



TUVALU

Statement

Delivered by

Honourable ~~Polihina Teina~~
Minister of ~~Home Affairs~~

at

The 56th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

29th February 2012, New York

(Check Against Delivery)

Permanent Mission of Tuvalu to the United Nations
800 Second Avenue suite #400

New York, NY 10017

Tel: 1-212-490 0534

Fax : 1-212-808 4055

Madam Chair
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates

It is a great honour for me to address the Fifty -Sixth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. I wish to congratulate you on your election as Chair and extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

Madam Chair,

Tuvalu Government is committed to its advancement of women both in the urban and the rural areas of our four islands. This commitment is explicitly reflected in its Development Policy. At the international level, Tuvalu Government is committed to fulfil its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

In Tuvalu, women have always played a vital role in the strong arm of the family. Since before outside developments, and their way into rural areas, rural women have been major catalysts in the overall affairs of their families and homes, their villages, and communities. They have been considered the experts in most critical areas of life in society from rearing children to managing women committees and savings groups. They saw things from a whole new picture. And their contributions have had a major impact on the overall economy of Tuvalu although it has been largely undocumented.

It is in this regard that we must continue to support rural women who must daily cope with sustaining the welfare of family members and combating the major challenges of development. We are convinced that the advancement of rural women in all aspects of life is also the advancement of society.

Madam Chair,

The establishment of the Department of Women Affairs is a clear commitment of the Tuvalu Government in the development of women in

partnership with the NCO Bay, National Council of Women - and with development partners, programmes of profound importance have been implemented to enable women in rural areas enjoy better livelihood.

The importance of addressing gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women is a priority. Although there have been issues of cultural, at conflict, women are gradually learning and asserting their rights.

On economic development, rural women have access to a micro credit scheme through the National Council of Women, local government and Department Kōwhiri, Wairākau.

On health issues, the Department of Health continues to have programs such as cervical screening and bringing expectant mothers from rural areas to deliver their first-born child on the main island.

On the issue of environment, projects such as replanting of 'togo' (moneroves) and 'kie' (pandanus) have been encouraged for providing resilience of communities to the impacts of climate change and improving materials for handicrafts.

Madam Chair,

Much has been done at the national level to enable women in rural areas to participate fully in the economy. There have been obstacles in the way. However, the Government will continue to support the advancement of rural women as they contribute to the overall development of our country.

I thank you.