

Thank you, chair. I'm Viva Tatawaqa, a Management Collective member of DIVA for Equality Fiji, QAQA Grassroots Young Feminist network and RESURJ, speaking on behalf of the Women's Major Group.

As a grassroots community organizer and mobilizer from the Pacific the **challenges with water, sanitation and hygiene** is one that we come across every single day. In 2015 it was reported that almost 70% of people living in the Pacific are without access to improved sanitation, women have 50% rate of unmet contraceptive and almost 50% lack access to improved drinking water supplies.

For us on the frontline, we also witness and live the consequences of inadequate access to water and sanitation on the privacy, safety and wellbeing of women, girls and gender-diverse people.

Insufficient access to WASH is worsened by the climate crisis, which is projected to significantly increase water scarcity and stress. DRR & Humanitarian response has led to greater MH action but need to strengthen gender focus;

This includes in education and health care settings - lack of access to water disrupts girls and women's access education, prevents them from accessing sexual and reproductive health services and impacts their livelihoods as frontline health workers.

Beyond household work burdens, women and girls also face specific challenges caused by insufficient water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in schools and healthcare facilities including lack of menstrual health services —disrupting their education, preventing them from accessing sexual and reproductive health and rights care services.

We recommend that governments at the national and sub-national levels:

- Recognize access to water and sanitation as human rights and ratify, domesticate and implement related international human rights instruments
- Prioritize safe sanitation services in rural and maritime areas in consultation with communities and organizers
- Ensure that community-owned water services are adequately resourced, that the people who run them are trained and supported, and that gender equality is promoted throughout
- Ensure strengthened education focus on WASH, go beyond schools, use gender justice approaches AND tackle harmful norms

Water, sanitation and hygiene management decisions are not gender neutral. Differences and inequalities between genders influence how individuals and communities use and make decisions about water needs to be inclusive and participative. Thank You.