



Australian Government

Australian Government Response to the
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence
and Trade Committee Report:

Empowering Women and Girls:
the human rights issues confronting women and girls in
the Indian Ocean-Asia Pacific Region

April 2017

Government Response to the recommendations in the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's inquiry into the human rights issues confronting women and girls in the Indian Ocean-Asia Pacific Region

Introduction

The Australian Government welcomes *Empowering Women and Girls*, the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's inquiry into the human rights issues confronting women and girls in the Indian Ocean-Asia Pacific Region. The Committee's recommendations to intensify efforts and develop new programs that take into account the diversity of the region are appreciated and are reflected in the current direction of our work in the region.

Australia is committed to pursuing gender equality outcomes across the international agenda. The Minister for Foreign Affairs launched the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy* (the Gender Equality Strategy) on 29 February 2016. This strategy strengthens gender equality and women's empowerment as a priority across Australia's foreign policy, economic diplomacy and development efforts as well as within DFAT's corporate operations.

Human rights of women and girls and the role of the law

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that Australia's diplomatic efforts continue to encourage legislative change to enhance the situation for women and girls, and to build the capacity of legal entities to enforce laws and ensure access to justice for women and girls. Specific areas that should be addressed include building a well-developed understanding of the needs of women and girls in:

- policing and law enforcement;*
- courts and legal aid; and*
- legal advice and advocacy services for women and girls.*

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

Under the Gender Equality Strategy, the Government is committed to supporting justice sector responses that improve the circumstances of women and girls internationally. This includes support for governments to develop appropriate laws and policies, strengthening the capacity of justice systems, and engagement with non-government organisations to increase women's awareness of, and access to, the legal system. Our aid program includes a range of investments aimed at strengthening the capacity of legal processes and institutions to uphold the rights of women and girls. We fund programs to which support the legal system to end violence against women in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Cambodia, Timor-Leste, the Pacific and Sri Lanka. Further details are outlined in DFAT's submissions to the Inquiry.

In the Pacific, the Attorney-General's Department (AGD), in partnership with the Australian Federal Police (AFP), is providing bilateral and regional capacity building

and technical assistance to strengthen domestic crime and policing laws under the Pacific Police Development Program (PPDP). Gender equality (and related human rights issues) is a cross-cutting priority of the program.

In 2015, AGD, at the request of the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP), developed the Pacific Forensic Model Provisions for the collection and use of forensic evidence. Effective forensic laws are essential in enabling prosecutions for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The model provisions provide a regional resource for Pacific Island countries to draw on to address gaps in existing legislative frameworks in ways that are appropriate for, and tailored to, their individual countries. The model provisions were developed in consultation with the PICP Pacific Forensic Working Group, supported by the AFP as well as legal officers and prosecutors from the region.

The AFP is committed to supporting partner policing organisations to address the specific law enforcement needs of women, particularly in relation to gender-based violence, including supporting the development of effective legislation and related police policy where it is absent.

In our bilateral and multilateral diplomatic work we also support stronger institutions. For example, Australia supports the UK-led development of the *International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict*, which seeks to ensure the investigation and prosecution of sexual violence as war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government prioritise aid investment in relevant local women's legal aid organisations, advocacy bodies and law reform commissions in the Indo-Pacific region where laws that disadvantage women and girls are in place.

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

The Gender Equality Strategy includes a commitment to engage and support women's legal institutions, ministries, and organisations. DFAT submissions to the Committee detail a number of current initiatives and we are continuing to increase this focus. For example, DFAT funded the UN Women project, *Leveraging Technical Tools, Evidence and Community Engagement to Advance the Implementation of Laws and Provision of Services to Women Experiencing Violence in South-East Asia*. This program included a component analysing the implementation of national laws and action plans on ending violence against women in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. Those findings were disseminated to key government and civil society organisations.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government encourage the Australian Courts to expand their investment in the work of making the registration of marriages and births more accessible in Indonesia; and expand its efforts to pursue

similar work where it can facilitate reform in other countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

The Australian Indonesia Partnership for Justice (AIPJ) is supporting legal identity provision in Indonesia, including the registration of births and marriages. In addition to piloting programs to increase access to civil registration in 20 provinces, the AIPJ has successfully advocated for the increased allocation of resources to legal identity and family law matters. The recently announced 2016 Supreme Court indicative budget allocation for access to justice activities in the religious courts is 29 billion rupiah, twice that of 2015.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- *encourage the Afghan Parliament to enact and enforce the Law on Elimination of Violence against Women; and*
- *provide diplomatic, technical and administrative support for the implementation of the law.*

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

Enacting and improving enforcement of the Law on Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW Law) are ongoing objectives for the Australian Government's diplomatic and development efforts in Afghanistan. The Australian Embassy in Kabul maintains ongoing relationships with Afghan parliamentarians, including concerning passage of the EVAW Law.

DFAT provides diplomatic, technical and administrative support for the implementation and enforcement of the EVAW Law through our EVAW Program in Afghanistan (AUD24.7 million, 2013-17, further information on specific activities provided below). Australia was the first donor to commence an EVAW Program (in 2013) and remains a lead donor in this area. Gender equality issues are a key focus of the Australian Aid Program in Afghanistan.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- *expand its support efforts for increasing the number of women recruits into police forces in the Pacific Island countries, including Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands;*
- *help increase and retain the number of female recruits to the Afghan police force, law enforcement roles and public services, while supporting efforts to provide sufficient protection for these recruits; and*
- *increase support for improved professional standards for law enforcement professionals, prosecutors and judicial officers, including gender sensitivity training throughout the region.*

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

In keeping with its International Operations Gender Equality Strategy, the AFP includes ethics, accountability, and gender equality themes in police corporate reform programs delivered in the Asia Pacific region.

In Afghanistan, Australia is a major contributor to the UNDP's Law and Order Trust Fund, which has helped increase the number of Police Women Councils to 70 in 30 provinces. These Councils bring together female officers to share ideas, form networks for mutual support and improve welfare. The Trust Fund also supported 50 Gender Mainstreaming Units which investigate domestic violence cases and ensure gender-related interventions are implemented at the provincial and district levels, including the recruitment of women police.

Australia's EVAW Program in Afghanistan provides training for the Afghan National Police on the EVAW Law and Special Operating Procedures for investigating cases of violence against women. Australia also supported the Afghan Government and international community's *Self Reliance Through Mutual Accountability Framework* (2015) policy document, which included language supporting 'increase[d] women's participation in government, including the justice and security sectors' and the preparation and implementation of an anti-harassment regulation for women in the public sector. The Framework was adopted by the Afghan Government on 5 September 2015.

Violence against women and girls

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government take every opportunity:

- *to engage with governments in the Indo-Pacific region, including at regional fora, to highlight the extent of violence against women and girls, the persistence of the problem, and its consequences; and*
- *to press other governments to enact and enforce laws that protect the human rights of women and girls, in particular in relation to sexual and gender-based violence, especially under-age and forced marriage and marital rape.*

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

The Gender Equality Strategy commits the Australian Government to supporting partner governments to develop and implement laws and policies that address violence against women and children, and improve their access to the legal system. DFAT is implementing this commitment at the global, regional and bilateral levels through both advocacy and program support.

DFAT's submissions to the inquiry outlined how Australia works closely through regional fora and mechanisms to promote human rights and enhance human rights outcomes for women and girls throughout the Indo-Pacific Region and provided examples of that work. Australia has also been a strong advocate against early and forced marriage. On 23 June 2014 Australia provided a statement to the 26th Session of the Human Rights Council on preventing and eliminating child, early and forced

marriage; and in January 2015 recommended in a statement at the Universal Periodic Review Working Group 21st Session considering the Universal Periodic Review of Guinea, that Guinea amend its Criminal Code to cover various forms of sexual violence, including marital rape and domestic violence; and enforce all legislation concerning women and girls.

DFAT is supporting building evidence of the magnitude and consequences of different forms of violence against women to inform interventions, encourage action and highlight the extent of this breach of women's human rights in the Indo-Pacific region. For example, DFAT is funding the UNFPA *kNOwVAWdata* project which is developing a knowledge hub and providing technical assistance to countries in the region undertaking studies in the prevalence of violence against women. Through DFAT's EVAW program in Timor-Leste, Australia recently supported a new baseline survey, which produced national data on the prevalence, incidence and consequences of different forms of violence against women. Preliminary results were publicly launched on 18 May 2016 to raise awareness and inspire action.

The Attorney General's Department is a member of the Pacific Island Law Officers' Network (PILON) and is involved with the PILON sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) Working Group.

The AFP through its involvement in the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP) Forum and engagement with other Regional organisations such as the New Zealand-led Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence Program (PPDVP) continues to work on increasing awareness and improving policing responses to sexual and gender based violence in the Pacific Region.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that, in light of the evidence showing continuing and pervasive violence against women and girls across the Indo-Pacific region, the Australian Government:

- *facilitate targeted and co-ordinated research (including gathering national prevalence and incidence data, as well as quantitative and qualitative surveys of community attitudes), legal reform, and programs directly aimed at community attitudes that are tolerant of violence against women and girls; and*
- *consider increasing funding for activities to combat violence as a proportion of Australia's development assistance budget, as well as commit to the provision of resources for the long term.*

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

As noted in the response to recommendation 6 above, the Australian Government maintains a strong commitment to ending violence against women and girls, and recognises the importance of changing community attitudes that tolerate gender-based violence.

The Gender Equality Strategy calls for evidence-based interventions that change community attitudes to ensure the safety and empowerment of women when assisting

partner governments and organisations to prevent violence against women and girls. The Australian Government will continue to work in partnership with the private sector, civil society organisations and other donors, and engage the media, schools, parliamentarians and local government as gender equality champions wherever possible.

As noted in DFAT's submission to the inquiry, Australia has funded many studies on violence against women including prevalence studies in Cambodia, Nauru, Federated States of Micronesia, Solomon Islands, Palau, Marshall Islands, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. We also supported the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre to undertake a prevalence study in Fiji and The Asia Foundation for a national study in Timor-Leste. Australia's aid program also contributed to the joint UN program, Partners for Prevention, to undertake the United Nations Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific which surveyed 10,000 men and 3,000 women in nine sites across six countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia - West Papua, Papua New Guinea - Bougainville, and Sri Lanka). DFAT is currently supporting phase two of this project which is piloting prevention responses based on the evidence gathered from the surveys. Australia is also partnering with the United Population Fund (UNFPA) to develop the capacity in the region to collect, analyse and report on violence against women data with the kNOwVAWdata project. This project is establishing a regional knowledge hub and providing direct assistance to countries in the region undertaking studies on the prevalence of violence against women.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- *continue to support existing programs that partner with governments, non-government and community organisations, and faith-based organisations which:*
 - o *deliver education with a particular focus on boys and adolescents, to promote understanding of consent, healthy sexuality, and respectful relationships; and*
 - o *make use of technology to expand the reach and engage young people.*
- *explore ways to extend programs addressing violence, such as those being run by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, and linking to similar initiatives operating in Australia and other countries across the region; and*
- *review work being undertaken in Australia and overseas to address gender-based violence to identify programs of best practice that are culturally appropriate for countries in the Indo-Pacific region.*

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

Australia's aid program has a comprehensive approach to EVAW. This approach is based on improving the quality of services and responses, access to justice, and prevention. In line with the Gender Equality Strategy, DFAT supports a broad range of organisations to conduct community awareness and advocacy when assisting partner governments and organisations to prevent violence against women and girls in the region.

Evidence-based prevention activities in the education sector are a priority. The Australian Government works with men and boys as advocates for gender equality and women's empowerment where that is appropriate and evidence-based, including to address forms of masculinity that hinder progress.

DFAT's ending violence against women programs are regularly assessed as part of the normal quality assurance processes used throughout the aid program. In addition, DFAT reviews best practice in Australia and internationally and shares these lessons among program managers. DFAT brought together managers its EVAW programs, experts, researchers, and partners to discuss developments and share insights in Bangkok in May 2016. In October 2016, DFAT convened a week of seminars and activities in Canberra on ending violence against women. These events included:

- a roundtable briefing for DFAT staff in developments on efforts to end violence against women in Australia from the Department of Social Services, the Office for Women, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health, OurWatch, the Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and the Australian Federal Police;
- a joint public seminar with the Australian National University Gender Institute which brought together researchers from Australia and the region, students, practitioners, representatives from the Commonwealth and Victorian governments, DFAT staff from a number of posts (including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu), UN Women, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP – Partners for Prevention) and interested members of the public to explore the linkages between developments in Australia and developments globally on ending violence against women.

AGD is a member of the Pacific Island Law Officers' Network (PILON) and is involved with the PILON sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) Working Group.

The AFP through its involvement in the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP) Forum and engagement with other Regional organisations such as the New Zealand-led Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence Program (PPDVP) continues to work on increasing awareness and improving policing responses to sexual and gender based violence in the Pacific Region.

Women and girls in war, conflict and disaster zones

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- *adopt the proposals made in the 2014 Second Annual Civil Society Report Card: Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security; and*
- *encourage governments in the region, which have not already done so, to prioritise the approval of national action plans for UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.*

The Australian Government partially accepts the recommendation.

The Australian Government values the contribution of civil society and we continue to work with civil society to implement our National Action Plan. The recommendations, proposals and findings of the *2014 Second Annual Civil Society Report Card: Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security* have informed Australia's implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. As well as civil society's Report Card on the Australian NAP, the Australian Government engages with civil society groups through our participation at the *Annual Civil Society Dialogue on Women, Peace and Security*. The Dialogue facilitates the exchange of opinions and assessments and information-sharing between civil society and the Australian Government. It builds on our strong engagement with civil society on women, peace and security through our ongoing implementation of the *Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security*.

The Australian Government's encourages governments in our region to prioritise the approval of national action plans for the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325. Most recently, Timor-Leste adopted its NAP earlier in 2016. Japan and New Zealand adopted their plans in 2015 and Indonesia adopted a NAP in 2014.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work to ensure that Australian responses to disasters and humanitarian crises factor in the unique and additional needs of women and children, by ensuring:

- *that all plans, toolkits and guidance documentation for humanitarian and disaster relief include a requirement to take into account the unique needs and vulnerabilities of women and children, and guidance on how this can be achieved; and*
- *humanitarian responses funded by the Australian Government model gender-sensitive processes, and avoid additional harms to women and children.*

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

Under the Gender Equality Strategy, the Government must make explicit its commitment to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in all guiding documents and processes, at both investment and activity level. Gender equality and women's empowerment is a thematic priority of the Government's *Humanitarian Strategy*, launched in May 2016. The Humanitarian Strategy includes a commitment to gender equality in humanitarian action, supports the active participation of women, girls, boys and men, and the increased disaggregation of data by sex.

In DFAT's humanitarian partnerships with Australian NGOs and the Australian Red Cross, gender equality and women's empowerment is a key consideration and is incorporated throughout all programs. Partners are required to complete gender action plans to respond to the different needs and priorities of women, girls, men, boys. This was illustrated in the response to Tropical Cyclone Winston. For example, CARE Australia, whose response focussed on implementing water, sanitation and hygiene, and livelihood programs, deployed its Pacific Regional Gender Advisor to ensure gender equality considerations were integrated not only in CARE's response but also across the coordination clusters to support wider incorporation of gender and

protection issues. The development of a Rapid Gender Analysis underpinned and informed CARE's response and ensured sex-balanced participation and consultation which in turn guided distribution site locations, beneficiary selection and the establishment of appropriate complaints and feedback mechanisms. Targeted training was also provided to build the capacity of new staff and volunteers in the importance of gender equality and socially inclusive approaches in humanitarian responses.

Australia provides dedicated humanitarian funding to UNFPA to preposition sexual and reproductive health commodities across identified disaster prone countries in the Asia Pacific region, for rapid distribution in the event of humanitarian crises. Australia also provides targeted funding to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian crises, including through the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The Australian Civilian Corps (ACC) contributes to gender equality and women's empowerment, directly, through the deployment of gender specialists and protection officers and more broadly by ensuring gender equality is incorporated in all deployments.

The Ambassador for Women and Girls attended the World Humanitarian Summit in Turkey in May 2016, sharing Australia's experiences of gender-sensitive humanitarian responses and advocating greater awareness of sexual and reproductive health in humanitarian settings. The Australian Government will continue to support sexual and reproductive health in emergencies, such as through the provision of safe birthing kits.

Australia works closely with women's groups to provide them with practical support to increase their capacity to deliver in humanitarian settings, and ensure that humanitarian programming both meets the needs of women and girls and meaningfully involves them in program design, delivery and monitoring.

Women must not only be consulted and have their voice heard, but be in leadership positions, actively determining humanitarian priorities and resourcing in a crisis. The Australian Government has also committed to apply a gender marker to all humanitarian funding to ensure gender equality issues are considered at all stages of the program cycle.

Health, reproduction and amenities

Recommendation 11

In light of the continuing high levels of maternal mortality, unsafe abortions, and infant and child ill health in many parts of the Pacific and Timor-Leste, the Committee recommends that the Australian Government maintain funding and support for reproductive health programs, including obstetric and gynaecological services, across the Indo-Pacific region with an increased focus on the Pacific and Timor-Leste. In particular, the Australian Government should:

- *work in partnership with non-government organisations and Pacific Island authorities to increase funding to maternal and reproductive health programs in the Pacific region;*

- *support improved provision of timely and high quality sex education in the Pacific region by providing support to Pacific leaders and health ministers in implementing the program of work in sex education these leaders endorsed in 2014; and*
- *maintain a strong strategic focus on maternal mortality in the design and delivery of aid programs in Timor-Leste and the Pacific.*

The Australian Government partially agrees with the recommendation noting these programs need to be adapted to country context and operate within current funding envelopes and pipelines.

In Timor-Leste and the Pacific, Australia supports the provision of maternal and reproductive health services through programs with NGOs, including Marie Stopes Timor-Leste, Catalpa International and Health Alliance International. The core focus of Australia's health program in Timor-Leste is maternal and child health and, within this, reducing the high rate of maternal deaths.

In Timor-Leste Marie Stopes is now in 11 out of 13 districts delivering family planning and reproductive health education. In the 2015-16 financial year Marie Stopes Timor-Leste delivered education sessions on family planning and sexual and reproductive health to 76,041 people, provided more than 21,000 clients with family planning services and received 16,929 calls to the new youth hotline Lina Foin-Sae.

DFAT funds the provision of sex education through the United Nations Joint Programme on Reproductive, Maternal, New-born, Child and Adolescent Health to Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. It also supports comprehensive sexuality education in other Pacific states working with both government and civil society organisations. DFAT has supported the Samoa Family Health Association to conduct comprehensive sexuality education and to roll out programs to women's community organisations.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government prioritise funding for services that address the immediate needs of survivors of sexual and physical violence in the Indo-Pacific region. These services should be holistic, incorporating:

- *accessible, timely and affordable treatment for physical injury;*
- *accessible, timely, affordable and culturally sensitive counselling and trauma relief;*
- *legal and justice services, including timely collection of evidence for prosecution;*
- *counselling and appropriate assistance for pregnancies and diseases arising from sexual assaults; and*
- *support to prevent further exposure to violence, such as through the provision of safe emergency accommodation.*

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

Under the Gender Equality Strategy, the Government supports partner countries and organisations to increase women's access to support services when they experience violence by:

- supporting appropriate counselling, accommodation, legal and practical support to women and their children
- assisting governments and organisations to improve health sector and workplace responses to violence against women
- helping strengthen the capacity of the justice system, including the police, courts, and informal structures, to respond effectively to violence against women and children
- supporting governments to enable access to social protection and social transfers.

For example, in Timor-Leste, the Australian Government supports The Asia Foundation to work with government and civil society to enable access to justice for women affected by violence, as part of the 'Nabilan: Ending Violence Against Women' program. This program provides grants and to community sector organisations for court monitoring and legal assistance to survivors of violence. It also provides health, welfare, counselling and shelter services to women and children affected by violence, through:

- institutional strengthening support to the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MSS) to oversee these services;
- grants and governance support to civil society organisations to provide these services;
- an accredited social work training program for community based workers; and
- piloting community-based approaches to services in under-serviced areas.

Recommendation 13

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government prioritise work with governments in the Indo-Pacific region, non-government organisations, and the scientific research community for the development of effective, low cost, accessible medicines to treat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, with a focus on disadvantaged women and children in the region.

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

In line with its *Health for Development Strategy 2015-2020*, the Australian Government is helping to build country-level systems and services that are responsive to people's health needs, including the development of new approaches and technologies to address health challenges. Through our investments we seek to address the financial, social and cultural barriers for women, children, poor people, and people with a disability to access essential health services.

For example, Australia is supporting the development of new medicines and diagnostics for malaria and tuberculosis through three Product Development Partnerships – the TB Alliance, the Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV), and the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND). Australia is actively leading and supporting malaria control and elimination initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region, including through regional malaria institutions such as the Asia Pacific Leader’s Malaria Alliance (APLMA), which is working towards achieving an Asia Pacific free of malaria by 2030.

Recommendation 14

To support women and girls with disabilities, who are ‘doubly disadvantaged’, the Committee recommends that:

- *all programs funded or supported by the Australian Government that seek to address violence against women and girls are designed with the specific needs of women and girls with disabilities taken into account in the design phase;*
- *all women’s health and reproductive rights programs supported by the Australian Government take into consideration the needs of women and girls with disabilities and seek to ensure these women and girls are included—and not adversely affected—by the programs; and*
- *work to support women and girls with disabilities in the Indo-Pacific region remains a priority for the Australian Government, and is included in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s Country Plans.*

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

The Australian Government is working with partner countries to assist people with disabilities, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, to find pathways out of poverty. Ensuring all aspects of development cooperation are disability and gender inclusive, particularly during the program design phase, enhances development effectiveness.

The *Development for All 2015-2020* Strategy for strengthening disability inclusive development in our aid program commits Australia to take into account the interaction of gender and disabilities in all our disability-inclusive development efforts. We include women with disabilities in leadership, women’s economic empowerment and ending violence against women activities, and acknowledge the additional barriers that women and girls with a disability face in accessing sexual and reproductive health services. This approach complements the Gender Equality Strategy, which recognises that women and girls with disabilities are more likely to experience violence and face additional barriers in seeking justice and support. The ongoing priority given to women and girls with disabilities in the Indo-Pacific region is reflected in the Department’s Aid Investment Plans.

For example, the Australian Government has supported research to better understand and address the risks of abuse experienced by women with disabilities. This research has been used by development partners across the Indo-Pacific region to raise awareness of the prevalence of violence against women with disabilities and encourage action to address it. The Government is also working with sexual and reproductive health delivery partners, including UNFPA, to address the particular vulnerabilities faced by women and girls with disability.

Recommendation 15

The Committee recommends that the Australian aid program retain a focus on ensuring that clean water, and access to satisfactory sanitation and hygiene, especially in schools, underpins development initiatives.

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

The Australian Government's *Health for Development Strategy* recognises the need for water and sanitation services, and hygiene promotion in schools and health centres. In Papua New Guinea the education program is building toilet and ablution blocks with its school improvement program. Under the Civil Society Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Fund, many civil society organisations are working with schools to improve sanitation and to deliver hygiene promotion programs, including menstrual hygiene management. For example, in Pakistan, Plan International is supporting teachers to establish clubs in schools to promote improved hygiene both at school and at home.

DFAT's *Strategy for Australia's Aid Investments in Education 2015–2020* prioritises removal of barriers to girls' completion of education cycles. The Government will continue to promote integrated water, sanitation and hygiene approaches, including separate sanitation facilities for girls and boys, into school facilities.

Recommendation 16

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government prioritise providing culturally appropriate, hygienic and safe sanitation facilities for women and girls, and that:

- *all Australian Government funded humanitarian relief responses, including refugee settlements and disaster relief shelters, provide culturally appropriate, hygienic and safe sanitation facilities; and*
- *all education programs designed to keep girls in school address the issue of sanitation facilities; providing facilities that can be adequately maintained and serviced locally.*

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

The Humanitarian Strategy (May 2016) commits Australia to prioritising the safety and dignity of affected populations and ensuring that partners use the Minimum Initial Services Package (MISP) for Sexual and Reproductive Health at the onset of a humanitarian emergency. At the World Humanitarian Summit (Istanbul, May 2016), Australia committed to investing in sexual and reproductive health services and supplies, as part of an essential health package in emergencies, and the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Australian funding ensured that, within the first 24 hours after Tropical Cyclone Winston devastating Fiji this year, mobile medical missions deployed as part of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Programme In Crisis and Post Crisis Situations (SPRINT) initiative were providing women with vitals checks, medical consultations,

health kits and family planning medications. The program, and strong collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), enabled the quick and efficient distribution of culturally appropriate prepositioned dignity kits.

In response to Tropical Cyclone Pam (Vanuatu) and Winston (Fiji), funding to Australian NGOs supported evacuation centres with hygienic and safe sanitation facilities. Funding ensured affected populations, including women and girls, had access to hygiene items and these were used effectively to maintain health, dignity and well-being in targeted evacuation centres. Our NGO partners worked closely with the education ministries in both responses to ensure schools, used as evacuation centres, were reopened with appropriate and functional WASH facilities in place.

The Australian Government recognises that water, sanitation and hygiene are pre-conditions for good health and contribute to keeping girls in school, particularly after puberty.

Australia's *Health for Development Strategy* recognises the need for water and sanitation services and hygiene promotion in schools and health centres. In Papua New Guinea the education program is building toilet and ablution blocks with its school improvement program. Under the Civil Society WASH Fund, many civil society organisations are working with schools to improve sanitation and to deliver hygiene promotion programs, including menstrual hygiene management. These organisations understand the need to provide culturally appropriate facilities and to use processes suit the local context.

Recommendation 17

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government support culturally appropriate, community-driven programs that provide sanitary products for girls and women to allow them to remain engaged in work and education during menstruation.

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

The Australian Government is supporting civil society organisations and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council to deliver menstrual hygiene management promotional messaging in the Pacific and to encourage schools to provide sanitation facilities that enable girls to manage their menstrual hygiene needs in privacy.

For example, Live and Learn Environmental Education is working with schools in PNG, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to promote menstrual hygiene management (MHM) and held a menstrual hygiene day at a school in Kavieng in New Ireland, PNG, to encourage girls, boys, and parents to be aware of the importance of MHM. This was the culmination of a program of work which trained teachers, school managers and students on hygiene behaviour and improved the local supplies of hygiene products. Student health clubs have been an innovative way to encourage advocacy by students themselves and they were highly active in menstrual hygiene days held in various schools. The Civil Society WASH Fund's Pacific Regional Learning Event (November 2015) included MHM as a key topic of discussion and featured MHM in a pre-event webinar and summary handout. Gender equality is a

continuing and important aspect of the Civil Society WASH Fund and information about the best approaches to MHM is exchanged regularly through these learning events.

DFAT's Pacific Division (with funding from the Innovation Xchange and the Gender Equality Fund) has contracted research to identify and assess barriers to effective menstrual management in PNG, Fiji and Solomon Islands – the first of its kind. This research will identify possible interventions to improve women's and girls' ability to manage their menstruation safely and with dignity, particularly where this would increase access to education or employment and income generation. Research has commenced, beginning in Solomon Islands in October, Fiji in November and December, and concluding in Papua New Guinea in February in 2017. The research is expected to be finalised in June 2017.

Australia is one of several donors who support the Water Supply and Collaborative Council. The Council has a strong gender equality program including MHM promotion. It spoke to 12,000 women and girls in five states of India in 2012 about MHM and tested simple training and communication tools which aim to break the silence about MHM. The knowledge and experience gained from this experience in India, where there was strong political leadership by the Prime Minister, led to a clear commitment to and budget support for MHM activities. This has subsequently allowed the Council to expand its MHM portfolio in South Asia and Africa. It has also led to a joint program "Gender, Hygiene and Sanitation" between the Council and UN Women in Africa in three focus countries (Senegal, Niger and Cameroon).

Recommendation 18

The Committee recommends that Australian Government agencies working in the Indo-Pacific region take advantage of opportunities to partner with faith based networks where they play a major role in delivery of health care services and care support.

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

Australia will continue to pursue efficient and effective ways to improve health care services and care support where these are agreed priorities. This includes partnerships with faith-based organisations that have comparative advantages. For example, in Papua New Guinea we fund Catholic Church Health Services and the Baptist Union of Papua New Guinea to provide HIV counselling, testing, treatment and care services to the general population and also specific support to at most risk populations such as men who have sex with men and commercial sex workers.

Education and the rights of girls

Recommendation 19

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government maintain its support for increasing primary school enrolments generally, and gender parity in enrolments

specifically, across the Indo-Pacific region where the levels of female enrolment remain low.

The Committee also recommends that Australian funding and programs in education should include a particular focus on the most disadvantaged communities; notably, children with disabilities, and disadvantaged ethnic minorities.

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

The Government's *Strategy for Australia's Aid Investments in Education 2015–2020* guides aid investment choices at a country, regional and global level. It commits the Australian Government to continue to advocate for disability inclusive education systems, girls' participation and equal education opportunities for rural and remote communities, as well as ethnic and linguistic minorities. Improving outcomes for disadvantaged groups, including girls and children with a disability, means addressing a range of interlinked challenges, including safety, quality learning, adequate facilities, transitions from primary to secondary school and local leadership.

Building on the commitment outlined in the *Strategy for Australia's Aid Investments in Education 2015–2020*, in September 2016, the Foreign Minister, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, signed on to the global *Statement of Action to Accelerate Marginalised Girls' Education Outcomes and Gender Equality*. This commits Australia to work with other donors, civil society and the private sector to help marginalised girls to take leadership within schools, support efforts to mobilise resources which target marginalised girls' education, improve data collection, analysis and reporting on marginalised girls, and reduce barriers to education for marginalised girls such as early marriage and gender-based violence.

Australia has been working for many years to improve girls' education in the Indo-Pacific region. Since 2013, Australia's aid investments have seen approximately 1.5 million more girls enrolled in school in our region. The 2015 Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment shows that the Pacific region is bucking the global trend with girls now demonstrating significantly higher levels of proficiency in both literacy and numeracy than boys.

Australia's support to Samoa has helped achieve near universal primary access. The percentage of boys and girls has remained steady since 2013 (52 per cent and 48 per cent respectively). Australian funding also ensures that children with disabilities have access to education at mainstream and special schools and it is estimated that around 400 children with disabilities have been supported since 2009.

Australia is supporting the Government of Vanuatu to undertake better analysis and planning on equality and inclusion within primary education to inform action on these issues. Our support in the skills sector is reaching the most disadvantaged in the community through providing training closer to peoples' homes. This is improving economic outcomes for females and those with a disability who can now access training without leaving their families and support networks.

In Kiribati, Australia is supporting inclusive curriculum development and implementation, and teacher training to allow children with disabilities to access

mainstream schools. Australia is supporting infrastructure upgrades to allow accessibility by those with disabilities.

In Papua New Guinea, Australia is supporting essential services for children living with disability who experience exclusion from mainstream schools and disproportionately high rates of abuse. Australia is supporting Papua New Guinea's National Disability Policy to improve the quality of teacher training and education, assisting the integration of PNG sign language into the inclusive schools.

In Fiji, Australia is providing support to 85 targeted primary schools to improve access to school and the quality of education for children from poor communities, reducing inequality based on location, disability and gender.

In the Indonesian provinces of Papua and West Papua, which have the highest illiteracy rates in Indonesia, Australia's engagement focuses on strengthening school and local government capacity to improve education service delivery in rural and remote regions to improve literacy and numeracy.

In Laos, Australia is working to help 450,000 children to go to – and stay – in school, with a particular focus on the most educationally disadvantaged - girls, children with disabilities and children from ethnic minority groups. This includes training people (particularly women) from ethnic minority groups to become teachers in their communities.

Recognising that girls and children living with a disability are disproportionately affected in conflict and crisis situations, Australia is currently developing a three-year AUD220 million aid package in response to the Syria crisis which will help get children into school in Jordan and Lebanon, including addressing gender and disability specific issues, to ensure equitable access to education.

A new Water for Women initiative, announced in September 2016 by the Prime Minister, will provide safe and affordable water and sanitation with a focus on improving girls' attendance at school, women and girls' access to health services, and removing barriers to women's participation in work. This initiative recognises that the impact of lack of access to clean water and safe sanitation is perhaps greatest on women and girls, and people living with a disability.

Recommendation 20

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government increasingly target aid funding towards girls at the secondary and tertiary levels, by:

- *providing additional funding that focuses on secondary school enrolment and completion initiatives for adolescent girls in key countries in the region;*
- *increasing support to programs designed to encourage more young women to complete tertiary qualifications throughout the region; and*
- *supporting research and programs designed to address the gap between educational attainment and employment/economic opportunities for women in the Indo-Pacific region.*

The Australian Government partially accepts the recommendation.

Under both the Gender Equality Strategy and the Education Strategy, Australia is enhancing educational outcomes for women and girls, by prioritising school retention and quality education for girls.

Taking a systems-based approach, Australia strategically supports initiatives that enable access, participation and transition between all levels of education and training (from basic through secondary to tertiary and vocational), with a focus on the most marginalised.

However, in practice, where the aid program is required to focus on the most pressing needs in an education system (due to issues such as budget constraints), in the first instance the focus may need to be on other areas of the education system, such as improved education outcomes at the primary level.

Recommendation 21

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government seeks to address the quality and character of education in the region, including through:

- *supporting government bodies and local education advocates who are working to change the curricula and methodology in teaching to promote gender equality; and*
- *offering to provide expertise in drafting gender-sensitive, culturally appropriate resources for schools, particularly in the Pacific, and/or funding the development of such expertise in-country.*

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

The Australian Government is working with partner countries to help them deliver comprehensive and high-quality education services. This includes having clearly articulated learning standards, relevant and inclusive curricula, engaging learning materials and appropriately qualified teachers.

Under the Gender Equality Strategy, Australia focuses on the gender norms imparted in education curricula and teaching materials, and on ensuring women are recruited and promoted in the education system.

In the Indonesian provinces of Papua and West Papua, Australia is helping to produce materials for use by teachers and students which are gender inclusive and promote positive gender roles, for example, girls fishing, playing football and female heroes, and boys in carer roles. Teachers are also being trained to teach in a gender-sensitive way. In Kiribati, Australia is addressing the quality and character of education by supporting the development of young people's self-confidence, agency and capacity for respectful gender relationships. Australia's investment in Samoa is assisting with the development of education resources to ensure they are gender sensitive and appropriate to the Samoan context.

Women and leadership

Recommendation 22

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government prioritise girls' and women's leadership and political participation, and integrate these as a priority across the aid program.

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

Enhancing women's voice in decision-making, leadership, and peace-building is a priority of the Gender Equality Strategy. In both advocacy and development programming, we promote women's decision-making, whether by seeking to ensure equal participation by women and men on community committees supporting our programs, or by assisting government agencies to introduce and institutionalise equal employment opportunity. Examples of a range of programs which promote women and girls' leadership and political participation were detailed in DFAT's submission to the inquiry.

AGD incorporates gender equality principles in the design, delivery and evaluation of PDPP work, including participation by women in our programs and workshops.

The AFP encourages and facilitates greater involvement of women in regional policing agencies through supporting women's participation in regional forums, as well as personal and leadership development programs. This commitment is articulated in the AFP's International Operations Gender Equality Strategy.

Internally, DFAT's *Women in Leadership Strategy* aims to address the barriers to women's career progression in the department, and create a culture in which all staff can thrive. It focuses on: leadership and culture; accountability and inclusion; embedding substantive equality; and mainstreaming flexible work and dismantling barriers for carers.

Recommendation 23

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government should:

- *increase support to organisations such as the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, which are able to focus on co-ordinating the priorities of countries in the region to address the needs of women and girls;*
- *take a stronger stance in the protection of high profile women and organisations advocating for the human rights and empowerment of women and girls;*
- *fund women's advocacy organisations working in the Indo-Pacific region where women leaders are most at risk;*
- *continue to support capacity building in parliaments, the judiciary, and accountability bodies in the region to support women's promotion into leadership roles; and*
- *advocate at an international level to promote women's empowerment for leadership as a priority goal within the global development agenda.*

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

Globally, Australia is a strong advocate for gender equality and the importance of women's leadership. A key role of the Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls is to advocate internationally on the importance of women's empowerment and leadership. This advocacy is not limited to the Ambassador. Recently in a statement to the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations made by the Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, we called for enhanced recruitment, retention, and advancement strategies for female military, police and civilian personnel and commended the United Nations' initiative to develop a 'talent pipeline' of women Directors in UN Peacekeeping and Special Political Missions. At the General Assembly High-level Thematic Debate on Peace and Security, we called for the leadership of women to be systematically harnessed in peace processes.

Under the Gender Equality Strategy, Australia supports women's organisations and coalitions, including women entrepreneurs, associations and service providers for women, particularly those giving voice to marginalised groups, such as women with disabilities, indigenous women or young women and girls.

In addition to the funding outlined in DFAT's submissions to the Inquiry, in 2015-16 the Gender Equality Fund contributed AUD300,000 to the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre to address a funding gap and enable the continued provision of critical services to women survivors of violence and their children.

In 2016-17 and 2017-18, DFAT's Gender Equality Fund is providing AUD500,000 per annum for 'movement building' among women's rights organisations in Vanuatu. This includes a new emerging women leaders program, and targeted capacity building for women's rights organisations with the potential to strengthen the sector as a whole. The program seeks to reduce violence against women by mobilising organisations in a joint national awareness and prevention campaign. The activities are specifically designed to galvanise women's rights organisations to work in coalition.

The Gender Equality Fund is also providing AUD500,000 over the 2016-17 and 2017-18 financial years to Sonke (a South African NGO) to conduct community advocacy activities, including training activists to carry out range of community mobilisation activities, capacity building of staff and volunteers and advocacy initiatives, with a focus on violence against women in South Africa and Tanzania.

The AFP also continues to collaboratively support the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre to increase gender and human rights awareness within Pacific policing agencies through training and in-country support. Increased support would be predicated on additional funding.

Recommendation 24

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government increasingly promote women's leadership at all levels of government, in business and the public sector, through flagship gender programs such as the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development initiative, and trial pilot models in other countries of the region, which:

- *provide opportunities for women candidates to train and gain leadership skills at all levels of government, including by investing in partnerships with parliamentary and political studies and research centres;*
- *foster research, networking and mentoring opportunities across the professions, public sector and business in partnership with governments, peak bodies, the private sector and civil society, with some targeted to engage young women;*
- *promote women's leadership under country plans, through relevant Memoranda of Understanding, and in contracts with private sector partners and non-government organisations; and*
- *conduct gender analysis and develop individual and longitudinal assessment criteria to better assess outcomes of scholarships and leadership mentoring programs to increase aid effectiveness.*

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

Under the Gender Equality Strategy, Australia advocates for the better representation of women in national and subnational leadership. Australia consistently pursues and advocates for gender equality in regional and multilateral fora, and bilateral dialogues.

Australia is promoting women's leadership in the private sector in South East Asia through the Investing in Women Initiative. This program is working with business coalitions to remove barriers to women's participation and progression, and to promote women's leadership in the workplace. It is supporting women-led small and medium enterprises by increasing access to capital for women-run businesses. Through its advocacy, it also challenges attitudes that prevent women from participating in the economic sector.

AGD is contributing to training, networking and mentoring opportunities for female public servants through its Pacific Legal Policy Twinning Program and Pacific Legal Policy Champions Training Program under PPDP.

The AFP supports promotion of women's leadership through; engagement with the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP); assistance to the Pacific Islands Women's Advisory Network; and scholarship placement of Pacific women police personnel on Australian Institute of Police Management (AIPM) management and leadership programs.

The promotion of women's leadership is included in country plans for the aid program. The aid program for Papua New Guinea explicitly includes support to improve women's leadership and economic opportunities as part of the Enhancing Human Development objective. DFAT's Supplementary Submission to the Inquiry (July 2015) also provided details of bilateral programs promoting women's leadership, including the MAMPU program in Indonesia (page 43) and Pacific Women (page 41).

DFAT has established the Global Tracer Facility, which will undertake the delivery of all routine (three-year cycle) tracing surveys and case studies for Australia Awards alumni. The purpose of the Facility is to enable DFAT to assess the development contributions and public and economic diplomacy outcomes of Australia's investment

in Australia Awards. The Facility will generate high quality information on former Australia Awards holders to provide a strong evidence base to evaluate the impact of Australia Awards on alumni, and by implication, on their home institutions and countries. It will be undertaking sex disaggregated analyses of tracer survey responses and undertake case studies dedicated specifically to gender equality.

Recommendation 25

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government continue to develop and invest in gender awareness components in programs targeting male leaders, including:

- *through international parliamentary visits, delegations and exchanges, and as an adjunct to the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships and other regional leadership initiatives; and*
- *by supporting 'champions for change' initiatives as community outreach through local leadership bodies, organisations and faith-based groups as part of the women's leadership empowerment agenda.*

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

DFAT will continue to engage with male leaders in the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships and other regional leadership initiatives program, including through inviting a male representative from each Pacific parliament to the annual Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships Forum.

DFAT supports various 'champions for change' initiatives, such as the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre's and the Vanuatu Women's Centre's Male Advocacy Programs. These programs engage men as advocates for gender equality and the elimination of violence against women. Other examples include UnitingWorld's Partnering Women for Change Program in the Pacific which is a multifaceted, innovative program that seeks to address gender inequality through working with churches by both transforming attitudes toward traditional views of gender and institutionalised inequality by engaging with churches from a shared faith perspective and through long-term relationship.

The economic empowerment of women

Recommendation 26

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government take a lead role in promoting women's economic development as a key part of the international human rights agenda for the empowerment of women and girls, by:

- *advocating through international fora for an increased investment in women's economic empowerment;*
- *promoting gender centric approaches to women's economic development in key sectors, for example, the agricultural sector through the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research and other relevant regional bodies;*
- *engaging in bilateral, regional and international negotiations to implement obligations and promote ratification of existing international labour*

instruments, harmonising migration and domestic laws, and regulating fees and charges on remittances to better protect migrant workers in a region-wide solution to outmigration.

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation in principle.

Promoting women's economic empowerment is a central theme of the Gender Equality Strategy. Australia has committed to increase aid for trade investments to 20 per cent of the aid program by 2020. The Government is doing this through a focus on women's participation in and access to trade. Australia is supporting women's economic empowerment through partnering with business, to deliver sustainable impact for women in developing countries while achieving commercial returns. The Government's approach includes considering women's specific needs and economic contribution in key sectors. For example, we support women's access to resources and innovations to improve agricultural productivity and income.

Investing in Women (2016-20) is an innovative initiative contributing to women's economic empowerment in South East Asia. Its focus countries are Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines. The project has four components:

- business partnerships to improve gender equality in workplaces of large firms, and their peers, competitors, and supply chains;
- investing in women in business by working closely with impact investors to increase women's access to investment financing, and to tailor their business development services to women's small and medium enterprises;
- providing assistance and advice to improve the effectiveness of other Australian Government economic and aid for trade investments; and
- an advocacy platform to initiate and support public diplomacy activities in South East Asia aimed at raising broad-based awareness to help shift social, organisational and institutional norms that affect or define women's economic opportunity, and related domestic and public roles and responsibilities.

The Business Partnerships Platform (BPP) matches funding from Australian and international businesses, NGOs and foundations for projects that support commercial objectives while advancing Australia's aid investment priorities, thereby delivering sustainable both social impact and commercial returns in developing countries. DFAT contributes to the partnerships through its networks and influence in partner countries, and catalytic funding and knowledge of the business, political and regulatory environment in the developing countries where Australia's aid program operates. The Gender Equality Fund contributed AUD2 million to the BPP in 2015-16 and AUD1 million in 2016-17. The BPP is providing support to projects that have a demonstrated capacity to achieve gender equality outcomes.

Australia continues to advocate for gender equality in our engagement in multilateral and regional fora, including APEC, the East Asia Summit, the Indian Ocean Rim Association, multilateral development banks and economic policy fora such as the G20, where Australia is a key proponent of the 'Women 20' workstream.

Promoting women's economic empowerment is a priority of Australia's aid for trade investments. Aid for trade, which addresses supply-side or domestic constraints to trade, can help provide opportunities for women entrepreneurs and improve the

workplace conditions of women workers. For example, in partnership with the International Trade Centre, Australia is building the export capacity of crafts-women in the Pacific and the Indian Ocean Rim. Also, in partnership with the International Labour Organization, Australia is helping improve the workplace conditions of women workers in garment factories in developing countries in Asia.

We note the Committee's recommendation that the Australian Government launch negotiations to implement obligations and promote ratification of existing international labour instruments, harmonising migration and domestic laws, and regulating fees and charges on remittances to better protect migrant workers in a region-wide solution to outmigration. While an integral element of ongoing advocacy, it is not a stand-alone priority.

Through Australia's Seasonal Worker Programme and other regional labour mobility initiatives, Australia is increasing the quantity and capacity of workers coming to Australia, thereby increasing opportunities for remittances. DFAT is working to reduce the cost of remittances, including through Australia's commitments in the G20.

Recommendation 27

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government increase:

- *overall Official Development Assistance (ODA); and*
- *the proportion of ODA allocated to economic and productive sectors in the Indo-Pacific region in which women are predominant, as a key component of its gender mainstreaming commitments, including by investment in:*
 - *research and programs supporting leadership and female empowerment in agriculture and key employment sectors for women;*
 - *whole of community and local empowerment models, with a focus on changing social attitudes and values to support women's economic empowerment, and on innovative literacy and 'second chance' training programs for women; and*
 - *development of infrastructure to reduce women's household burden and appropriate childcare solutions in partnership with Governments, non-government organisations and the private sector, and promote this through country development plans and development contracts.*

The Australian Government notes the recommendation.

The level of Official Development Assistance will be considered as part of the usual Budget process. The Australian Government is committed to delivering an affordable and effective aid program that reduces poverty and promotes sustainable economic growth. The amount of annual aid is carefully calibrated to ensure effective development outcomes and continued support for aid throughout the Australian community.

The Indo-Pacific will remain the focus of the aid program. In 2016-17, the Government will spend an estimated 92.9 per cent of country-attributable ODA in the Indo-Pacific.

Australia's *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy* has set a target requiring at least eighty per cent of all Australia's aid investments perform effectively in promoting gender equality.

Seven aid for trade investments are being funded by DFAT's Gender Equality Fund, aiming to provide trade-related benefits for women in the Indian Ocean Asia-Pacific region.

Recommendation 28

The Committee recommends that, in negotiating international and regional trade, mining and other development agreements, the Australian Government:

- *have recourse to available research and data on the gendered impacts of this development to ensure it maximises opportunities for both men and women;*
- *require this research where it does not exist; and*
- *deploy relevant research and data to refine and inform programs developed with the purpose of supporting women's economic empowerment across the Indo-Pacific region.*

The Australian Government partially accepts the recommendation.

In trade agreements involving developing country partners, and where development assistance is provided for developing country partners to undertake national interest assessments, the Government encourages consideration of gender impact analysis in such assessments.

Economic cooperation provides opportunities to address gender equality issues through trade agreements. For example, gender is a consideration in our economic cooperation activities under the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand FTA (AANZFTA) Economic Cooperation Support Program (AECSP). The AANZFTA FTA Joint Committee agreed in 2015 to incorporate gender expertise in the design and implementation of AECSP activities to support the program to more effectively address gender equality goals and better achieve development results under the FTA.

Additional research and data deployment would be subject to availability of additional funding.

Improving Australian programs

Recommendation 29

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government:

- *lift the percentage of total Official Development Assistance that is 'primarily' focussed on women and girls from the current five per cent level to between at least eight and 10 per cent over the next five years, particularly as a proportion of aid to the Pacific region;*
- *focus its limited investments and gender expertise on large-scale, long-term (10 years or more) programs designed directly for women's empowerment in key countries, using the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development program as a model; and*

- *focus its investments on programs that directly build local capacity through supporting local women's organisations.*

The Australian Government welcomes the recommendation, but is unable to commit to timeframes at this stage.

It is expected that the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy combined with the Gender Equality Fund (AUD55 million in 2016-17) will accelerate support for gender equality in the Australian development program. The Gender Equality Fund is supporting global gender equality initiatives and flagship investments, as well as jointly funding country and regional programs. It complements funding by country and regional programs for gender specific investments where there are persistent challenges and progress has been slow, and mainstreaming of gender equality effectively into all investments. It also fosters innovative work by private sector and non-government organisations, particularly women's organisations.

One of the flagship investments supported by the Gender Equality Fund is Investing in Women which promotes private sector development, economic growth and gender equality in South East Asia.

Recommendation 30

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government introduce a requirement that all Official Development Assistance programs, regardless of their OECD Development Assistance Committee gender rating, must 'do no harm' to women and girls. Programs must be screened to ensure they will not:

- *further entrench women's disempowerment;*
- *result in unintended violence against women and girls or leave women and girls more vulnerable; or*
- *disadvantage specific sectors of the population of women and girls, including women and girls with disabilities or those from ethnic minorities.*

The Australian Government partially accepts the recommendation and is working to embed gender equality throughout its aid investments.

All Australian aid investments should ensure that gender equality is properly considered. One of our aid program targets is that at least 80 per cent of investments, regardless of their objectives, will do so effectively. This includes ensuring that programs do not disadvantage women or further entrench gender inequalities.

Recommendation 31

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government increase both the percentage and overall number of staff at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) who receive training in gender-sensitive programming, including staff located in Canberra, with the aim of ensuring all staff who play a role in the design and implementation of Official Development Assistance programs have the ability and confidence to apply good practice gender analysis. The Committee further recommends that DFAT:

- *introduce to the Department's performance management system a formal requirement for such training to be completed by staff engaged in providing development assistance;*
- *increase the number of male members of staff participating in this training; and report on*
 - a) the numbers of staff trained, and*
 - b) the percentage of the workforce trained, in the Department's Annual Report.*

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

DFAT currently delivers an e-learning course on gender equality and Australia's aid program. It is mandatory for staff posted to a position working on the aid program and for staff preparing for their first posting. Since the course was launched in October 2014, a total of 253 people have completed the course and a further 39 are currently enrolled and at varying stages of completion.

DFAT conducts a two-day face-to-face Gender Equality Analysis and Development Effectiveness training course. In 2015-16 it was delivered four times in Canberra and five times at Post (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Kenya, Thailand) to a total of 212 participants. Most of the participants were DFAT staff, joined by some contractors and staff from other Australian Government agencies engaged in relevant activities. As of 31 December 2016, we have delivered the two-day course once in Canberra to 13 people (three male) and a new half-day introductory course to sixteen people (one male).

DFAT both in Canberra and at posts continues to develop and expand the gender equality training available to staff in order to strengthen implementation of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy, which makes gender equality and women's empowerment a priority across all work undertaken by the department. Managers are urged to encourage male employees to enrol in gender equality training, recognising the responsibility of all staff to advance the department's gender equality objectives. Gender equality is being integrated across the faculties of the new Diplomatic Academy, as one of its cross-cutting themes.

Recommendation 32

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government take steps to improve data collection and reporting on gender outcomes in aid and diplomacy, by:

- *introducing enhanced collection and reporting of qualitative data to measure cultural and attitudinal change, such as changes in attitudes towards the roles and status of women and girls;*
- *requiring the collection of, reporting and utilisation of baseline data on the status and experiences of women before programs begin so that the efficacy of programs can be measured against that data;*
- *supporting nations in the region to collect and publish gender-disaggregated data, especially with regard to poverty, health, education and experiences of violence;*

- *supporting organisations such as UN Women and Oxfam in their provision of 'hubs' of knowledge, data and resources on women and girls around the world.*

The Australian Government partially accepts the recommendation, noting suggested measures will need to be considered in the specific context and relevance of each program and each country.

The Government will work to ensure gender statistics are available, accessible, analysed, and used to inform policy-making, advocacy and accountability for delivering gender equality and women's empowerment.

For example, the Australian Government is contributing funds to UN Women on a cost-sharing basis for implementation of the "Making Every Woman and Girl Count" program. The program supports and monitors implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through better production and use of gender statistics.

Recommendation 33

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government build upon the good work of Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls by:

- *providing further resourcing for the work of Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls; and*
- *supplementing the role through the additional appointment of a 'Male Champion' for women and girls.*

The Australian Government accepts the recommendation.

The Australian Government continues to build on the good work of the Ambassador for Women and Girls. Since her appointment in December 2013, Ms Natasha Stott-Despoja AM has visited 31 individual countries (including several on multiple occasions, leading to a total of 45 country visits) to advocate for gender equality at the global, regional and bilateral level.

On 21 November 2016, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Women announced the appointment of Dr Sharman Stone as Australia's third Ambassador for Women and Girls. As Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls, Dr Stone will continue to promote Australia's efforts in gender equality and women's empowerment in bilateral, regional and global forums, including at the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum. Dr Stone will take up her position in January 2017.

Dr Stone has played a leadership role in championing the rights of women and girls, both in Australia and globally. She had a distinguished 20-year career in the Australian Parliament, progressing major issues that affect women and girls, including the elimination of child marriages, human trafficking and poverty reduction.

DFAT will continue to look for opportunities to expand the Ambassador's outreach in support of the empowerment of women and girls and will provide necessary resourcing to support a broad and effective program for the Ambassador.

Under DFAT's *Women in Leadership Strategy*, inclusive leadership is reflected in performance agreements and assessments at all levels and become a tested criterion in EL2 and SES postings and promotion/recruitment rounds. DFAT has appointed an SES Band 3 advocate, Mr Gary Quinlan, to promote implementation of the strategy and respond to issues where necessary.

Clarifications and Corrections

Paragraphs 9.170-9.175 *Australia-Asia Program to Combat Trafficking in Persons (AAPTIP)*:

The AAPTIP program is distinct from the AGD's engagement in the *Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime* (Bali Process). The Bali Process is a voluntary regional forum on irregular migration issues co-chaired by Australia and Indonesia. Its membership includes 45 countries from the Asia-Pacific and the UNHCR, IOM and UNODC. AAPTIP is DFAT-led five year, AUD50 million program (2013-18), which aims to reduce incentives and opportunities for trafficking in the ASEAN region.

Paragraph 9.181 *Strongim Gavman Program (SGP) – Law and Justice*:

AGD oversees the Law and Justice component of the SGP. However, the program also involves a range of other Australian Government agencies.

Page 25, para 2.46 and 2.47; page 38 para 2.107; page 41 para 2.118; page 42 paras 2.122 and 2.123; page 43 para 2.131; page 44 para 2.136; page 76 para 3.87; page 88 para 3.129; page 134 para 5.19; page 141 para 5.55; page 147 para 8.17; page 285 para 9.21 – remove 'the' from before Solomon Islands

Page 84 para 3.115 - last dot point should read Vanuatu Women's Centre.

Page 190 para 6.68 – Madagascar and Mozambique are not in East Asia.

Page 232 para 7.103 – Dr Lesley Clark is a women, ie "She noted..."