

**National Gender Equality Policy
2015-2019**

Table of Contents

Abbreviation.....	2
Glossary	3
Acknowledgement.....	4
Forward	5
Preamble	6
Policy Vision	7
Policy Mission.....	7
Introduction and Background.....	8
Linkage to International and Regional Agreements	9
Linkage to National Development Processes	10
Policy Statement and Purpose	12
Operating Principles	12
Strategy Statement.....	13
Enabling Factors.....	16
Policy Strategic Plan of Action	17
Strategic Area 1. Reducing Domestic and Gender Based Violence.....	17
Strategic Area 2. Enhancing Women’s Economic Empowerment.....	17
Strategic Area 3. Promoting Women’s Leadership and Equal Political Participation..	18
Strategic Area 4. Building a Foundation for Gender Mainstreaming	18
Implementation	19
Monitoring, Review and Reporting.....	19
References	20

Abbreviations

BPA: Beijing Platform for Action

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women

CRP: Comprehensive Reform Program

CSO: Civil Society Organisations

DWA: Department of Women's Affairs

FPA: Family Protection Act

FPU: Family Protection Unit

GBV: Gender Based Violence

ICPD: International Conference on Population and Development

JCSSS: Justice and Community Services Sector Strategy

MJCS: Ministry of Justice and Community Services

PAA: Priorities and Actions Agenda

PMO: Prime Minister's Office

TSM: Temporary Special Measures

UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund

VNCW: Vanuatu National Council of Women

VNSO: Vanuatu National Statistics Office

VWC: Vanuatu Women's Centre

Glossary

Gender

Gender refers to socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men.

Gender analysis

Gender analysis a process that examines the roles, needs, issues, knowledge and capacity of men and women and is used to design, implement, monitor and evaluate a particular policy, project or intervention to develop targeted strategies for achieving gender equality.

Gender equality

Gender equality is the equal enjoyment by men and women of rights, socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Equality does not mean that men and women are the same but that their enjoyment of rights, opportunities and life chances are not governed or limited by whether they were born male or female.

Gender mainstreaming

A systematic and multi-sectoral process of integrating the needs and interests of both men and women across all policies and projects, and in the structure and management of governments and organisations.

Human rights

A set of entitlements that belong to a person by virtue of being born and are independent of their sex, religion, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, where they live, or any other status. The fundamental rights and freedoms of human beings are enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and associated protocols, and in the National Constitution of Vanuatu.

Temporary Special Measures

These are targeted interventions introduced through legislative, administrative or other regulatory instruments to attain gender balance in the public sphere. They come in different forms such as the allocation of quotas and reserved parliamentary seats for women. These measures do not discriminate against men; instead they are specifically introduced on a temporary basis to ensure gender parity is reached in political representation and decision making.

Sex and age disaggregated data

Sex and age disaggregated data refers to quantitative or qualitative data that is collected to provide a breakdown of variables according to age and sex. It is used to conduct comparative analysis to identify where differences exist between demographic groups (for example, youth, families, single parents) and between men and women to support gender-responsive decision making and policy formulation.

Women's empowerment

This refers to the process whereby specific actions are taken to ensure women are aware of and have the ability to exercise their rights, voice their concerns and issues, access opportunities and resources, and make decisions that affect their lives. Women's empowerment is an essential step in achieving gender equality as it serves to bring women on an equal playing field with men.

Acknowledgement

The Department of Women's Affairs of the Ministry of Justice and Community Services gratefully acknowledges the assistance, input and support provided by many individuals and organisations in developing this policy. In particular, we sincerely thank:

- the Policy Working Committee for strategic advice and guidance;
- the Australian Aid's Stretem Rod Blong Jastis Program for the provision of technical assistance;
- the Department of Strategic Policy Planning and Aid Coordination for high level input; and
- Provincial Governments for their engagement in the consultation and validation process.

We also extend our gratitude to all stakeholders involved in the development of the policy, for their contribution, insights and suggestions. This policy is a reflection of our shared commitment and support for gender equality in Vanuatu.

Foreword

At the time of independence, our forefathers envisioned Vanuatu in which everyone regardless of their sex, race, place of origin, religious or traditional beliefs, political opinions or language could fully enjoy their rights and freedoms.

Today, the actual situation is very different: nearly two-thirds of women have experienced some form of violence in their lives, there are significantly fewer women employed in the formal sector compared to men, and women are underrepresented in decision making processes, including at the national level where there is no female member of parliament.

The country cannot prosper when half of its population faces considerable inequalities in social, economic and political settings.

Achieving gender equality starts with changing our own behavior and thinking. We must be willing to address the causes of inequality by challenging negative attitudes and gender stereotypes. We must also push for changes in laws and practices that treat men and women unfairly.

I believe this policy reflects a positive step in ending discrimination against women and girls, and in making sure men and boys are part of the process and solution to achieve this. Men and women must work together to make gender equality a reality.

I am grateful to all the individuals and organisations who have contributed to the development of this policy. It is with great pleasure that I present this policy to all men and women of Vanuatu.

Honorable Sato Kilman Livtuvanu(MP)
Prime Minister of Vanuatu
July 2015.

Preamble

The Vanuatu Government recognises that gender equality is part of the fundamental right and duty enshrined in the National Constitution of Vanuatu. Chapter 2, Part I of the Constitution recognises the rights and freedoms of all individuals without discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, place of origin, religious or traditional beliefs, political opinions or language. It also has provisions for the 'special benefit, welfare, protection or advancement of females, children and young persons, members of under-privileged groups or inhabitants of less developed areas' (Chapter 2, Clause 5 (1) (k)).

Gender equality and women's empowerment are also critical to the achievement of the national development vision: "a Just, Educated, Healthy and Wealthy Vanuatu". While the country's Constitution and key national plans and strategies articulate the importance of equality and rights, significant disparities continue to exist between men and women.

This first National Policy on Gender Equality affirms the Vanuatu Government's commitment towards gender equality across all sectors and at all levels of society and the elimination of discrimination and violence against women and girls. The policy builds on previous national policy initiatives and is informed by extensive background research and consultation including:

- the 2006 National Women's Forum;
- the National Plan of Action for Women 2007-2011;
- Gender mapping and associated stakeholder consultations, 2013;
- Policy development consultations undertaken in Torba, Sanma, Penama, Malampa, Shefa and Tafea provinces, 2012-2013; and
- the 2015 national and provincial policy validation.

The future of Vanuatu is shaped by active participation and meaningful contribution of all citizens. Men and women must be equal partners, leaders, decision makers, contributors and beneficiaries of the country's growth and development. As such, while empowering women and girls is important, so too is the education and the engagement of men and boys in ensuring all people in Vanuatu stands on an equal platform and have fair opportunities.

The journey to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment will not be easy; a major shift is needed in societal attitudes and behavior towards men and women. Significant social, economic, cultural and political barriers must be overcome to transform the way people think about and act on gender roles and to improve gender relations within households, communities and the wider society.

As such, navigating through the journey ahead is not a task for the government alone; it requires the determination, investment and support from all actors and institutions, including development partners and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Together, we can make gender equality a right, a duty and a reality for all.

Policy Vision

A safe and secure society where women and men of all ages and abilities live in harmony and work together for a better Vanuatu.

Policy Mission

To promote equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities among men and women and to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls.

Introduction and Background

Gender equality is a condition in which men and women have equal enjoyment of rights, socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Gender equality is a key pillar of sustainable development as it underpins all development processes and efforts.

Over the past 20 years, there has been evident progress for women in Vanuatu. According to the *2009 National Population and Housing Census: Gender Monograph*, the gender gap in literacy and education has narrowed: in some provinces, girls outperformed boys in school attendance.¹ Child mortality rate has significantly declined in the decade between 1999 and 2009 and there has been a notable drop in teenage pregnancy across the country.² In terms of labour participation, the proportion of women in waged employment has substantially increased. A significant achievement over the recent years has been the introduction of the Family Protection Act (FPA) (approved in 2008 and came into effect in 2009), which provides legal protection for victims of violence.

Various government ministries, including agriculture, public works, environment, health, education and lands have developed gender strategies and are taking proactive steps to integrate gender perspectives into their respective sectors.

Despite the notable progress, a number of challenges remain:

- Gender based violence (GBV) is a serious issue affecting women and girls. Approximately 60% of women in Vanuatu have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence in their lives, of whom 21% were left with permanent injuries and 68% were subjected to psychological violence by their intimate partners (Vanuatu Women's Centre 2011).
- Since independence in 1980, only 5 women have been elected into national parliament (World Bank 2013). Recent report indicated that women represent just 3% of total senior/executive government positions (Morgan 2013). More often than not, women are excluded from decision making and are absent from leadership positions.
- Women represent 40% of the labor force in both public and private sectors compared to 60% for men. More women than men are economically inactive, most being full time homemakers caring for children, the elderly, people with disabilities and other family members (Vanuatu National Statistics Office 2011).
- The opportunity for women to set up businesses is limited as they lack access to capital, financial services and markets (Bowman, Cultural, Ellis and Manuel 2009). This is particularly the case for rural women (World Bank 2013).

¹ In Torba, Malampa and Shefa provinces, more boys than girls are not going to school.

² However teenage pregnancy remains high in Torba and the national figure is still high when compared to other Pacific Island Countries

- Despite gender parity being closely reached in school enrolment rates, women remain underrepresented in tertiary education and are less likely to be awarded government scholarships (Vanuatu National Statistics Office 2011).
- As stated in the Combined 4th and 5th CEDAW report, discriminatory laws restrict women's rights to property and inheritance (Government of Vanuatu 2012).
- More women than men (49% and 41% respectively) are involved in the subsistence economy (Vanuatu National Statistics Office 2011), which makes them more susceptible to poverty, climate change, disasters and other livelihood stresses.
- There are more female headed single parent households with children, grandchildren or extended family members compared to men (Vanuatu National Statistics Office 2011).
- Adolescent fertility remains relatively high at 66 births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 years (UNFPA 2014). According to some studies, 60% of pregnancies are mistimed or unwanted (UNFPA 2014).
- Disability is somewhat more common among women (13%) than men (12%). Women with disability are likely to experience educational and employment disadvantage (Vanuatu National Statistics Office 2011).
- Discrimination against women is reinforced through legislation as well as through wider cultural and religious beliefs and practices (Bowman, Cultural, Ellis and Manuel 2009).

Linkage to International and Regional Agreements

Vanuatu is a signatory to a number of international and regional agreements on gender equality and the advancement of women. These include:

- the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Optional Protocol;
- the Millennium Development Goals;
- the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA);
- the Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation;
- the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action;
- the Pacific Plan;
- the Revised Pacific Platform for Action on the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality; and
- the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration.

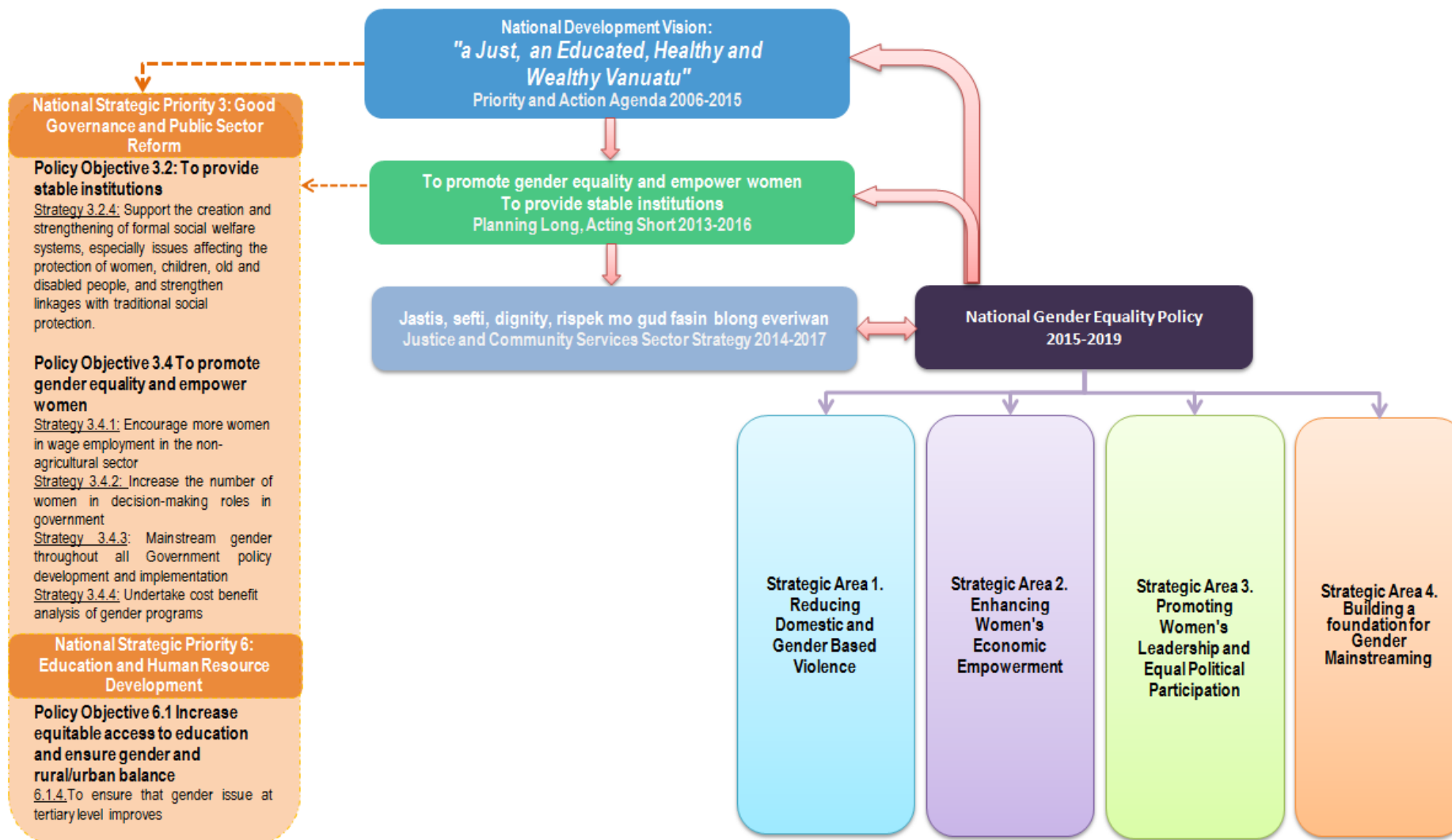
Linkage to National Development Processes

At the national level, the Government of Vanuatu has reiteratively included gender equality in its development agenda, first through the Comprehensive Reform Program (CRP) and later in the Priorities and Action Agenda (PAA) 2006 – 2015. The PAA review in 2012 emphasised the need for greater focus on gender mainstreaming. Subsequently, gender equality and women's empowerment were identified as a key policy objective and carried forward as specific policy interventions in the Planning Long Acting Short (PLAS), a three year strategy that supports the implementation of PAA.³ The PAA will soon be replaced by the new National Sustainable Development Plan 2016-2030.

In addition, strategies for addressing the main social welfare and justice issues affecting women and children in the country are also articulated in the Government's Justice and Community Services Sector Strategy (JCSSS) 2014-2017. This policy is in alignment with these broader national development plans and strategies (refer to Figure 1).

³ Both the PAA and PLAS contain two policy objectives specific to addressing gender and women's issues: Policy Objective 3.2 To provide stable institutions and Policy Objective 3.4 To promote gender equality and empower women.

Figure 1. National Gender Equality Policy: Linkage to National Planning Process



Policy Statement and Purpose

The policy statement for the National Gender Equality Policy is **the Government of Vanuatu will exercise leadership to achieve gender equality and take proactive steps to embed gender equality into its legislation, policies, programs, organisational structures and operational procedures.**

The purpose of the policy is to provide a strategic national framework for enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment in Vanuatu. The policy aims to provide a coordinated structure to enhance the effectiveness, the efficiency and the impact of the various efforts and activities undertaken by all actors and stakeholders.

Operating Principles

The National Gender Equality Policy is underpinned by a set of principles to provide clarity on the intentions of the policy and to facilitate greater cooperation and understanding between organisations involved in its implementation.

There are six principles that guide the implementation of this policy:

1. The **fundamental rights and freedoms of all men and women** in Vanuatu are enshrined in the Constitution (Chapter 2, Clause 5 (1)). It also recognises the duties each person has to themselves and others to ensure everyone can fully enjoy the rights and freedoms (Chapter 2, Clause 7).
2. **Gender equality is about men AND women.** They are both equal partners, have equal roles and share mutual responsibilities in the development and growth of Vanuatu. Overcoming discrimination and violence requires the empowerment of women and girls, as well as the active engagement and education of men and boys.
3. **Gender mainstreaming is a whole of government agenda** rather than a sole responsibility of a single department. Strong leadership from the top, namely the Prime Minister's Office is required to ensure gender-responsive approaches are systematically integrated across all government policies, programs and projects.
4. There is a high level of diversity among men and women; it must be recognised that certain groups are more vulnerable than others, including **girls, young women, women with disabilities, widows and lone female headed households.**
5. The strategies and actions identified in this policy are **practical, achievable, measurable and relevant to the Vanuatu context** to ensure stakeholders from all sectors work in partnership in implementing the policy and in delivering tangible benefits and outcomes to women and men.
6. **The policy framework is not prescriptive.** During the life of the policy, opportunities may arise that are not entirely aligned with the four strategic areas but have clear benefits to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The policy makes room for such opportunities to be explored provided that they contribute to the overall policy vision and mission.

Strategy Statement

The consultations and research undertaken in the development of this policy identified a wide range of gender issues and barriers faced by women and girls. While there were differences among provinces, certain issues were consistently raised by men and women as being a major challenge common to most communities and therefore requiring high level policy direction and intervention.

Lessons from previous national policies on women indicate that focusing on many different issues without sufficient resourcing capacity can curtail implementation efforts; having a more targeted approach to address priority issues can provide greater clarity and focus for policy implementation and resource mobilisation, not only for government but for all stakeholders involved.

Accordingly, the National Gender Equality Policy focuses on and prioritises the following four strategic areas:

- 1.Reducing Domestic and Gender Based Violence**
- 2.Enhancing Women’s Economic Empowerment**
- 3.Promoting Women’s Leadership and Equal Political Participation**
- 4.Building a Foundation for Gender Mainstreaming**

Strategic Area 1. Reducing Domestic and Gender Based Violence

Violence against women and girls is a serious and widespread problem in Vanuatu. It stems from multiple factors and certain social and cultural beliefs and practices exacerbate the problem.

The National Survey on Women’s Lives and Family Relationships 2011 reported that 60% of married women or those with a partner have experienced physical violence, 68% emotional violence and 69% behavioural control by men (VWC 2011). In some communities, bride price and forced marriage are still being practiced (Molony 2014).

The FPA came into force in 2009 and as a result the Family Protection Unit (FPU) was established within the Vanuatu Police. While the FPA has provisions for Authorized Persons and Registered Counsellors to provide protection to victims of GBV in communities where courts do not exist (World Bank 2013), the actual implementation has been slow and complex.

The Government of Vanuatu, together with development partners and CSOs have been delivering a multitude of awareness and advocacy campaigns to stop GBV, often without consistent messaging on GBV issues. A key approach is to link GBV education to understanding about culture, faith and human rights to strengthen the effectiveness of community awareness and advocacy programs.

To reduce domestic and GBV, the provisions of the FPA must be implemented and enforced, access and referrals to justice, health and support systems must be improved, and chiefs, community and church leaders, and teachers must be trained to end and prevent violence against women and girls at home, communities, schools and in all settings. The coordination and partnership between the justice, health, education and local authority sectors, CSOs, faith-based organizations and media is pivotal to achieving this outcome.

Strategic Area 2. Enhancing Women's Economic Empowerment

The growth of Vanuatu's economy relies on an active labour force that consists of both women and men. Similarly, women and men should fully and equally benefit from economic development opportunities.

The majority of people live a subsistence lifestyle and rely on livelihood activities as their main source of income. Many women are engaged in the informal and traditional economy, including production and processing of food and cash crops (e.g. copra) and handicrafts. Income derived from such activities is vital for paying for food, clothes, and energy, medicine and school fees.

Lone female headed households are more likely to rely on the sale of goods as their source of income than lone male headed households (VNSO 2011). They are also likely to own fewer possessions (e.g. canoes, cars, boats and TV). The situation for women in rural and remote areas is more limited compared to women in urban areas: they lack access to education, training, financial services and markets.

Women's participation in the formal labour market stands at 40% for both private and public sector compared to 60% for men (VNSO 2011). Lack of basic numeracy, literacy and financial skills among women restricts their chances of entering the labour market, obtaining formal employment and establishing their own businesses. Educational attainment is a key determinant of employment outcomes. Although the gap is narrowing, girls are less likely than boys to be enrolled in primary, secondary and tertiary education (VNSO 2011).

Enhancing women's economic empowerment requires the provision of and improvements in physical infrastructure (e.g. roads, transport, market facilities, telecommunication) as well as training services and supportive environments that enable women to participate, make decisions and own productive resources. Legislative changes are also needed to remove discriminatory barriers against women and to ensure equal and fair working conditions for both women and men.

Strategic Area 3. Promoting Women's Leadership and Equal Political Participation

Ni-Vanuatu women and women's organizations have been a cornerstone of Vanuatu state building process. They played a key role at the time of independence as well as in the shaping the country's development. Despite this, only five women have won seats in national parliament since independence in 1980. At the last national election in 2012, no woman was elected as a member of parliament, despite having 17 female candidates contesting (Llo-Noka and Dalesa-Saraken 2010).

In 2011, the Department of Women's Affairs (DWA) proposed for the establishment of reserved seats for municipal elections as part of the amendment of the Municipalities Act. The Council of Ministers approved the introduction of Temporary Special Measures (TSM) in May 2013, which allocates 30-34% special quota for women in Municipal Councils, effective only for four year terms (16 years). The quota system was used for the 2014 Port Vila elections in which five women were elected. The quota is yet to be applied for municipal elections in Luganville and Lanekel.

The Gender Profile of Political Parties and Elections indicated that for women to have an opportunity to be elected, they need training in electoral processes as well as campaign support, political party backing and access to finance (Llo-Noka and Dalesa-Saraken 2010).

The promotion of women's leadership and equal political participation requires attitudinal and structural changes in existing political and decision making systems. First and foremost, voter education at the community level is critical for mobilising acceptance and support from both men and women towards women's involvement in politics and decision making. TSM must be adopted for

national, provincial and municipal elections to ensure the representation of women at these levels. The recruitment and promotion of women into senior managerial positions in public and private sectors must also be encouraged.

Strategic Area 4. Building a Foundation for Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is identified as a key strategy within the PLAS which states: “*Mainstream gender throughout all government policy development and implementation*” (Strategy 3.4.1). However the process of gender mainstreaming has remained piecemeal and sector-specific.

According to the gender mapping undertaken by the World Bank (2013), poor political will, lack of technical, human and financial capacities, misconceptions about gender being ‘women’s issues’, weak accountability and absence of incentives in tracking and evaluating progress constrain gender mainstreaming across the government.

While some ministries and departments have developed sectoral gender plans and strategies (i.e. health, education, lands, agriculture, public works), there is a need for systematically integrating gender responsive approaches to all government policies, programs and projects (Government of Vanuatu 2012).

Gender analysis must be undertaken in the design, implementation and evaluation of all government policies and projects to ensure interventions result in positive benefits for both men and women. National budget planning processes should also include gender assessment. The collection and analysis of sex and age disaggregated data, and sharing of such data across ministries, are a necessary part of gender analysis. Discriminatory provisions within existing legislation such as those relating to citizenship, property and inheritance rights, and marriage must be amended to comply with Vanuatu’s obligations to CEDAW (Government of Vanuatu Combined Fourth and Fifth Periodic Report 2012).

As gender equality is a fundamental pillar for sustainable development, gender mainstreaming requires high level leadership and support to ensure it becomes part of conventional practice across government ministries and department. Consequently, gender mainstreaming is not a task to be delegated solely to DWA as its primary focus remains on women’s empowerment. This policy recognises that DWA will work closely with the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) to build a foundation for gender mainstreaming with a view that by the end of the policy lifetime, gender mainstreaming is fully driven by the PMO as a whole-of-government agenda.

Enabling Factors

The policy identifies enabling factors or preconditions for facilitating the realization of the four strategic areas of the policy. These factors have emerged from the synthesis of the 13 critical factors outlined in the previous National Plan of Action for Women 2007-2011 and through the analysis of gender mapping (2013), PAA, PLAS and JCSSS. The Government of Vanuatu is committed to working with Development Partners, CSOs and the private sector to ensure dedicated budgets and resources are committed towards the following enabling factors and in turn create a conducive environment in which gender equality and women's empowerment can be achieved.

Education – Literacy and numeracy are fundamental to the empowerment of women and girls, and as such they need fair and equal access to education and training throughout their lives. Education of men and boys are pivotal in transforming discriminatory gender attitudes and practices, and in attaining equality and respect between men and women.

Health – The emotional, psychological and physical wellbeing are critical to the development of all individuals. Women and girls have the right to access to nutritious food, safety, sexual and reproductive health, family planning, maternal and child health services, disability services, medical facilities, counselling and support services.

Environment – This includes both the natural and the built environment, as well as the associated ecosystems and services, land and physical infrastructure that are vital to human survival and to livelihood activities.

Information Access – Obtaining accurate, reliable and timely information through appropriate communication channels is an important element in the empowerment of women and girls. Whether it is information on health, education, employment, natural disasters or elections, women and girls are entitled to access the same level of information as men and boys in order to help them make important life choices.

Societal Institutions – Gender norms are reinforced through societal institutions such as churches, schools, work, justice system, communities and families. Having institutions that respect and treat men and women fairly and recognize their abilities, knowledge and strengths is a key enabler for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Human Rights – Recognizing everyone is born equal with human rights and that rights cannot be taken away from them is a prerequisite to achieving equality between men and women. All individuals and institutions are accountable for respecting and upholding human rights.

Policy Strategic Plan of Action

The Strategic Plan of Action has been developed as a vehicle for translating policy statements into practice and for mobilizing action and support from the government, CSOs, faith-based organizations, development partners, private sector, educational and training providers and communities over the lifetime of the policy. Each strategic area is accompanied by a set of key strategies and target outcomes.

Strategic Area 1. Reducing Domestic and Gender Based Violence

Key Strategies

- 1.1 Prevention of GBV through public awareness and advocacy
- 1.2 Actively engage men and boys to end violence against women and girls
- 1.3 Strengthen and improve protective, social and support services including protection of Women, Children and person with Disabilities in times of emergencies.

Indicators

- # of communities reached with messages of human rights, gender equality, GBV, Faith and Culture
- Evidence on causal factors and costs of domestic and GBV researched and documented
- Increase in reported incidences of physical and sexual violence against women and girls
- Authorized Persons and Registered Counsellors are piloted at least 3 Area Councils of each Provincial Government. in all provinces
- Survivors of violence have access to health services, counselling and support
- Disaster risk management and planning addresses GBV prevention and response.
-

Strategic Area 2. Enhancing Women's Economic Empowerment

Key Strategies

- 2.1 Ensure equal employment opportunity for men and women.
- 2.2 Improve productivity, skills and income for women including young women and women with Disabilities engaged in informal and traditional economy.
- 2.3. Identify opportunities for boys and girls to pursue their educational and career pathways
- 2.4 Promote and support women in business in both rural and urban areas

Indicators

- Increased percentage of women employed in wage employment within private and public sectors
- Equal employment opportunities for women and men are legislated and enforced
- At least 10% increase productivity, skills and incomes for women in the informal and traditional economy
- % of Gender parity is achieved in both secondary and tertiary education by 2017
- Increased 10 % numbers of women owning business by 2019.

Strategic Area 3. Promoting Women's Leadership and Equal Political Participation

Key Strategies

- 3.1 Raise community awareness, acceptance and support for women's leadership and participation in decision making
- 3.2 Encourage political parties to increase membership and participation of women
- 3.3 Amend relevant legislation to ensure women's political representation at the municipal, provincial and national levels
- 3.4 Increase the number of women in executive positions within public and private sectors including leadership role within churches and community base institutions.
- 3.5 Promote women's representation on national taskforces and working committees

Indicators

- At least 10 % increase in the membership and positions held by women in political parties
- Municipalities Act, Decentralization Act and People's Representation Act amended and temporary special measures are in place for municipal, provincial and national elections
- At least 10% increase in the number of women in senior managerial positions within the public and private sector including leadership role within churches and community base institutions.
- At least 30% of members of government taskforces and working committees are women

Strategic Area 4. Building a Foundation for Gender Mainstreaming

Key Strategies

- 4.1 Enhance the financial, technical and staffing capacity of DWA, Ministry of Justice and Community Services, National Human Right Committee and DESSPAC to fulfil its coordination and advisory function for the implementation of this policy
- 4.2 Advance gender equality outcomes within PAA including in the national budget and across all government sectors
- 4.3 Initiate research on relevant issues related to women's issues and gender equality

Indicators

- DWA has at least 30 % increase in financial, technical and staffing capacity to coordinate and advice on the implementation of this policy.
- Enhanced collaboration through MOUS and operational structure between institutions and organizations including women's organizations to advocate, raise awareness and promote this policy

- Gender Responsive Budgeting introduced and all government ministries have a gender strategy in place.
- CEDAW articles are embedded into legislation and statutory reforms of government.
- Gender analysis is carried out and sex and age disaggregated data collected for all government policies, programs, projects and budgets.
- Evidence-based research on women's issues and gender equality is conducted and shared between government, development partner and CSOs.
- Climate change and disaster risk reduction policies, projects and governance mechanisms such as NAB are gender responsive.

Implementation

A strong and well-resourced national women's machinery is necessary for coordinating efforts on the implementation of this policy. Previous policies on women relied heavily on DWA as a lead agency for implementing policy actions yet it did not have the technical or financial capacity to take on such a role. Accordingly, this policy recognizes the need for a proper budget, staffing and capacity building for DWA to take on coordination and advisory functions for the implementation of the policy.

Policy implementation is not a sole responsibility of DWA nor will it lead all of the strategies outlined in this policy. Instead, DWA will leverage strategic partnerships with other government ministries, provincial governments, development partners, CSOs and faith-based organizations. DWA will also support stakeholders who are better positioned or have the expertise and resources to lead the implementation of the strategies identified in this policy.

A three-year gender equality plan has also been developed for all provinces to implement the policy at provincial and community levels. DWA's gender officers will work closely with their respective provincial governments to coordinate the implementation and monitoring of the plans.

Monitoring, Review and Reporting

The National Gender Equality Policy is supported by a separate monitoring and evaluation plan to track the progress of the implementation process and to identify areas where further efforts and resourcing are required.

DWA will be primarily responsible for monitoring the policy through the review of its annual work plans and its internal monitoring processes. DWA will also be responsible for receiving and advising on progress reports from Provincial Governments on their progress in implementing the provincial gender equality plans.

A Policy Committee will be established to provide independent oversight and tracking of the policy progress. The Committee will be responsible for holding the Government to account in addressing the strategic areas of the policy and will provide guidance and recommendations on strengthening policy coordination and implementation efforts.

It is important to note that there will be a review of PAA and PLAS in 2015 and a new National Sustainable Development Plan will come into effect in 2015-2016. Consequently, the policy should be closely monitored to ensure it continues to be aligned with and is linked to the strategic objectives of these broader planning processes.

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