



PRESS RELEASE

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3rd Pacific Feminist Forum begins: Feminist solidarity key to pushing agenda for women's and human rights in the Pacific

Embracing the collective power of our movements, more than one hundred and fifty feminists, women's rights defenders and human rights activists from twenty countries in the Pacific region are sharing, learning and strategising as the much anticipated 3rd Pacific Feminist Forum (PFF) begins today at the Pearl Resort.

In a multitude of colours, participants danced and sang as they welcomed each other to the space – the 3rd PFF being the culmination of eleven national feminist forums from the region that were organised simultaneously before the major event.

The forum is supported by the Australian Government through both the We Rise Coalition and the Pacific Women Lead at Pacific Community (PWL at SPC), and UN Women through the global Spotlight Initiative of the United Nations which has received generous support from the European Union.

Today we also celebrated two renowned feminists from the region – Shamima Ali, Coordinator of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC) and Noelene Nabulivou, DIVA for Equality Fiji's (DIVA Fiji) Political Advisor, who in turn, acknowledged the work of women's and human rights defenders in the region who continue to fight for gender justice and equality despite the many barriers.

"Feminist work is to change civilization so it's necessarily hard and complex as much as it can be joyous. It is tough and beautiful - that's the reality of doing work that matters," Noelene Nabulivou said.

The activists were challenged to continue to fight for each other and speak out against the injustices faced by women and girls in the different Pacific communities as Shamima reiterated the importance of maintaining Pacific solidarity to change patriarchal ideologies.

"We don't have to like each other, we don't have to agree with each other's policies, but when it comes to the crunch, we all come together. We'll keep coming together. Loose the fear, if you

believe what you are saying is right, you stand up and fight for it. Feminists go out with a bang, not with a whimper,” Shamima said.

An interactive and exciting programme has been planned for the three day forum where the Pacific feminists will reflect and strategise on key issues around gender equality and women’s human rights, particularly urgent as the forum has been organised after the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which further exacerbated the challenges faced by women globally.

As feminists and advocates of women’s rights in the Pacific, there is an urgency of regional movement building with growing gender inequalities in the face of climate tragedies, tropical disasters, political instabilities, the continued impact of COVID-19, the lack of women in leadership and decision making spaces on top of the very high rates of gender based violence in the region.

Representatives from supporting donors and development partners were also present during the session and reaffirmed their support for the work and the feminist movement in the region.

Participating feminists in the inaugural PFF in 2016 put together the Pacific Feminist Charter for Change and the second forum in 2019 which produced the Pacific Feminist Charter Action Plan (2019).

The 3rd PFF, held four years later is a chance to reflect on and build from the actions stipulated in the two previous charter and action plan, and the activists look forward to sharing their demands in this year’s outcomes statement and the opportunity to amplify the issues of some of the most vulnerable women in the world in the backdrop of the changing global environment.

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The 3rd PFF Working Group includes Sista, Voice For Change - Jiwaka, PNG, Talitha Project, Tonga Pacific Disability Forum, Kiribati Association of Non-Governmental Organisation - KANGO, femLINKpacific, Brown Girl Woke and the Fiji Women's Rights Movement.

