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***ANALYSIS OF EDUCATION POLICY: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF
ENSURING GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION***

The attached paper, prepared by Gayle Nelson for the Forum Secretariat, presents information on the connections between education policies, gender equality and social and economic benefits to Pacific countries. The Executive Summary and Recommendations have been prepared by the Forum Secretariat for the consideration of Ministers.

ANALYSIS OF EDUCATION POLICY: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF ENSURING GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper is to identify a framework of education policy strategies for the Pacific that will support and promote both Pacific values and gender equality in education. The paper recognises the important role of accurate and adequate education indicators.

2. From a human rights perspective at the international level, gender quality in education is a component of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). All Forum member governments have ratified this convention. Gender equality and non-discrimination in education is also part of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

3. Studies have indicated that where success in girls' education projects has been achieved, evaluations also noted increased benefits to boys. In some countries boys have lower enrollments or are achieving less than girls despite the fact that girls tend to carry a heavier burden of household responsibilities at all ages.

4. The benefits of gender equal education include:

- contributes significantly to women's ability to assure their families' health and nutrition and supports reproduction of national human resources;
- higher participation rates of girls' in education produces higher participation rates in the workforce and greater labour market productivity.

5. Policy issues that must be incorporated into an integrated framework include:

- ensuring education facilities are within reach of all children and are secure and safe for all children;
- quality issues including teacher training in awareness of gender and education issues;
- quality of the curriculum – a curriculum that takes advantage of Pacific values;
- vocational programmes and skills training of all kinds targeted to girls as well as boys and establishing community support for programmes that keep girls in schools;
- community organisation and public involvement in monitoring education have been identified as contributing factors to improving access, quality and options in education.
- facilitating the involvement of NGOs as partners in education.

6. Constraints to effective and sustainable policy include:

- lack of reliable data – there are large gaps in data about education; countries have to date produced different data sets and use different reporting frameworks;
- lack of commitment and capacity for integrated planning, policy development and implementation;
- lack of sustained funding within government recurrent budgets.

Recommendations

That Ministers:

- (a) *Recognising and building on existing initiatives, and in fulfillment of existing commitments to the Pacific Platform for Action, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Education for All and the World Social Summit, encourage their governments to undertake the following actions in support of the above Principle Statements:*
- *At the national level undertake gender analysis of education access and quality and use findings to support education policy revision and to ensure allocation of resources in support of gender equal education;*
 - *Collaborate with Ministers for Finance and Economics to support gender analysis of budget processes in order to highlight ways in which government budgets can more effectively support sustainable and equitable education and HRD;*
 - *Encourage teacher training institutions to utilise existing regional and national services that are providing gender awareness training and data collection training;*
 - *Direct vocational and technical training institutions to provide data on enrollment and completion rates for men and women to government on an annual basis and encourage them to develop institutional gender policies in line with existing constitutional mandates and government commitments to gender equality.*
 - *Review rules and regulations about treatment of students who become pregnant while in school and those with children to ensure they are not discriminated against under existing law.*
- (b) *Direct the Forum Secretariat to undertake, in the next calendar year, the following actions identified in support of the above Principle Statement promoting gender equitable education policies:*
- *Work with other regional and international agencies to develop quantitative and qualitative indicators and data categories to monitor gender equality in education. Devise strategies to include these indicators and categories in existing and new program activities such as household surveys and censuses across the region.*

ANALYSIS OF EDUCATION POLICY: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF ENSURING GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

Purpose

This paper has two primary objectives. The first objective is to present Ministers with information from current international and regional research that explores the social, economic and environmental development issues resulting when boys and girls or men and women do or do not have equal opportunities in education systems. The second objective is to identify a framework of education policy strategies for the Pacific that will support and promote both Pacific values and gender equality in education and thereby result in improved development outcomes. An underlying theme throughout the paper supports the need for increased data collection that specifically monitors different education indicators over time between male and female population groups. Monitoring and analysis of such data can lead to more informed and therefore improved decision-making by leaders.

Background

2 In the Pacific there are a variety of underlying causes for gender inequality in education. One historical cause is that the education systems that were introduced by the major churches in the early stages of political and economic colonization were discriminatory against girls and women. Churches were the first organizations to introduce education in the Pacific and they reflected the discrimination that was prevalent throughout western societies in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Male dominated church hierarchies also exacerbated these biases. When education for girls was introduced it tended to focus on replicating western divisions of labour, rather than the diverse realities of Pacific cultures. Women were considered to be the primary care-givers and homemakers, and men were income earners and agriculturalists. Hence, girls were relegated to home economics type curricula and boys were taught more comprehensive subject matter.

3 More recently in the Pacific national governments have been undergoing structural adjustment and economic reform that have led, in some cases, to development of policies for educational reform that include moves toward decentralisation of responsibility for education, user pay systems and privatisation. This paper strives to report on the gender impacts of such policies. However, because of the recent nature of these changes and a lack of data, some findings remain anecdotal and reference is made to similar but more complete studies done in other regions of the world.

4 Over the past 30 years, international analyses of development processes have pointed to the positive relationship between reduced gender inequalities in education and improved development policy outcomes. Initially most research was undertaken in the areas of population and health; current research continues to identify benefits in these areas from ensuring girls receive well-rounded educations inclusive of all subject matter but has also identified a wide range of additional socio-economic benefits.¹ Monitoring of environmental issues has also highlighted the impact of education on natural resource management and food security. When women are the primary agriculturalists or managers of specific resources, ensuring equal access to, and quality of, education for girls and boys

¹ UNICEF. State of the Worlds Children 1999. <http://www.unicef.org>

can have a significant positive impact on results of development policy in environmental management.²

5 Over the past decade, studies have been conducted internationally on how more gender equality in education positively affects macro economic issues such as employment related revenue, production of tradable goods, and national economic growth.³ These macro-level policy outcomes are also linked to savings to governments in areas such as reduced population pressure on infrastructure services, environmental management and social costs in sectors such as health, welfare and law and order. Therefore although results are realised over the long term, governments reap large economic gains for all investments in education. By ensuring that education promotes full involvement of girls and women governments can double national benefits from scenarios where girls are not involved. Such gains can be further enhanced when education policy is integrated with gender sensitive policy and planning initiatives in other government sectors.

6 As mentioned above, there has been little research done on these topics in the Pacific region, and analysis is currently constrained by the lack of reliable data. Education data that does exist in the Pacific points to sub-regional, national and intra-country ethnic variations. This means there is a need for tailored policy solutions within consistent gender analysis frameworks. The 2000 Forum Economic Ministers Meeting has given direction for development of a regional workplan to assist countries to examine national budgets for allocations to gender equality in HRD. Collaboration on this type of analysis will enable Education Ministers to formulate policy revisions to ensure budgets are effectively allocated to meet gender equality commitments within their individual countries.

7 From a human rights perspective at the international level, gender equality in education is a component of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). All Forum member governments have ratified this convention. Gender equality and non-discrimination in education is also part of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which has been independently ratified by five Forum island countries⁴, Australia and New Zealand. All Forum Island Countries have endorsed the Pacific Platform for Action that calls for Pacific-wide ratification of CEDAW and sets gender equal education as a priority. Additionally Pacific countries are party to the International Conference on Population and Development and the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and have pledged to work toward universal access and quality in education - linking education to sustainable development and recognizing that gender inequality inhibits progress toward these goals.

8 Ratification of the international conventions such as CEDAW and CRC legally obligate countries to take steps toward implementation of those frameworks. The CEDAW and CRC frameworks provide sound guidance to all countries for increasing gender equality in education – regardless of whether they have ratified. Countries can also report on all new initiatives for gender equality in education to international monitoring bodies in fulfillment of their obligations.

9 Many Pacific countries have experience with gender and education through donor sponsored projects such as curriculum reviews and revisions that give balanced attention to girls and boys needs both in teaching materials and in the classroom. Additionally a number of regional donors have proactive scholarship programs oriented to ensuring gender balance in overseas placements. However, gender disparities continue to exist (to varying degrees and in varying categories) in educational inputs and outcomes in all Pacific countries. Some reviewers of this paper feel that this is a because

² Agenda 21. Chapter 25 ‘Children and Youth in Sustainable Development’.
<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/agenda21chapter25.htm>

³ “Enhancing Women’s Participation in Economic Development” World Bank Policy Paper.
<http://www.worldbank.org/gender/how/enhance.htm>

⁴ Fiji, PNG, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu have ratified CEDAW. Cook Islands and Niue are subject to the convention through their affiliation with New Zealand.

initiatives have not created adequate community ownership, do not adequately reflect girls and women's actual experiences and do not adequately incorporate cultural values.⁵

Discussion

10 There are several reasons why it is difficult to pin down exactly what is happening in the Pacific with regard to gender equality in education. First there are significant gaps in available statistical data and much of what is available is not comparable between countries or data sets. Annex 1 presents some currently available data on gender and education. Annex 2 presents some of the indicators that would give a clearer picture of the Pacific situation and which could be built into existing statistical collection exercises.

11 Secondly, statistical categories and analysis have not kept pace with the current development directions and impacts they are having on gender equality in education. Two areas of change that are creating or increasing gender inequality in some countries are (i) structural adjustment programs (as discussed above) and (ii) the social and political disruptions caused by economic instability and moves to cultural, racial and ethnic segregation. Structural adjustment, or economic reform programs, require rationalization of spending on education and do not seem to be in tune with population growth, existing problems with the quality of teacher training, and payment of salaries that will keep qualified teachers in their own countries. The results is that there are fewer school spaces, fewer qualified teachers per child, and curricula that are out of tune with employment markets (SPFS 1998. Cook Islands). There is more competition for fewer school spaces (in many countries boys are favoured over girls) and the development of sound unbiased curricula and teachers' ability to deliver it is compromised. Additionally general reductions in the size of the public service in many countries and the introduction of more 'user pay' education policies are having a negative impact on people's ability to pay school fees and sponsor rural relatives to attend school. Again, cultural and historical preference in most countries seems to favour investment in boys education when financial resources are limited. The social disruption caused by ethnic and political conflicts in the region has had similar negative impacts on education. In Bougainville education for both boys and girls has been severely curtailed by conflict and in both PNG and the Solomon Islands, safety considerations cause girls to be kept home from school. Conflict also causes loss of income for a variety of reasons, again restricting families from educating all their children and resulting in cycles of negative development due to limited capacity development at the community level.

12 Thirdly, it is difficult to clearly understand what is happening because education is largely a qualitative issue with qualitative results that are not easily measured. The results are influenced by a multitude of complex and inter-related factors – such as poverty, culture, ethnicity, geographic location and the rapid rate of social change – coming together to create some of the problems mentioned above. The following discussion presents information based on (i) gender analysis models that are designed to promote understanding about how different groups are impacted by policies; (ii) the recognized and documented benefits of reducing gender inequality in education; and (iii) lessons learned from existing gender and education policy initiatives. This will include examination of constraints and of considerations for effective policy development. The overall discussion begins from a general perspective of findings from the regional and international arena that are relevant to the situation of Forum Island Countries. The paper then concludes with a suggested framework for integrating gender equity into policy development, presents guiding principles on gender and education, and makes recommendations for the consideration of Ministers.

Definition and examples of gender analysis

13 Gender analysis examines how policies, programs and projects impact male and female population groups differently. There are a number of gender analysis techniques, but all incorporate holistic examination of social variables such as whether people come from rural or urban areas, whether they are rich or poor, of different races, religions or ages. Gender analysis also looks at the

⁵ See Annex 3 for membership of the focus group that participated in reviewing the draft of this paper.

different social conditioning that shapes men and women's roles and behaviours and their responses to policy initiatives. Above all gender analysis strives to be participatory so that viewpoints of those affected are incorporated in to analysis and action.

14 Historically, Pacific and international analyses of education for gender differences have found that girls have less access to education, have qualitatively poorer experiences, and do not progress as far as boys in school. These findings were acknowledged in the UNESCO 'Education for All' World Education Forum held in Jomtien Thailand in 1990. Despite pledges from nations attending this and other conferences (such as the United Nations Copenhagen social summit in 1995) there has been little progress in achieving gender equality goals in education.⁶ A series of 5 year monitoring conferences have been held in the year 2000 and acknowledge the lack of progress in education. These include the UNESCO Education for All 2000 meeting in Dakar and the +5 World Summit on Social Development in Geneva. The Geneva meeting made specific commitments, inclusive of the Dakar meeting outcomes, that reaffirm the goal of gender equality in education. These include:

Commitment 6: "To promote and attain the goals of universal and equitable access to quality education, the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and the access of all to primary health care, making particular efforts to rectify inequalities relating to social conditions and without distinction as to race, national origin, gender, age or disability; respecting and promoting our common and particular cultures; striving to strengthen the role of culture in development; and contributing to the full development of human resources and to social development, with the purpose of eradicating poverty, promoting full and productive employment and fostering social integration; and

(para 84) Reaffirm the Framework for Action for 'Education for All' adopted at the World Education +5 Forum in Dakar, to develop or strengthen national strategies or action plans at the appropriate level to promote its goals: to ensure that by 2015 all children, with special emphasis on girls and children in difficult circumstances or with special needs, including children with disabilities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality; to improve early childhood care and education; to ensure access to appropriate learning, life skills, and citizenship programmes; to achieve a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy; to improve the quality of education, and to take action to eliminate gender disparities and to assure girls and women full and equal access to education. "

15 Based on a concern that significant change in gender equality has not yet been realised, there has been a concerted effort in a number of regions and countries to address the issue of inequality in education. Monitoring of projects has shown that achieving desired outcomes is more complex than simply instituting 'girls education initiatives.' Hence donors and lending agencies and academics have undertaken more in-depth gender analysis of problems of gender inequality in education. Findings from a wide range of evaluative studies repeatedly reflect that gender inequality in education is linked to a web of economic, social and cultural variables that require integrated policy solutions involving all sectors of government and society at large. This approach to integrated solutions then embeds policy in the cultural contexts of specific countries and the region.

16 Ministers may be interested to note at the outset of this discussion that where success in girls' education projects has been achieved, evaluations also noted increased benefits to boys.⁷ Therefore it cannot be assumed that specifically targeted programs have negative effects on other groups.

⁶ UNESCO. Education for All 2000 Assessment. Pacific Region Country Reports
<http://www2.unesco.org/efa/wef/countryreports/home.html>

⁷ USAID 1998. "More But Not Yet Better: An Evaluation of USAID's Program and Policies to Improve Girls' Education". C. O'Gara and S Benoliel. <http://www.dec.org>.

17 Other recent research in a number of countries, including Australia and Tonga, has shown that in some cases boys have lower enrollments or are statistically achieving lower scores and/or grade completion than girls. This is despite the fact that girls also carry a heavier burden of household responsibilities at all ages. Differences between boys and girls occur more obviously at secondary levels and appear to be unrelated to proactive programs for girls. Rather they are linked to a number of other factors such as: more opportunities for employment at younger ages for young men than young women; parental pressure or support for sons to work and daughters to stay in school (particularly if employment involves migration); cultural attitudes that provide more family based early childhood education for girls; and peer attitudes that cause boys to feel academic achievement is not 'macho'.⁸ These are also gender issues in education, and as with other equality issues they are rooted in economic, social and cultural standards. They must be carefully analysed by governments and by those affected to develop effective and holistic strategies that will contribute to gender equality in education outcomes.

Primary areas of research

18 Research undertaken by UN agencies, multilateral financial institutions and donors highlight a range of benefits linked to equity in education from preschool to tertiary levels. Equity as an issue encompasses gender difference but also includes attempts to redress disparities due to differences caused by rural and urban population distribution, cultural or religious norms, poverty, ethnic or racial variation, and physical disabilities. However, when considering all these categories for equal opportunity in education, girls represent the largest number of the disadvantaged and therefore are the most representative group to target and monitor.⁹

19 Benefits accruing to countries from ensuring equal educational opportunities to all their citizens tend to be classified in the literature according to government sectors and associated with economic costs and benefits. But because economic benefits from education are not realised in the short term there is often hesitancy to invest significant financial resources in education. It must be kept in mind however that there are wide ranging, well documented economic and non-economic returns from investment in education and that those returns are integral to each other. For example, healthy populations functioning in well-managed natural and economic environments are more stable, more creative and develop a social cohesion and stability that fosters overall well being and what is known as 'social capital.' Without social capital, development initiatives do not work and economic growth cannot take place.

20 Research has also pointed out that benefits occur more readily when specific aspects of education are taken into account.¹⁰ These aspects or components include, among others, early childhood development, curriculum, teacher salary scales. Integrating policy to reflect and accommodate the connections that exist between gender equality, components of the education systems, required resources and political will are discussed in the policy section below.

Benefits of Gender Equal Education

21 Some of the benefits most commonly identified in current literature link improved gender equality in education to the following:

⁸ "Making sense of the male experience: the case of academic underachievement in the English-speaking Caribbean." IDS Bulletin 31/2. Institute of Development Studies, Sussex University; also 6th ComSec Women's Affairs Ministerial Meeting record, April 2000.

⁹ USAID 1998. *ibid.*

¹⁰ ID21 2000. 'Getting Gender onto the Policy Agenda' and 'Different for Girls: are donors and governments up to countering gender inequalities in education'. <http://www.id21.org>. UNRISD 2000, Visible Hands: Taking Responsibility for Social Development, chapter 7. <http://www.unrisd.org>.

- **Social sector benefits**

22 Basic education contributes significantly to women's ability to ensure their families' health and supports reproduction of national human resources. Basic literacy and numeracy skills enable women to understand and implement hygiene procedures in food preparation and child care; to make sure their children are properly nourished with basic food groups as well as with micro-nutrients such as iodine – which supports brain development; to maintain a home environment that is less susceptible to diseases such as malaria and dengue fever; to be able to judge when it is necessary to take a child for medical attention; and to administer medication properly. Although educated fathers are also capable of making such choices, persistent divisions of labour at the household level seem to have the effect of making education for girls more effective in addressing these issues.

23 Educated women are also more likely to be successful at generating household income than uneducated women. Repeated studies have shown that men and women allocate their income differently and women's income is much more likely to be spent on child and family welfare, such as additional food, clothing and school fees. Men's income tends to be spent more regularly and in larger share on recreational activities and leisure for the earner. The tendency for women to reinvest income that they control in their children also creates a higher push factor for sending children to school, thus creating a positive and reinforcing cycle for child education and development of a skilled labour force.

24 Additionally it is well proven that early childhood education – which largely takes place in the home under the tutelage of mothers – is a critical element in ensuring academic success and general problem solving abilities in children. Women who have had the benefit of education themselves are much more likely to create a positive learning environment in the home for their young children or seek to enroll them in formal early childhood education programs. International studies are also now showing that children of educated mothers do better at all levels of school and contribute more to national economic growth.¹¹

25 Maintenance of cultural traditions can also be enhanced as a result of girls education. Children may learn about their history in school and from elders, but the importance of reinforcing positive cultural values and adapting them to the modern world generally takes place from an early age in the home and community, where women have a higher level of influence on early childhood development. Again, basic education for girls and women enhances this cycle and facilitates development of self-esteem and self-confidence for both boys and girls.

26 The UNFPA has done studies for many years on the effects of girls' education on fertility. While there are other variables, including women's status in society and the influence of religion, education of girls has been shown to be a major factor contributing to reduced family size. Reductions in family size have direct related benefits both to maternal mortality and child survival rates. Such reductions are also a direct economic benefit to countries under stress from rapidly expanding populations and pressures on infrastructure and services.

- **Improved governance**

27 The current composition of Pacific governments and senior level management in the public service is imbalanced from a gender perspective. There are a number of contributing factors creating this imbalance, including historical gender imbalances in education. In countries where girls' participation rates in primary and secondary education have been higher over the past generation, more women hold senior level positions in the public service and participate at various levels of elected government.

¹¹ "Enhancing Women's Participation in Economic Development" World Bank Policy Paper. <http://www.worldbank.org/gender/how/enhance.htm>

28 Additionally, basic and secondary education gives children an understanding of how their countries work and how they can contribute to the success of their countries through various avenues, be they in government or from civil society. Educated girls are also more likely to have higher self-esteem levels and command respect in their communities, as they become adults. As mothers and community members they then have increased chances to positively contribute to good governance and teach their children to be active responsible citizens. Ensuring that all citizens have the knowledge and skills to participate in politics and community activities creates more vibrant, productive and accountable national political environments.

- **Environmental sustainability and food security**

29 Gender roles vary greatly throughout the Pacific. From culture to culture women and men have different responsibilities for managing their natural land and marine environments, producing and harvesting food and medicine, building housing and creating artifacts. Additionally, national governments must maintain agreements with citizens for use of natural resources under customary ownership as sources of revenue.

30 Despite the fact that people in the Pacific have managed their environments more or less sustainably for generations, increasing populations, new forms of development and increased needs for cash put additional pressure on the resource base and call for informed decision-making and new skills in order to avoid resource overuse or depletion. Because men and women have different environmental responsibilities and different sets of knowledge about the environment, both boys and girls need inputs from education systems to enable them to manage natural resources in a sustainable way when they become adults.

31 Food security is also linked to environmental education and informed decision-making. In most cases in the Pacific women are responsible for management of household food supplies. Both formal and informal types of education are required to build awareness among men and women about the links between environment and food security. Decisions and actions based on such awareness are less likely to have a negative impact on food linked environmental resources. In the context of increasing populations and economic pressure to exploit forest and marine resources, and with climate change becoming an increasing concern, understanding these links is particularly important.

32 Further, if people are to explore alternative economic options related to the environment such as eco-tourism, they need at least basic education skills to understand issues, solve problems and run businesses. In many eco-tourism ventures there is heavy reliance on women to provide services in areas of food preparation and accommodation management pointing again to the need for balanced opportunities in training and education.

- **Economic growth**

33 A review of the above points clearly demonstrates connections between making education more gender equal and various resulting economic benefits to government. From a straightforward efficiency perspective gender equal education contributes to making a larger percentage of populations better producers and better at reproducing a higher quality human resource for labour purposes. Reductions in family size and improvements in health alleviate pressure on service providers, improve social stability, and cause less demand on often overburdened national infrastructures. The savings that can be realized through these scenarios are especially significant where countries are attempting to reform their economies to be more compatible to global economic frameworks such as those created through WTO and promoted through APEC.

34 Having a larger base of educated citizens – by ensuring that women are equally educated - also contributes to better governance. This often takes the form of increased participation in initiatives and increased interest of citizens in the performance and accountability of their leaders. Among other benefits, improvements in governance create better, more stable investment climates for countries and encourage growth.

35 A recent cost-benefit analysis by the World Bank¹² highlights that overall investments in education from pre-school to tertiary result in monetary and non-monetary gains to countries that include those mentioned in the sections above. As well other noted returns to national investment in gender equal education include: individual market productivity; non-wage labour market remuneration; individual productivity in knowledge production; intra-family productivity; health; consumer choice efficiency; labour market search efficiency; crime reduction; social cohesion; technological change; income distribution; savings; charitable giving; reduced dependency on social welfare systems.

Policy Issues

36 Evaluations of education programs that promote gender equality highlight a number of lessons and issues about effectiveness and appropriateness of education policies. Primary factors for success seem to be integrated policy approaches that incorporate gender analysis, community participation, and central government commitment. Returns from such integrated policy strategies are significant with both short and long-term benefits to families, communities and governments¹³.

37 The range of education policy issues that must be incorporated into an integrated framework are discussed below and include both substantive issues of access and quality, and process issues related to flexibility of education and involvement of civil society.

- **Access**

38 Access means ensuring that education facilities exist within reach of all children and ensuring that all girls and boys can attend. In the Pacific there are a number of factors that may impact access. School availability, including the number and distribution of schools, is a particular problem where communities are widely dispersed and/or where overall population figures are low. This can also be exacerbated by conflicts over land tenure and the rights of government to use customary land for building schools. While such issues create problems for boys as well as girls, when schools are long distances from communities, safety factors such as those noted below are more likely to come into decisions to keep girls at home rather than boys.

39 Additionally economic reform initiatives to decentralise responsibilities for schools can negatively effect number of schools and number of spaces available (SPFS 1998, RMI). This can result from an absence of centralised policy and priority setting. It is likely that decentralisation will create barriers to girls attendance where there is little gender awareness at the community level and where there are high teen pregnancy rates. The work of NGOs such as the RMI Youth to Youth in Health program are striving to offset such barriers to girls participation in schools through their community level programs on sexual responsibility and gender equality (SPFS 2000, Gender and Development, Good Practice from the Pacific).

40 Access to early childhood education (ECE) facilities and programs is now being considered as a significant issue for the Pacific. ECE has been shown internationally to be a cost-effective investment in the development of human resources because it accelerates learning abilities in children at an age when they are most receptive and creates life-long advantages. Unfortunately in the Pacific few if any national governments take responsibility for ECE and school fees for private or NGO pre-school facilities are higher than for primary level classes at government schools. This creates a significant barrier for parents and is a detriment to national development in terms of lost opportunity for development of a quality human resource base.¹⁴

¹² “The Benefits of Early Childhood Development Programs: An Economic Analysis” 1998. Jacques vaner Gaag and Jee-Peng Tan. World Bank.

¹³ USAID 1998. *ibid.*; also “Enhancing Women’s Participation in Economic Development” World Bank Policy Paper. <http://www.worldbank.org/gender/how/enhance.htm>

¹⁴ “The Benefits of Early Childhood Development Programs: An Economic Analysis” 1998. Jacques vaner Gaag and Jee-Peng Tan. World Bank.

41 Safety of schools is closely related to access and quality. Safety includes location of schools and geographic terrain considerations such as river or highway crossings, distance for students to travel to school, methods of travel, and isolation of routes to school. In all of these safety issues families may feel that girls will be more at risk than boys and feel that keeping them home from school is the only viable option.

42 School facilities influence boys and girls attendance. Most frequently the lack of appropriate segregated toilets, change rooms and in some cases work areas may inhibit girls' attendance. These types of factors combined with chaperone conditions may be particularly important in girls' access to secondary facilities which are often residential.

43 Cultural attitudes toward girls and boys attendance and performance at school come into all considerations about access and quality because perceptions about gender are highly influenced by culture and historical patterns. Where cultural attitudes foster discrimination against any group, countries have a legal responsibility to enforce existing laws against discrimination, and an obligation to create awareness of the harm that discrimination – in this case in education – can cause to national, community and family interests in development. For example, a focus on cultural attitudes and access shows that the division of labour in the household may impact the demand for girls vs. boys time in the household. This in turn can influence choices about which children to send to school, and the number of years they are allowed to attend. Ethnic differences (such as between indigenous and Indo-Fijians) may also create differentials in girls ability to stay in school and should be addressed pro-actively at a national policy level.

44 When families are deciding whether to send all their children to school, school fees or tuition and additional expenses such as uniforms, books and food costs must be rationalized against available cash income and the work that children do at home. In many cases (and linked to cultural attitudes and whether or not married daughters stay within their own families) families may feel that it is a better overall investment to send boys to school if men have historically been the people working for cash in their communities. When families have large numbers of children and cannot afford to send all of them to school, there are indications world wide that girls are the ones who are most likely to be held back or forced to drop out early. Data indicates that this also applies in most Pacific countries.

45 Percentages of government allocations to primary, secondary and tertiary schooling vary from country to country and policy decisions about which levels to support can influence access. For example Pacific research (SPFS 1998. Samoa) shows that in Samoa government allocations for tertiary education were significantly higher than allocations for primary education in the mid 1990s. Such disparities create a severe skewing of financial support since only 4% of the age cohort actually participate in tertiary education. Significant gender differences also exist in tertiary enrollment in Samoa where 84% of vocational training positions going to boys but a majority of teacher training positions going to girls. These types of discrepancies will also impact earning potential, as salaries for trades are likely to be significantly higher than those for teachers.

- **Quality**

46 Quality is a subjective concept and difficult to ensure through policy. However, there are a number of policy considerations that are linked to ensuring educational quality.

47 Teacher training standards, hiring criteria, support and monitoring of teachers are perhaps the most important considerations in ensuring quality education and are integrally linked to the promotion of gender equality. Teacher training can and should include gender awareness training. Gender training can clarify and correct what may be unintentional gender discrimination. Teachers are often unaware that they are limiting students to particular roles or options because they are either girls or boys. Many studies have shown that teachers and parents often expect boys to do better than girls in certain subjects such as math and science and that boys are not expected to show an interest or do

well in subjects such as language or home economics. These types of expectations tend to become obvious to children and create a form of discrimination that limits achievement and undermines the goals of education. Hiring criteria should include requirements for teachers to demonstrate knowledge of gender issues and their ability to promote gender equality in teaching. Providing support to teachers to maintain gender equality in their work is important – this can be done through ensuring that appropriate materials are available and are targeted to both girls and boys. There are currently a range of organisations in the Pacific region that offer gender training to government and that can be utilised by Education Departments and Ministries.¹⁵ Monitoring and follow-up support is also important because all people are conditioned to specific viewpoints about what is appropriate behaviour and accomplishment for girls and boys – attitudes about gender do not change easily. Often teachers need ongoing assistance to develop teaching approaches that encourage both girls and boys equally.

48 Male to female teacher ratios at primary and secondary levels can have an effect on the quality of education and equal acceptance of girls' and boys' needs. A balance of male and female teachers at every level provides role models to demonstrate that education is a positive and useful endeavor to both boys and girls and contributes to school safety for both sexes. Keeping teachers in rural or outer island areas is a challenge to all governments. Few countries have policies on teacher assignment and acceptance of postings is generally at the discretion of teachers. In addition, social and cultural constraints may have to be overcome to make it easier and more acceptable for single female teachers to enter and feel comfortable living in strange communities.

49 Safety of children from sexual harassment, bullying and corporal punishment, and other perceived risks are issues that may incline parents to hold their children out of school, or that may cause some children to drop out or not attend. Commonly, but not necessarily accurately, girls are thought to be more at risk than boys from these dangers. Ensuring child safety is a legal obligation of governments and a society wide responsibility. Pacific countries have acknowledged this through ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child but it has yet to become a reality. Ensuring that girls and boys are safe at school may require different and gender specific assessment processes and solutions, but the first step is setting standards and enforcing them.

50 Quality of the curriculum can have a significant impact on gender equality. A curriculum that takes advantage of Pacific values such as cooperation, reciprocity, sharing and respect and at the same time promotes self-esteem for all students will significantly enhance the learning environment and reinforce attitudes about shared responsibilities from the household to the national level. A curriculum that also involves communities and parents can further reinforce such values. In some Pacific countries current education policies restrict community involvement in education delivery, creating a barrier to curriculum improvement.

51 Parental education levels are a significant influencing factor on child attendance at school. Parental attitudes toward the relevance of study and achievement are often linked to their own educational experiences. The relationship between educated parents and child attendance levels also indicates a link with the sustainability and quality of education. Educated parents have higher expectations about the importance of education, place a higher value on achievement and completion than uneducated parents and are more likely to actively participate in school programs and advocate for their children's rights. These attitudes are transferred to children and perpetuate general social values that attach importance to quality in education. Because mothers are often the people who decide if they can do without their daughters labour in the home, it is critical to ensure a generation or two of educated girls to entrench cycles of 'quality education for girls' values. There is also evidence from developed countries, where gender equality has been an issue in education for over a generation,

¹⁵ Organisations offering gender training include the Pacific Regional Human Rights Resource Team (DFID), Forum Secretariat, SPC, UNDP, UNIFEM and others.

that expectations and values about gender fairness can also become sustained through parental expectations.¹⁶

- **Appropriate and open options for education**

52 Educational options and the number and quality of options are often not equally available to girls and boys. This is particularly true for vocational and technical training. In many cases the types of facilities that exist are oriented toward providing skills for traditionally male occupations and student populations are almost exclusively male. In the Pacific vocational options for girls have historically been oriented toward domestic training, or in some sub-regions to domestic training and agriculture, and have been much less likely to lead to wage employment. It is important that governments avoid streaming girls and boys into occupational stereotypes that limit girls to lives as 'housewives' and subsistence gardeners and boys as breadwinners. Domestic oriented vocational training is important to ensure that children learn about nutrition and why home environments need to be clean and safe; however, it is equally important that boys (as future fathers) as well as girls develop these skills. At the same time, if Pacific countries are interested in ongoing positive development with economic growth then it is crucial that vocational programs and skills training of all kinds are targeted to girls as well as boys. This will help to create an expanded workforce that is technically and academically proficient. As mentioned in the following section, NGOs are currently establishing effective models to promote more equitable vocational training and these can be replicated or used by governments.

53 Establishing community support for programs that keep girls in school is another way to ensure that girls and women have the same opportunities as boys for educational achievement and future employment. For example, special programs, which facilitate education for teen mothers and for young women who become pregnant while still in school, should be seriously considered. Current practice in many educational institutions in the Pacific is to suspend girls who become pregnant. The same rule does not apply however, to the young men who are equally responsible for the pregnancies. Pregnancy and motherhood do not incapacitate young women from learning and should not be allowed as grounds for discrimination.

54 It should be noted that in most countries it is constitutionally illegal to discriminate against students who become pregnant. Governments that allow institutions to discriminate in such a way leave themselves open to class action suits.

- **Participation of civil society**

55 Community organization and public involvement in monitoring education have been identified as contributing factors to better access, quality and options in education.¹⁷ Governments have an important role to play in facilitating the involvement of NGOs as partners in education. NGOs can also provide assistance to students by raising funds for scholarships and for special programs such as early childhood education and schooling for disabled children. In these areas NGO work supports gender equality – as girls have been shown to form the majority of disadvantaged children. In the promotion of increased educational and employment options for women, the Fiji Women's Rights Movement has undertaken successful campaigns such as the 'Girls Can do Anything' initiative to promote more female enrollment in non-traditional vocational training. This type of work could be replicated with similar benefits in other countries through government and NGO collaboration. Additionally, women's NGOs may have already developed effective strategies and expertise for dealing with issues such as sexual harassment and safety for vulnerable individuals.

¹⁶ Government of Canada, 1998. 'Gender Equality Indicators: Public Concerns and Public Policies' Proceedings of a Symposium Held at Statistics Canada, March 26 and 27, 1998. <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca>

¹⁷ World Bank 1995. *Priorities and Strategies for Education. A World Bank Review.* <http://www.worldbank.org/html/extpb/PrioritiesEducation.html>.

Education ministries or departments may be able to benefit from the experience of these NGOs and reduce budget expenditures through collaboration with them.

56 Although teachers are part of the public service, and although parents are a primary influence for their children, these groups are not widely consulted or involved in education policy design and development. By not involving them, governments overlook experienced resource groups that could increase the effectiveness and appropriateness of policy. Teachers and parents should be targeted stakeholder groups in all discussions along with governments, NGOs and the private sector.

Constraints to effective and sustainable policy

57 There are three main constraints to developing and maintaining sound policy approaches to gender equal education systems. These are:

- **Lack of data**

58 Data, analysis and assessment of change in data over time are generally considered integral to informed policy development. Data also contributes to assessment of policies, by providing information to show whether policies are becoming more or less effective and how they can be improved. In the Pacific there are large gaps in data about education; countries have to date produced different data sets and use different reporting frameworks.¹⁸ There are many reasons why these gaps and inconsistencies exist including: lack of teachers trained to collect day-to-day and year-to-year information about their classrooms; low capacity among statistics office staff; difficult geographic conditions in many countries that inhibit data collection; and lack of funds to compile and maintain databases. Even where information is being collected, it is not consistently sex disaggregated so that differences in outcomes for girls and boys are apparent. Good gender equity policies can be developed in the absence of data but they will be based in large part on observation of trends and guesswork. The main drawback of this latter approach is that there is no way to prove over time that one approach is more successful than another and results in uneven government commitment. Some initiatives have been undertaken by international and regional organisations such as UNIFEM and SPC to train national statistics officers in collection of sex-disaggregated data. Coordination and replication of this type of work would reduce national costs and promote improved gender analysis in the entire region. Additionally information from the 'Education For All' Pacific national reports is being synthesised and the final product will also highlight remaining data gaps.

- **Lack of commitment and capacity for integrated planning, policy development and implementation**

59 As has been noted above, addressing gender inequalities in education requires an integrated policy approach. In the Pacific there is little experience with integrated planning and policy development. Although a number of donor initiatives are now promoting this approach there does not seem to be appropriate and targeted skills transfer that will create Pacific ownership of integrated policy. Therefore the process of integrated policy management is not replicated as a matter of course within government run programs. While some countries are beginning to use inter-ministry or inter-departmental committees to manage and report on implementation of international conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, there is often a notable absence of Ministry/Dept. of Finance staff actively participating on these committees.

¹⁸ This lack of compatibility is apparent in reports provided to the UNESCO Education for All 2000 process. Reports can be viewed on the internet at http://www2.unesco.org/efa/wef/countryreports/region_pacific.html.

- **Lack of sustained funding within government recurrent budgets**

60 Following from the last point above, a common constraint to gender equity policies in education is a lack of commitment from central government agencies in many countries. Without the political will and financial commitment to undertake gender analysis and move toward gender equality, governments will repeatedly falter in policy and program implementation.

Policy strategies

61 In order to address any of the above policy issues and related constraints it is necessary to integrate gender analysis considerations into more issue-focused policy prescriptions. A strategic framework or template for incorporating gender equity into a range of education policies should include the following points and be elaborated further based on the specific policy issue.

Framework for Integrating Gender Equity into Policy Development

Policy Development Component	Action Required	Outcome
Issue Analysis	Examination of current situation, assessment of degree of gender equality/inequality in linked policy areas, and establishment of gender specific policy objectives integrated into broader policies.	Set of current benchmarks and policy objectives with indicators for desired change and time frames.
Responsibility	Identification of senior level education, planning and finance officials to co-manage policy design and implementation. Training of officials in gender awareness and analysis. Review of school rules, regulations and practice for discrimination against pregnant students.	Guiding body to manage policy implementation, share information with other initiatives as required, advocate for policy success and fulfill national and international commitments.
Funding	Collaboration with finance ministry and donors to design funding strategies that will maintain commitment to gender aspects of policy over long term and build staged improvements in overall education systems.	Secure funding.
Sustainability	Ensure that responsibilities for gender analysis and related policy and program revision are built into terms of reference of all staff.	Ongoing attention to gender equality as a core education issue.
Public and Stakeholder Involvement	Conduct outreach on issues and policy development processes, solicit feedback and involvement of relevant stakeholders (including teachers and NGOs) undertake basic gender awareness training with all stakeholders.	Policy will mesh with public expectations and have identified sources of expertise in civil society.
Testing	Establish pilot areas for policy implementation.	Information for final policy revisions before wider implementation.
Monitoring and Evaluation	Involve non-government organizations and other government ministries in monitoring integrated results of policy and evaluating effectiveness vis a vis gender equality across sectors.	Assessment of integrated results over time, development of information base for socio-economic cost benefit analysis.
Reporting	Incorporate policy results into national reports on CRC, CEDAW and Education for All.	Documentation and data on gender equality progress.

Synopsis of key findings and relevance to the Pacific

62 This paper has provided an overview of research and initiatives that have been or are being done to support gender equality in education and it examines how findings and outcomes of initiatives relate to education policy. The discussion has focused attention on issues that are relevant to various Pacific sub-regions.

63 It should be noted that each sub-region has its own concerns about gender equality in the education system and that in some cases differences also exist between and within countries subregionally, according to ethnic and cultural variations. At the primary and secondary levels the limited statistical information that is available points to more gender inequality in Melanesia and Micronesia than in Polynesia. In almost all countries of the region there are significant inequalities in participation and achievement at the tertiary level.

64 The first part of the discussion has presented findings pointing to economic, social and environmental benefits accrued where there is more gender equality in education. These included improved health and nutrition of children, lower birth rates, more social stability and better economic productivity and savings and sustainable environmental management. The second part has highlighted substantive policy issues such as access to, and quality of, education, which will require policy adjustments to improve teacher sensitivity to gender issues, improve curriculum material and ensure student safety and equal treatment. Additionally the policy section addresses issues linked to process and procedures, such as ensuring appropriate and flexible alternatives within education systems and involving the public and NGOs. An over-riding policy issue is the need to involve, and ensure commitment from, senior levels of government and finance ministries or departments as well as communities. Without such commitment education programs will not be sustainable and existing country commitments to gender equality in education will not be realized.

65 Finally, the paper has presented a template for gender sensitive policy development that demonstrates strategic approaches to ensuring the integration of gender analysis into policy. This assumes an understanding that the various components of education policy must also be integrated to holistically address national goals, development plans and regional and international commitments. Undertaking gender analysis will require gender awareness raising or training for government officials, teachers and members of the community.

66 For Pacific governments juggling economic reform, entry into an increasingly globalised economy, and (for most countries) increasing populations, there is a need to ensure that everything possible is done to involve and benefit from the creativity and potential of citizens. By ensuring that children – boys and girls – receive appropriate and comprehensive education, governments maintain cohesive and productive societies that are a prerequisite to the development of robust economies.

67 The findings of this paper have been vetted by a group of international development agencies in Fiji who have formulated guiding principles for promoting gender equality in education and have endorsed a set of recommendations for governments to consider.¹⁹

Guiding principles for promotion of gender equality in education

68 Gender equality in education (from pre-school to tertiary levels) is integral to sound social, environmental and economic development and is integral to Forum Island Countries fulfillment of their commitments to i) international conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and ii) regional agreements such as the Pacific Platform for Action.

69 Education and gender equality in education systems are an ongoing responsibility of governments and investments in education are critical to the long-term development success and social stability of Forum Island Countries. Ensuring that all citizens have access to affordable, quality, non-discriminatory education must continue to be a primary commitment of governments.

70 Gender analysis must be integrated into all levels of education policy and programming with the goal of increasing gender equality in education. This will be most effective when done in the context of integrated policy development and rooted in Pacific cultural values with the aim of supporting appropriate and holistic education for all children and adults.

¹⁹ See Annex 3.

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ANNEX 1

Table 1 Education

	Gross Primary Enrolment 5-14 yrs		Gross Secondary Enrolment 15-19 yrs		% Primary School Entrants Reaching Grade 5		% Female Teachers Primary School	% F Te Sec S
	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Cook Is	100	100	42	49	na	na	na	
Fiji Is	na	90	37	35	93	96	58	
FSM	82	83	45	43	na	na	na	
Kiribati	76	78	42	47	84	87	62	
Marshall Is	78	79	51	47	na	na	na	
Nauru	96	95	32	37	na	na	61	
Niue	97	96	44	64	na	na	na	
Palau	90	90	65	69	na	na	na	
PNG	32	30	26	19	60	59	32	
Samoa	93	94	66	75	na	na	72	
Solomon Is	41	36	30	18	75	62	26	
Tonga	90	91	64	71	85	75	69	
Tuvalu	87	88	31	35	na	na	na	
Vanuatu	73	70	26	18	90	91	39	

Sources:

1. Data on gross primary enrolment, gross secondary enrolment, expenditure on education as % total government expenditure and expenditure as % of GDP taken from Pacific Human Development Report 1999, UNDP, Annex 4, Table 6, pg. 110.
2. Data on % primary school entrants reaching grade 5 and % female teachers primary and secondary school taken from the website <http://genderstats.worldbank.org>. This data refers to the most recent data available and varies for each country and within two years of the following dates: with respect to % primary school entrants reaching grade 5 - Fiji (1985), Kiribati (1985), PNG (1990), Solomon Is (1980), Tonga (1990), Vanuatu (1990); and, with respect to % female teachers primary and secondary school - Fiji (1985), Kiribati (1998), Nauru (1985), PNG (1990), Samoa (1998), Solomon Islands (1980), Tonga (1990), Vanuatu (1980).

ANNEX 1

Table 2 Education and Health

	Gross Primary Enrolment 5-14 yrs		Gross Secondary Enrolment 15-19 yrs		Proportion of Adults who are Illiterate		Life Expectancy at	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	
Cook Is	100	100	42	49	7	6	71	
Fiji Is	na	90	37	35	5	9	65	
FSM	82	83	45	43	23	34	64	
Kiribati	76	78	42	47	6	9	59	
Marshall Is	78	79	51	47	21	31	63	
Nauru	96	95	32	37	5	5	55	
Niue	97	96	44	64	3	3	74	
Palau	90	90	65	69	6	12	64	
PNG	32	30	26	19	65	79	55	
Samoa	93	94	66	75	4	4	65	
Solomon Is	41	36	30	18	61	80	64	
Tonga	90	91	64	71	1	1	65	
Tuvalu	87	88	31	35	5	5	64	
Vanuatu	73	70	26	18	63	70	64	

Sources:

1. Data taken from Pacific Human Development Report 1999, UNDP Annex 4. Gross primary and secondary enrolment, and proportion of adults who are illiterate data from Table 6, pg. 110; life expectancy at birth data taken Table 1, pg. 105; maternal mortality and % women not expected to survive to age 40 from Table 3, pg. 107.

ANNEX 1

Table 3 Women's Political and Economic Participation

	Gross Primary Enrolment 5-14 yrs		Gross Secondary Enrolment 15-19 yrs		Women in the Work Force (As % of Total)			
	M	F	M	F	In Paid Employment	Administrative & Managers	Professional & Technical Workers	C S Sale
Cook Is	100	100	42	49	34	33	47	
Fiji Is	na	90	37	35	21	10	45	
FSM	82	83	45	43	30	15	32	
Kiribati	76	78	42	47	33	4	43	
Marshall Is	78	79	51	47	27	7	32	
Nauru	96	95	32	37	na	na	na	
Niue	97	96	44	64	na	13	45	
Palau	90	90	65	69	38	na	na	
PNG	32	30	26	19	39	12	31	
Samoa	93	94	66	75	19	12	47	
Solomon Is	41	36	30	18	48	3	28	
Tonga	90	91	64	71	39	19	44	
Tuvalu	87	88	31	35	33	16	46	
Vanuatu	73	70	26	18	46	13	35	

Sources:

1. Data taken from Pacific Human Development Report 1999, UNDP Annex 4. Gross primary and secondary enrolment data from Table 6, pg. 110 women in the workforce and women in government data taken Table 4, pg. 108.

Definitions:

1. Gross Enrollment ratios = the number of children in primary or secondary regardless of age, divided by the population of the age group which officially corresponds to the same level.
2. Net Enrollment ratios = the number of children enrolled in school who belong to the age group that officially corresponds to primary schooling, divided by the total population of the same age group. Few Pacific countries have Net Enrollment data available.

ANNEX 2

Additional Indicators to Demonstrate Gender Equality in Education

In the Pacific there is very sporadic collection of sex dis-aggregated information related to education. Countries and donors should discuss collaboration on pilot processes to facilitate collection of this information within national census protocols or in household surveys linked to education monitoring.

This list shows some of the indicators that are commonly used to demonstrate gender equality in education. These are recommended in addition to those shown in the tables in Annex 1. Collection should be done for private and public educational institutions.

- Net enrollment rates for girls and boys;
 - Girls and boys out of school rate;
 - Starting school age for girls and boys;
 - Expected number of years of schooling for all children;
 - Repeaters (girls and boys) as % of total enrolled in primary grades;
 - Percentage of girls and boys advancing to grades 7 – 10;
 - Percentage of girls and boys advancing to grades 11 – 12;
 - Repeaters (girls and boys) as % of total enrolled in primary grades.
-
- Ratio of teachers to pupils in primary grades – by province, state or island group, rural/urban areas;
 - Ratio of teachers to pupils in secondary grades – by province, state or island group;
 - Percentages of male and female teachers by province, state or island group;
 - Wage categories of male and female teachers by educational qualification and years of teaching experience.
-
- Percentage of men and women advancing from secondary to university;
 - Percentage of men and women graduating from university;
 - Percentage of men and women in technical and vocational schools – by type of program;
 - Percentage of men and women graduating from technical and vocational schools – by type of program;
 - Number of years for male and female completion of tertiary degrees and diplomas – as percentage of established time frames.

ANNEX 3

Focus Group Members

- Imrana Jalal, Pacific Regional Human Rights Resource Team and DFID;
- Gina Huong-Lee, Fiji Women's Rights Movement;
- Claire Slatter, USP and Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN);
- Nuufou Petia, Community Education Training Centre, SPC;
- Ronald VanDijk UNICEF;
- Lily King, UNIFEM;
- Linda Peterson, UNDP;
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