



JOINT PRESS RELEASE – Office of the Ombudsman & UN Women

Apia, 19 August 2022 – Samoa launches a first of its kind Talanoa Toolkit for Village-Based Advocates Against Family Violence.

A first of its kind Talanoa Toolkit for village-based advocates against family violence was launched in Samoa today by the Office of the Ombudsman/NHRI, in collaboration with the UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office through the Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (Pacific Partnership). The Pacific Partnership is funded primarily by the European Union, and the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, and UN Women, and is led by the Pacific Community (SPC), UN Women and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

The Talanoa Toolkit, a resource initiated from recommendations of the National Inquiry into Family Violence 2018 and the Village Family Safety Committee Pilot Project 2019-2021 serves as a primary prevention tool to be used by a broad range of actors to facilitate conversations and dialogues to address family violence in community and family settings. It seeks to ensure that any persons, regardless of lived experience, socio economic background, status, identity have equal access to the knowledge and skills necessary to facilitate conversations and dialogues on gender-based violence and family violence prevention in their respective communities.

The overall purpose of the Talanoa Toolkit is to ensure that conversations about addressing family violence within villages and families by village-based advocates are guided by consistent messaging being upheld by policy makers, development partners, and key stakeholders providing first response and family violence prevention services in Samoa. The key messages contained in the Talanoa Toolkit aims to encourage courageous and empowering conversations in addressing intimate partner violence, violence against children and sexual violence in Samoa.

Associate Minister of Prime Minister Office and Cabinet also for Office of the Ombudsman Tofā Manuleleua Paletasala Tovale delivered the keynote speech and acknowledged the role of village-based advocates against family violence in promoting violence free families and communities,

“The Talanoa Toolkit is an essential resource for advocates against family violence in communities whether village representatives, committees, organizations, church ministers or youth and can be adapted and used in any community awareness on family violence prevention in districts, villages, churches, schools and families”. He further added *“discussions of family violence can be a sensitive issue but having this resource in hand is a tool to help facilitate meaningful discussions and continue to promote key messages by service providers, the Government and partners in the elimination of violence against women and children in Samoa”* Manuleleua in his keynote remarks.

The Ombudsman Luamanuvao Katalaina Sapolu acknowledged the Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls for their support and hopes that the Toolkit will be a valuable resource for all village-based advocates against family violence in Samoa.

The Acting Officer in Charge of UN Women Fiji MCO, Ms. Abigail Erikson congratulated NHRI on the launch of the Talanoa Toolkit, acknowledging its importance to Samoan communities in discouraging deeply rooted mindsets and practices that continue to perpetuate family violence in homes and communities, thus preventing further harm to women and girls and their families.

“While the Talanoa Toolkit is informed by global standards on prevention and survivor-centered support, it is written in Samoan and English, and contextualized to reflect Samoan cultural practice. We commend the effort undertaken to ensure this level of accessibility.

The launch for the resources was followed by an introductory session into the resource with selected village-based advocates to raise their awareness about the toolkit and how they can be effectively used for their own purpose.

The Talanoa Toolkit was distributed to all village representatives and organizations in attendance.

A copy of the guide in Samoan and English can be downloaded from our website using this link: [Full – \[English\]](#) [\[Samoan\]](#) Summary – [\[English\]](#) [\[Samoan\]](#)

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Background on the Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls

The Pacific region has some of the highest rates of violence against women recorded in the world – twice the global average with an estimated two in every three Pacific women impacted by gender-based violence. Along with high rates of violence – a grave human rights violation - women and girls in the Pacific region experience constant and continual inequalities including low levels of participation in decision-making, limited economic opportunities, and restricted access to critical services and rights.

The Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (Pacific Partnership) brings together governments, civil society organisations, communities and other partners to promote gender equality, prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG), and increase access to quality response services for survivors.

The EUR27.6 million programme is funded primarily by the European Union (EUR12.7m) with targeted support from the Governments of Australia (EUR11.1m) and New Zealand (EUR3.2m) and cost-sharing with UN Women (EUR0.6m) and is led by the Pacific Community (SPC), UN Women and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.