, p. 72

9 Ibid, p. 105

- 49% of women with disabilities (interviewed in a 2013 study) experienced sexual violence, and 19% experienced physical violence from family members. Most health, justice and EVAW services are not accessible for women with disabilities¹⁰.
- Women and girls who have experienced physical or sexual violence by a partner report higher levels of emotional distress and are more likely to have thoughts of suicide.¹¹
- Women and girls experiencing violence in rural areas have very little access to health and justice services.
- Women and girls in rural areas need information about their human rights, this Policy and the *Family Protection Act*.
- Incidences of violence against women and girls increase during and after conflict and natural disasters and Solomon Islands is highly prone to natural disasters.¹²

The purpose of the National Policy to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls 2016-2020 is to reflect the cross-cutting efforts that are needed to ensure the **prevention** of violence against women and girls; the empowerment and **protection** of victims/survivors of violence through the response of medical and counselling services, police, investigation of cases, protection orders; the **prosecution**, sentencing, perpetrator programs and correctional services for perpetrators in ways that respect women's rights. The Government of Solomon Islands will support civil society to provide counselling, safe houses and referrals. This policy also recognises the need for significant social, political and economic empowerment of women in line with the *National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy 2016-2020*.

This Policy is a framework for coordination between government, civil society organisations, faith-based organisations, development partners and the private sector to achieve the following objectives in line with the *Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy 2016-2020*, Key Policy Outcome 4:

1. *"To enhance the coordination, implementation and monitoring of the National Policy on Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls and the Family Protection Act 2014;*
2. *To enhance support for victims of violence against women and girls and extend quality services to rural areas;*
3. *To create a shared understanding amongst stakeholders who work in eliminating violence against women for coordination of primary prevention activities."* (p.8)

10 UNFPA, (2013) *A Deeper Silence - The Unheard Experiences of Women with Disabilities – Sexual and Reproductive Health and Violence against Women in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tonga*, pp. 109-114 Suva, Fiji

11 *Ibid*, p. 112

12 UN Women (2014), *Climate Change, Disasters and Gender Based Violence in the Pacific*, Suva Fiji, <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/1/climate-change-disasters-and-gender-based-violence-in-the-pacific#view>

IV. Policy Goal

The goal of the Policy is to eliminate violence against all women and girls in Solomon Islands.

V. Policy priority outcomes

The National Policy to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls 2016-2020 contains five priority outcomes:

1. Violence against women and girls is reduced as a result of holistic prevention strategies
2. Legal frameworks, law enforcement and the justice system are strengthened
3. Victims and survivors have better access to medical, legal and protective services
4. Perpetrators are held accountable and rehabilitated
5. National commitments are developed and coordination is improved

POLICY OUTCOME 1: Violence against women and girls is reduced as a result of holistic prevention strategies

“Disseminate information which is clear and easy to understand, including for women with disabilities, on the criminalization of different forms of violence under the Family Protection Act among the general public, in particular women” (CEDAW Concluding Observations 2014, Recommendation 25(a), p.7)

This policy recognises that prevention is a key approach to eliminating violence against women and girls. Prevention is aimed at preventing violence against women and girls before it happens and preventing further violence from occurring against victims/survivors of violence. Prevention requires addressing gender inequality as the root cause of violence through changing attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and social norms that condone and perpetuate violence against women and girls. Prevention programs aim to improve the social and economic disadvantage that contributes to violence against women and girls through efforts to promote women’s leadership and women’s economic empowerment, both of which are key outcomes in the *National Gender Equality and Women’s Development Policy 2016 – 2020*.

Prevention of violence is achieved through a combination of policy reforms that ensure accountability to women and girls. It is most effective when implemented through an holistic approach with interventions targeted at the individual, community and national levels to women, men, children and young people. Interventions take place in a number of environments including communities, schools, workplaces and churches.

While individual behaviour change programs are effective and needed, they must be a component of broader prevention programs that aim to change attitudes, behaviours and practices at the community level. This ensures that individuals operating in their environment are supported in gender equitable, nonviolent behaviour change. Effective prevention requires simultaneous work to change individuals’ attitudes and behaviours and create an enabling environment for each individual in their peer and community groups so that those groups reinforce messages of non-violence.

Effective community based prevention work requires fostering networks to work together and operate from the same explanation of why violence occurs (i.e. gender inequality at the core) and from a common violence prevention framework. Many organisations are currently involved in awareness raising work about eliminating violence against women and girls including CSOs, NGOs, government and faith based organisations and the private sector. It is crucial that messages are consistent, rights-based and victim/survivor centred.

Women and girls with different diversities (e.g. women with disabilities) must be meaningfully included in program design and implementation to ensure that interventions are appropriate, inclusive and effective.¹³ Action in this area, should include the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs developing key messages and coordinating awareness and advocacy programs between CSOs, Churches and government organisations in line with this policy.

Do No Harm

Efforts made to minimise possible negative effects and maximise possible benefits for women and girls in all programs working to prevent violence and in services for women and girls experiencing violence. It is the responsibility of those working with victims/survivors to protect them from further harm, as well as ensure that they experience the best possible outcomes. It is harmful to conduct awareness raising programs regarding violence against women and girls in communities where women and girls cannot access services such as counselling, police and medical services. Prevention programs must refer to services when women disclose that they are experiencing violence during awareness programs.

School-based prevention activities require a whole of school approach. This includes working with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) to implement age appropriate curricula on respectful relationships and gender equality; addressing gender equality within the educational system; and having programs for positive parenting. The MEHRD has recently completed a new health curriculum that covers topics such as prevention of physical and sexual abuse which began its roll out in 2016. The Ministry will provide training for teachers on the new curriculum in 2017. NGOs and prevention actors at the community level should support teachers and include them in training at the community level about EVAWG.

Men and boys have a role in prevention activities. Working with men must be focused on transforming men's attitudes and behaviour and be accountable to women and girls and prioritise their safety. Current work with men in Solomon Islands is focused around male champions and this work must be expanded to include bystander programming, men's behaviour change, and draw on lessons learned and evidence from regional and international best practice.¹⁴

Workplaces are also a target environment for prevention activities. Some private sector organisations such as Guadalcanal Plains Palm Oil Limited and government departments such as the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) and Correctional Services Solomon Islands (CSSI) have family violence policies. Many women who work in government and NGOs reported that they have experienced family violence. Workplace policies are needed to support women who are victims/survivors of family or domestic violence to hold men who are perpetrators of violence accountable according to the law. The Public Service Commission must develop a zero-tolerance policy for all government workplaces that can be adapted to NGOs and the private sector.

This policy recognises that prevention work also must be coordinated with service providers such as counselling, shelters, police and health services in order to keep women and girls safe.

13 A resource for disability inclusive training is the *Toolkit on Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls with Disabilities (2014)*, Pacific Disability Forum, Suva Fiji: <http://www.pacificdisability.org/getattachment/Resources/PDF-Resources/Toolkit-on-Eliminating-Violence-Against-Women-And-Girls-With-Disabilities-In-Fiji1.pdf.aspx>

14 A resource for men's behaviour change programs is: *UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Men and Boys (2015)* <http://endvawnow.org/en/modules/view/9-men-boys.html#46>

Objectives:

- 1.1 Improve coordination of prevention activities between NGOs, Churches and government ministries to reach women and girls at the community level;**
- 1.2 Develop key and positive messages for the prevention of violence against women and girls that are rights based and inclusive of women and girls with disabilities including health messages (e.g. healthy child development, health consequences of VAWG and solutions, essential medicine available for sexual assault);**
- 1.3 Provide programs for children at the community level through supporting the MEHRD's health curriculum and improving positive parenting programs;**
- 1.4 Develop men's behaviour change programs that result in transformational change;**
- 1.5 Ensure that awareness programs are developed based on advice from service providers such as counselling, shelters, police and health services in order to keep women and girls safe;**
- 1.6 Ministry of the Public Service develop workplace family violence policies that can be adapted for each ministry and for CSOs and the private sector.**

POLICY OUTCOME 2: Legal frameworks, law enforcement and the justice system are strengthened

The CEDAW Concluding Observations (2014) recommend that the Solomon Islands Government: “Take measures to ensure that the police respond to and investigate complaints regarding violence against women, perpetrators are prosecuted and punished, and collect data on number of prosecutions and convictions, including at the provincial level.”

Staff from the Director of Public Prosecutions office estimate that approximately 80% of criminal cases are related to violence against women. The justice system is key in eliminating violence against women and girls through enforcing laws that protect women and girls and punish perpetrators. The legal sector must be accessible to all women and girls and remain high priority due to the high prevalence of violence against women and girls. Many women and girls in Solomon Islands face barriers to accessing justice but these are exacerbated for marginalised, rural women and girls and women and girls with disabilities who have additional difficulties accessing justice services.

Access for women and girls with disabilities includes providing physical access to infrastructure as well as access to communications and support services for vision, hearing and intellectual and other disabilities. Improving access to legal services for women with disabilities should be based on advice from organisations working with/for people with disabilities in particular the People with Disabilities Solomon Islands (PWDSI). The justice system must be accessible to women and girls with disabilities and the current Honiara Public Solicitors Office and Director of Public Prosecutions offices are not accessible to people with physical disabilities.

The Solomon Islands Government has demonstrated leadership and commitment to improving the legal framework to protect women and children in the past five years. The *Family Protection Act* was passed by Parliament in 2014 and enacted in 2016. The Act criminalises domestic violence and provides increased protection for victims/survivors of domestic violence including protection orders. The *Penal Code* was amended in 2016 to expand the definition of sexual assault to provide greater protection of women and children against sexual violence. New definitions of sexual offenses included sexual intercourse with a person with a disability (without consent) and offenses related to child commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking. The *Child and Family Welfare Bill 2016* was drafted in 2013 to improve the protection of children from sexual and family violence.¹⁵

This policy recognises that laws must be consistently and fairly enforced and information and education about changes to law must be widely communicated at the community level- changes under the *Family Protection Act 2014* and *Child and Family Welfare Bill 2016*, methods of enforcement and the sensitivity required to appropriately support women and girls to deal with acts of violence against them. Accredited training and technical assistance to police, court staff and the judiciary must be provided to promote understanding of gender-based inequalities of power.

Protective laws must help to prevent ongoing violence. Marriage and family laws, must continue to be reformed in line with the *Family Protection Act 2014* and the *Child and Family Welfare Bill 2016* and new laws must be developed or amended to strengthen the legal response to violence against women and girls. Family law includes marriage, divorce, child custody and maintenance. Family law is important because it assists women who have to leave their marriage or other intimate relationship because of violence.

The justice system must also be accessible to women and girls in rural areas. There is a low level of trust among women and girls in reporting incidents of violence to the police.¹⁶ The justice sector is currently challenged by insufficient resources for courts and police services to reach women and girls in rural areas. Solomon Islands has both formal justice systems such as the police and courts and informal systems with church and community leaders that

¹⁵ The *Child and Family Welfare Bill 2016* is currently being tabled in Parliament.

¹⁶ SPC (2009), *Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study: a study on violence against women and children*, p. 124. Only 5% of women report incidents of violence to the police.

deal with and **decide** on cases on family violence at the community level.

Under the *Family Protection Act*, Local Court Justices are empowered to make Interim Protection Orders. Local Court Justices are traditional, community and women leaders and many of these leaders have previously been involved in mediating land disputes rather than domestic violence disputes. Over the life of this policy over 500 local court justices will be trained and it is crucial that they receive training both in the *Family Protection Act*, and in issues of eliminating violence against women and girls. Local court justices must be supported by NGOs, police and court officials to protect women and girls through including local court justices in awareness raising and training activities. This is consistent with the CEDAW concluding observations recommendation that the Solomon Islands Government: “Develop a strategy with clear timeframes to ensure that traditional justice mechanisms comply with the human rights standards set forth in the Convention when addressing complaints by women. The strategy should include capacity building and training programmes on the Convention and on women’s human rights for traditional justice authorities. (Recommendation 13(b), p. 4)

The *RSIPF Crime Prevention Strategy 2016-2018* is focused on improving policing at the community level and identifies Family Violence as one of four key priorities. The RSIPF is also improving its victim/survivor focus and is involved in violence prevention through raising awareness on the FPA. While this priority is welcomed, the Strategy is focused on working with male traditional and church leaders, which on its own will not be sufficient as many of these leaders still require a level of capacity building and gender sensitive awareness to be effective to eliminating violence against women and girls at the community level. There are also other partners implementing programs at the provincial level aimed at improving community governance but addressing violence against women and girls does not feature in the design.

Existing and new programs focused on community level policing and conflict resolution should include coordination with the MWYCFA, women’s organisations, NGOs and service providers to improve access to justice for women and girls and gender mainstreaming at the community level.

The *Women Peace and Security National Action Plan 2017-2021* has a number of actions that are related to improving gender sensitivity and gender balance in the RSIPF. The RSIPF has improved its gender balance and in 2016, 50% of new recruits were women. The RSIPF has also undertaken a gender audit and is training new recruits on issues relating to eliminating violence against women.

The Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs and the Commissioner of Police reported that a new data collection system is currently being rolled out through the Provinces that will result in better data, including data about cases of violence against women and girls. This data must be communicated to all stakeholders including SAFENET and the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA) to promote coordination (Policy Outcome 5) and to monitor the implementation of this policy.

The CEDAW Concluding Observations also recommend that the Solomon Islands Government “Commits resources to address cases of violence against women during the ethnic tensions and to adopt and publish the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.” This recommendation is included in the *Women Peace and Security National Action Plan 2017-2021*.

Objectives

- 2.1 Increase access to justice for all women and girls with a focus on women and girls with disabilities and rural women and girls;**
- 2.2 Increase awareness of the *Family Protection Act 2014* at the community level**

- 2.3 Increase understanding of gender inequality, violence against women and girls, the responsibility of police, court officials and local court justices and on the application of relevant Acts to enforce laws.**
- 2.4 Strengthen data collection and analysis for use by service providers, including case management and data sharing on VAWG;**
- 2.5 Continue to amend and develop legislation to deal with arising issues of violence against women and girls, including trafficking**

POLICY OUTCOME 3: Victims and survivors have better access to medical, legal and protective services

‘Allocate financial resources and strengthen the technical capacity of civil society organisations, in particular women’s organisations, to provide services and redress for women victims of violence.’ (CEDAW concluding observations, Recommendation 25(e), p.7)

The *Family Protection Act 2014* requires that victims have access to the following services: counselling and medical services, police, legal services, and a safe place in the community. This policy recognises that many women and girls experiencing violence currently do not have access to these critical services and requires strengthening of existing medical, counselling, police, legal and social services and facilities. Services must be victim/survivor centred and accessible by all women and girls including marginalised women and girls, rural women and girls and women and girls with disabilities. Improving access to services for women with disabilities should be based on advice from organisations working with/for people with disabilities in particular the People with Disabilities Solomon Islands (PWDSI).

Since survivors are likely to seek health care as a response to violence related health conditions or to present at health facilities for routine services related to maternal and reproductive health, health care services often become the gateway for survivors to seek the help they need. An effective integrated medical-psychosocial response is essential to effective access to a multi-sectoral response to violence.

The Solomon Islands Government has committed to coordinating services that support victims/survivors of violence. In 2013, existing services formalised their network to develop SAFENET to improve the response and care for victims/survivors of violence against women and girls. SAFENET includes the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (Integrated Mental Health Services, the Social Welfare Division, and Health Facilities), the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force, the Public Solicitors Office, Family Support Centre and the Christian Care Centre. SAFENET is a referral system for victims/survivors of violence against women and girls. The CEDAW Concluding Observations recommend that the Solomon Islands Government: *“Strengthen the SAFENET referral system for women victims of violence, and establish shelters for women in all provinces and ensure their accessibility for all women, including women with disabilities.”* (Recommendation 25 (d), p.7) A 2015 review of SAFENET recommended that SAFENET improves case management, referral and coordination and SAFENET will be supported to improve services over the next year. SAFENET is in the process of developing Provincial based responses that also require support.

Seif Ples Gender-based Violence Crisis and Referral Centre was opened at Rove police station in May 2014 and offers first response medical aid, short term emergency accommodation and referral for victims/survivors of violence. The health sector has an increased focus on eliminating violence against women and girls at the Provincial level, which is detailed in the *The Solomon Islands National Health Strategic Plan 2016-2020*. These programs need continued support and resources to expand to provincial centres and continuously improve coordination and case management. The CEDAW concluding observations also recommended that the government *“Allocate financial resources and strengthen the technical capacity of civil society organisations, in particular women’s organisations, to provide services and redress for women victims of violence.”* (Recommendation 25(e), p.7)

There are emerging support services in some provincial centres, particularly Isabel, Choiseul and Western Province. The Isabel Alliance Team is made up of church, Police and Health officials that collaborate to eliminate violence against women through support and referral and a group is active in Choiseul. The Gizo Family Support Organisation is a women’s CSO that have been trained and provides counselling and referral to victims/survivors of violence. Members of these groups must be supported through capacity building on case management and included in implementing and promoting the *Family Protection Act 2014* at the Provincial level.

MYWCFA is committed to rolling out the UN Women Essential Services Package in partnership with Pacific Women.

The UN Women Essential Services Package consists of global survivor-centred standards for health, legal and social services for women and girls experiencing violence. The Essential Services package also has a strong focus on improving multi-sector coordination.

Objectives

- 3.1 Strengthen the SAFENET referral and case management system for female victims/survivors of violence and roll out SAFENET to the provinces,**
- 3.2 Ensure quality victim/survivor centred services including: counselling and medical services, police and legal services, and a safe place in the community for women and girls in all provinces;**
- 3.3 Ensure accessibility for women and girls with disabilities in all services and infrastructure;**
- 3.4 Allocate financial resources and strengthen the technical capacity of civil society organisations and government ministries, to provide survivor-centred services and redress for women and girls victims/ survivors of violence;**
- 3.5 Capacity building to provincial based coordination groups in victim/survivor centred case management and involvement in rolling out FPA and EVAWG policy awareness initiatives;**
- 3.6 Strengthen the health sector response to provide evidence-based integrated medical-psychosocial care for survivors of sexual and gender based violence.**

POLICY OUTCOME 4: Perpetrators are held accountable and rehabilitated

This policy recognises that effective and appropriate interventions are needed that place survivor safety at the centre of responses and focuses on male perpetrators' responsibility for eliminating violence against women and girls. Such interventions include treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration programs for perpetrators. These programs must be developed to result in changes in perpetrator's behaviour and attitudes.

The Government of Australia recently conducted research on regional and international good practices in perpetrator programs and recommended the following standards for safe and effective perpetrator programs:

1. Women and their children's safety is the core priority of all perpetrator interventions
2. Perpetrators get the right interventions at the right time
3. Perpetrators face justice and legal consequences when they commit violence
4. Perpetrators participate in programs and services that change their violent behaviours and attitudes
5. Perpetrator interventions are driven by credible evidence to continuously improve
6. People working in perpetrator intervention systems are skilled in responding to the dynamics and impacts of domestic, family and sexual violence¹⁷

There has been some activity over the past five years by Correctional Services Solomon Islands (CSSI) who are proactive in their efforts to work with perpetrators and collaborate with CSOs that are active in EVAWG work.

CSSI will continue to work with perpetrators in prison and is committed to promoting reintegration, working with communities when perpetrators return home and explore counselling for perpetrators. CSSI has a Reintegration Strategy to guide this work.

Current work should be evaluated and revised to reflect the standards above. Funding for perpetrator programs should not be diverted from other programs to eliminate violence against women and girls and is of a lower priority than prevention, response and protection services.

Objectives

- 4.1 Develop systems to collect information on the effectiveness of programs to evaluate and provide evidence on whether these programs reduce violence against women and girls;**
- 4.2 Continue to develop and support interventions to change the behaviour of perpetrators based on good practices;**
- 4.3 Collaborate with community leaders and CSOs to develop comprehensive reintegration programs.**

17 Council of Australian Governments (2015), *National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions*; http://plan4womens-safety.dss.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/nospi_coag_paper.pdf

POLICY OUTCOME 5: National commitments are developed and coordination is improved

Despite a range of interventions led by both government and civil society organisations, a stronger coordinated approach to ending gender based violence is required. There are weaknesses in legal, judicial, and protection mechanisms which undermine efforts by government and civil society, and the government's weak capacity to build coordinated responses continues to be a challenge. The complexity and entrenched nature of violence against women makes ending it one of Solomon Islands' biggest development challenges. It will require strong leadership from both men and women, particularly in the justice and policing sectors but also by churches and community leaders. (GEWD Policy 2016-2020, p.16)

This policy is a sub-policy of the GEWD policy and monitoring and evaluation will be overseen by the Advisory Reporting and Coordinating Committee (ARCC) on Gender Equality and Women's Development which is the governing body for the GEWD Policy.

Develop national commitments

The Solomon Islands government commits to a long-term, whole-of-government response that is developed with stakeholders for eliminating violence against women and girls. The policy will be operationalised through a rolling, four year Strategic Action Plan (SAP and Actions) that provides a detailed framework of strategies. The Strategic Action Plan (SAP) shall be reviewed after 3 years of implementation and will include guidance for the evaluation of this policy.

Solomon Islands Government will provide sufficient resources for the implementation of this policy. MWYCFA will advise the government so that sufficient resources are allocated to all involved Ministries to ensure a whole-of-government response to EAW. The government will also provide sufficient resources for the EAW coordinator in the MWYCFA to implement the monitoring of the SAP. This is in-line with the CEDAW concluding observations recommendation to: *"Allocate sufficient and sustainable budget and adequate staff with the necessary technical skills to the Women's Development Division at the national, provincial and local levels, and ensure that it has a clear mandate to coordinate the implementation of public policies."* (Recommendation 19(a), p.5)

The SAP is designed to present a rolling four-year plan of activities; this time period coincides with Ministries' corporate plans. In parallel with those plans, the SAP includes monitoring and evaluation processes, and these will use participatory processes to help stakeholders understand and commit to understanding their roles and responsibilities and achieving the objectives of this Policy.

Reporting

The MWYCFA will compile progress reports related to violence against women and girls from the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF), the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS), SAFENET, and other relevant agencies. The MWYCFA will submit a composite annual report to The Advisory Reporting and Coordinating Committee (ARCC) on Gender Equality and Women's Development the governing body for the GEWD Policy. The ARCC will endorse the report to Cabinet as submitted, or with changes the ARCC recommends. This annual report will focus on the key strategic areas of this policy, and highlight progress, achievements, capacity building needs and other impacts of this policy on the people of Solomon Islands.

Review and Evaluation

The CEDAW concluding observations recommend that the Solomon Islands Government: "Adopt a monitoring and evaluation framework for all public policies and strategies for the advancement of women with measurable indicators." (Recommendation 19(c), p.6)

A monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed for this policy that aligns to the GEWD framework. This policy and the SAP will be formally reviewed after three years via a National Taskforce (NTF). The NTF will be appointed with and made up of representatives from Government, civil society, and the private sector, under the auspices of MWYCFA and the ARCC. The review will assess all reports to identify the gaps in activities, where outcomes are not being met, etc. The review will guide the NTF in assessing the effectiveness of the SAP which in turn will guide government in evaluating the effectiveness of this policy. The evaluation of the policy will be undertaken at the end of the five-year period.

Coordination of services

A key challenge in eliminating violence against women and girls in Solomon Islands is ensuring that services reach women and girls in remote rural areas and women and girls with disabilities. Services also need to support networking and information sharing between Honiara and provincial centres based on continuous improvement of data collection and sharing. Lack of resources for health, justice and awareness raising programs are an ongoing challenge that will only be met with strong multi-sectoral coordination that is centred on women and girls. Many of the response services such as counselling, referral and safe houses are provided by CSOs and should be supported through long-term core funding.

This policy will be coordinated by the National EVAWG Taskforce supported by the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs and recognises the importance of planning, coordination, information exchange and networking among the government agencies, civil society organisations, churches and the private sector involved in the implementation of this policy.

Capacity building is needed for government ministries, CSOs, Churches and the private sector on multi-sectoral coordination and the governance of policies to ensure that agencies are aware of their roles and responsibilities in delivering this policy and reporting back to all stakeholders on progress and challenges. Capacity building requires planned, long term commitment and resources.

Violence against women and girls increases during and following conflicts¹⁸, emergencies and natural disasters. The Solomon Islands is prone to frequent natural disasters such as cyclones, earthquakes and tsunamis. In order to protect women and girls from violence during disasters, the capacity of organisations involved in disaster response and recovery should be developed to take into account the protection of women, children and people with disabilities before disasters strike. This is achieved through gender inclusion in disaster risk reduction (DRR) programs, improved data collection in disaster assessment, including existing EVAWG services (such as SAFENET) in disaster risk management planning and response.¹⁹

Objectives

- 5.1 Solomon Islands Government commits to a whole-of-government response that is developed with stakeholders for eliminating violence against women and girls;**
- 5.2 Government provides sufficient resources for the implementation of this policy. MWYCFA will advise government so that sufficient resources are allocated to all involved Ministries to ensure a whole-of-government response to EVAWG;**
- 5.3 MWYCFA, in partnerships with stakeholders works to build capacity within relevant CSOs on eliminating violence against women and girls inclusive of women and girls with disabilities, with a focus on women and girls in rural communities;**

18 The Solomon Islands Government has a *National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security 2017-2021* which details outcomes and activities relating to violence against women and girls during and after armed conflict.

19 UN Women (2014) *Climate Change, Disasters and Gender-based violence in the Pacific*, Suva Fiji.

5.4 Establish procedures for future research, systematic data collection, analysis and sharing;

5.5 Build capacity of humanitarian actors to respond to EAWG in disaster risk reduction, emergency response and recovery and include EAWG service providers in disaster planning and response.

VI. Policy Plan of Action 2016-2020

This five- year strategic plan of action describes outputs, key actions and sectors that are concerned with the achievement of the outcomes of the Solomon Islands National Policy to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls 2016–2020. The MWYCFA recognises this policy cannot be implemented in isolation of other Solomon Islands Government policies. However, the coordinated approach and collective ownership of this policy will enhance and contribute to gender specific outcomes in policies across the government. The actions identified in this action plan are based on feedback received from stakeholders during the review of the Solomon Islands National Policy on Eliminating Violence Against Women 2010.

Policy goal and objectives

The goal of the Policy is to eliminate violence against all women and girls in Solomon Islands.

Policy priority outcomes

The national policy to eliminate violence against women and girls contains five priority outcomes:

1. Violence against women and girls is reduced through as a result of holistic prevention strategies
2. Legal frameworks, law enforcement and the justice system are strengthened
3. Victims and survivors have better access to medical, legal and protective services
4. Perpetrators are held accountable and rehabilitated
5. National commitments are developed and coordination is improved

The following section proposes a series of inputs, key strategies and actions that will support the achievement of each outcome.

POLICY OUTCOME 1: Violence against women and girls is reduced as a result of holistic prevention strategies

1.1 Improve coordination of prevention activities between NGOs, Churches and government ministries to reach women and girls at the community level;

- » Establish a database for all EVAWG implementation, including a shared calendar of training and awareness raising activities.
- » Host quarterly update forums with all stakeholders and partners of EVAWG.
- » Work with MASI to organise media training through PACMAS on Domestic and Family Violence appropriate interviewing and reporting.

1.2 Develop key messages for the prevention of violence against women and girls that are rights based and inclusive of women and girls with disabilities including health messages (e.g. healthy child development, health consequences of VAWG and solutions, essential medicine available for sexual assault);

- » Coordinate stakeholders to develop key messages that are guided, clear and consistent to form the basis of all awareness by all stakeholders at the national and provincial level.
- » Set up a stakeholder communications committee to develop joint IEC materials based on the key messages and distribute materials through all networks.

1.3 Provide programs for children at the community level through supporting the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development's health curriculum and improving positive parenting programs;

- » Support MEHRD to provide teacher training on health curriculum (especially non-violence sections) and provide a program of awareness raising in schools and religious institutions' learning classes for young people and children on EVAWG.
- » Develop guidelines for positive parenting programs that are human rights based and model respectful and equal relationships between parents and in all intimate and family relationships.

1.4 Develop men's behaviour change programs that result in transformational change;

- » Research best practice in men's behaviour change programs that result in transformational change and develop best practice training to be delivered to all relevant agencies.
- » Provide a program of transformational change training to police and correctional services; include training in Police Academy curriculum.
- » Develop IEC messaging aimed at men and include in awareness raising and media campaigns.
- » Work with Chamber of Commerce to develop dialogue with businesses encouraging them to produce policies acknowledging the rights of female employees to safety and protection.

1.5 Ensure that awareness programs are developed based on advice from service providers such as counselling, shelters, police and health services in order to keep women and girls safe;

- » Strengthen alliances between service providers, e.g., SAFENET, Safe Families Alliance, provincial EVAWG alliances.
- » Publicise the 132 hotline as a first point of contact, especially for women and girls isolated by location or ability.
- » Develop standardised training for all staff of organisations involved in EVAWG prevention work on how to manage disclosure of violence and referral to victim/survivor services.

1.6 Ministry of Public Service develop workplace family violence policies that can be adapted for each ministry and for CSOs and the private sector.

- » Develop a generic Family Violence policy and training package for all sectors and organisations to adapt.
- » Develop a generic Violence Free Workplace policy and training for how to prevent workplace discrimination and violence and to support women experiencing violence in the workplace.

Sectors that will contribute to Policy Outcome 1

- » Social development
- » Education sector
- » Disability sector
- » Good governance and corporate governance
- » Media and communications
- » Police and justice services
- » Local level government
- » Private sector
- » Civil society
- » Churches

POLICY OUTCOME 2: Legal frameworks, law enforcement and the justice system are strengthened

2.1 Increase access to justice for all women and girls with a focus on women and girls with disabilities and rural women and girls;

- » Expand legal and judicial services in Provinces.
- » Provide targeted awareness raising at community level, especially for vulnerable groups, on rights and how to claim them.

2.2 Increase awareness of the *Family Protection Act 2014* at the community level;

- » Initiate a standardised national program of awareness raising on the contents of the *Family Protection Act 2014* and the *Child and Family Welfare Bill 2016*, the safeguards provided for and what those mean for communities.
- » Distribute simple explanatory IEC materials in Pidgin.

2.3 Increase understanding of gender inequality, violence against women and girls, the responsibility of police, court officials and local court justices and on the application of relevant Acts to enforce laws;

- » Provide a comprehensive training program for police and justice officials in all locations on the application of relevant Acts and enforcement expectations.

2.4 Strengthen data collection and analysis for use by service providers, including case management and data sharing on VAWG;

- » Strengthen Information Management Systems (including JIMS²⁰) to store and retrieve fully disaggregated data and indicators.
- » Support gender and statistics training in all relevant sectors.
- » Quarterly meetings of the victim/survivor service providers to collect and monitor results from all stakeholders.

2.5 Continue to amend and develop legislation to deal with arising issues of violence against women and girls, including trafficking.

- » Systematically review existing legislation for alignment with the *Family Protection Act 2014*, CEDAW and other relevant commitments, identifying gaps in the legislative framework.
- » Recommend necessary amendments to existing legislation or the development of new legislation to ensure all laws are aligned, including response to women and girls in trafficking.

20 "The Solomon Islands Government has commissioned the development of the Justice Information Management System (JIMS) to enable better management of information for the Justice Sector including the courts and the Police. This will ensure better monitoring of data on violence against women cases to ensure that there is information on cases from incident reporting to arrest and court appearance. Some features of the JIMS include dispatch of vehicles to incidents, daily dispatch reports, management of warrant information, recording and search of persons with photos and other information including criminal history and fingerprints, and court results." (CEDAW Follow Up Report 2016)

Sectors that will contribute to Policy Outcome 2

- » Social development
- » Good governance and corporate governance
- » Disability sector
- » Information and statistics
- » Judiciary services, including Attorney General's Office
- » Police services
- » Civil society organisations

POLICY OUTCOME 3: Victims and survivors have better access to medical, legal and protective services

3.1 Strengthen the SAFENET referral and case management system for female victims/survivors of violence and roll out SAFENET to the provinces;

- » Support SAFENET as the primary referral network to access adequate funding and continue expansion to provinces until all are serviced.
- » Strengthen referral and case management for network members and all relevant stakeholders.

3.2 Ensure quality victim/survivor centred services including: counselling and medical services, police and legal services, and a safe place in the community for women and girls in all provinces;

- » Develop national counselling standards.
- » Support the expansion of Family Support Centres and *Seif Ples*, including shelters to all provinces
- » Support for the development of common frameworks for different agencies to assess the risk of violence against women and girls occurring/recurring on a case-by-case basis, to be implemented across the integrated response system.

3.3 Ensure accessibility for women and girls with disabilities in all services and infrastructure;

- » Work with organisations working with/for people with disabilities in particular, People with Disabilities Solomon Islands to better identify the needs of women and girls with disabilities and how to address them.
- » Ensure all legal, medical and emergency services are accessible for women and girls with disabilities, particularly when providing new services to the Provinces.

3.4 Allocate financial resources and strengthen the technical capacity of civil society organisations and government ministries, to provide survivor-centred services and redress for women and girls who are victims/ survivors of violence;

- » Victim/Survivor-centred training for Police and service providers.
- » Standardisation of counselling, case management and response so that every victim/survivor receives consistent quality support.
- » Annual refresher training for SAFENET members to include survivor centred approaches.

3.5 Capacity building to provincial based coordination groups in victim/survivor centred case management and involvement in rolling out FPA and EVAWG policy awareness initiatives;

- » Support joint stakeholder missions to provinces, e.g., Police/MWYCFA/MHMS/MJLA/NGO.
- » Agreed consistent messaging used by all stakeholders to reinforce key learning, along with effective IEC materials.

- » Support a network of community trained trainers on FPA and EVAWG policy to be delivered in remote locations.

3.6 Strengthen the health sector response to provide evidence-based integrated medical-psychosocial care for survivors of sexual and gender based violence.

- » Capacity building of MHMS staff at the Provincial level on victim/survivor centred VAWG response, treatment and referral.

Sectors that will contribute to Policy Outcome 3

- » Social development
- » Health sector
- » Disability sector
- » Local level government
- » Judicial services
- » Police services
- » Civil society organisations

POLICY OUTCOME 4: Perpetrators are held accountable and rehabilitated

4.1 Develop systems to collect information on the effectiveness of programs to evaluate and provide evidence on whether these programs reduce violence against women and girls;

- » Ongoing careful review and monitoring of perpetrator programs with the participation of women's non-governmental organisations and victims/survivors.
- » Justice system develops consistent data collection and recording systems including impacts of perpetrator programs.

4.2 Continue to develop and support interventions to change the behaviour of perpetrators based on good practices;

- » Establish minimum standards for perpetrator programs, with services delivering programs required to meet these standards.
- » Establish or strengthen statutory and non-statutory best practice intervention programs for perpetrators, which may be prescribed cautiously in sentencing or voluntarily attended, that are part of the integrated response system and are not an alternative to prosecution.

4.3 Collaborate with community leaders and CSOs to develop comprehensive reintegration programs.

- » Support community leaders with training on successful reintegration of perpetrators that keep the community safe from violence against women and girls.

Sectors that will contribute to Policy Outcome 4

- » Social development
- » Local level government
- » Correctional services
- » Judicial services
- » Civil society organisations
- » Churches

POLICY OUTCOME 5: National commitments are developed and coordination is improved

5.1 Solomon Islands Government commits to a whole-of-government response that is developed with stakeholders for eliminating violence against women and girls;

- » MWYCFA works closely with the Department of Public Service to mainstream EAW across government.
- » MWYCFA to re-establish a National Task Force as the governance body to oversee progress on activities, identify challenges and make recommendations to MWYCFA for resolving barriers to progress.
- » The National Task Force constitutes approximately equal numbers of government and civil society representatives, at least one private sector representative and at least one Development Partner representative.

5.2 Government provides sufficient resources for the implementation of this policy. MWYCFA will advise government so that sufficient resources are allocated to all involved Ministries to ensure a whole-of-government response to EAW;

- » MWYCFA will support government to achieve a cross-party commitment to providing an adequate annual budget as a demonstration to the population and to Development Partners of a serious commitment to eliminating violence against women and girls.
- » MWYCFA will consult and identify how these funds should be allocated across relevant Ministries and activities.

5.3 MWYCFA, in partnerships with stakeholders works to build capacity within relevant CSOs on eliminating violence against women and girls inclusive of women and girls with disabilities, with a focus on women and girls in rural communities;

- » MWYCFA will support the development and implementation of shared services or practice standards, guidelines or codes across the sectors that respond to violence against women and girls; and the development and implementation of information-sharing systems and protocols between all agencies involved in the response to violence against women and girls, especially the most vulnerable.

5.4 Establish procedures for future research, systematic data collection, analysis and sharing;

- » MWYCFA and stakeholders will identify where gaps in information exist and will arrive at a guideline for researching EAWG in Solomon Islands.
- » MWYCFA will support all local or regional organisations proposing research in an area of EAWG and will ensure that results are widely circulated.

5.5 Build capacity of humanitarian actors to respond to EAWG in disaster risk reduction, emergency response and recovery and include EAWG service providers in disaster planning and response.

- » MWYCFA will support gender inclusion in disaster risk reduction programs, improved data collection in disaster assessment and the inclusion of existing EAWG services (such as SAFENET) in disaster risk management planning and response.

Sectors that will contribute to Policy Outcome 5

- » All Ministries
- » Social development
- » Disability sector
- » Health sector
- » Environmental development
- » Information and statistics
- » Sustainable and economic development
- » Civil society organisations
- » Churches

VII. Institutional Arrangement for the Monitoring and Evaluation of the National Policy to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls 2016–2020

The Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA) is responsible for the achievement of the EVAWG Policy and will re-establish a National Task Force as the governance body to oversee progress on activities, identify challenges and make recommendations to MWYCFA for resolving barriers to progress.

The National Task Force (NTF) will constitute approximately equal numbers of government and civil society representatives, at least one private sector representative and at least one Development Partner representative. Further, the NTF will receive ex-officio support from the Eliminating Violence Against Women Policy Coordinator at MWYCFA, and secretariat support from the Research, Policy, Planning and Information Division (RPPID) of MWYCFA.

The National Task Force will meet quarterly and report twice annually to the Advisory Reporting and Coordination Committee for the Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy 2016-2020, which reports to Parliament through the Minister responsible for women.