

Country Gender Profile: The Kingdom of Tonga

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The Kingdom of Tonga

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Summary

Summary of Country Gender Profile in the Kingdom of Tonga (2010)

Current Situation of Women in the Kingdom of Tonga

- 1) In Tonga, women have traditionally held a high social status. However, in recent centuries, there has been a sociological shift with modernization and the adoption of Christian values that has resulted in the society becoming more patriarchal. As a result, Tongan women today face various inequalities in legislative matters and work settings.
- 2) Domestic violence is believed to be seriously underreported with awareness of this issue being extremely low, especially in rural areas, and there being no legislation prohibiting such violence.
- 3) In most cases, men are the decision maker in all-important matters, in both the public (including political) and private spheres with women being poorly represented in the politics with only one female representative in the Legislative Assembly.

Gender Policy of Gender

- 1) The government's awareness of gender issues is low with the current National Strategic Planning Framework, which came into operation in July 2009, not acknowledging gender as one of the country's development issues.
- 2) In 2001, the National Policy on Gender and Development was formulated, and subsequently in 2002, a Three Year Implementation Plan for Gender and Development 2003/4-2005/6 was prepared. However, little budget was allocated for the Plan, so it has not been implemented. There are no laws relating to gender specifically, such as a prohibition on sexual discrimination.
- 3) In September 2009, the government failed to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). It is considered that the government is avoiding passing the convention as it would require them to amend the land ownership system, which almost completely restricts women's rights to own land.

National Machinery

- 1) The National Machinery, the Women's Affairs Division of the Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture, is not able to function sufficiently due to the lack of human and financial resources.
- 2) The Women's Affairs Division is seeking to revise the National Policy on Gender and Development (2001) and the Three Year Implementation Plan for Gender and Development (2002).
- 3) As gender is not specifically mentioned in the National Strategic Planning Framework, it is unlikely that other ministries or government offices will incorporate and emphasize gender issues in their activity plans.

Situation of Women/Gender in Education

- 1) Education is compulsory and free of charge for all Tongans from age 6 to 14; 6 years of primary and 3 years of junior secondary education. The literacy rate is impressive at 99.2% for males and 99.3% for

females as of 2007.

- 2) The net enrolment rate for girls in primary education is slightly lower than for boys, but the rates for both genders are higher than 90%. The net enrolment rate for girls in secondary education is higher than for boys, and the drop-out rate is lower for girls than for boys.
- 3) As there is no accredited university in Tonga, most students wishing to obtain a university degree must go overseas.
- 4) The gross enrolment rate for women (7%) in tertiary education is higher than that of men (4%). However, the majority of female graduates choose to marry and remain at home. This is considered to be due to the mindset of the majority of the population that “women should stay home and make good wives/mothers”.

Situation of Women/Gender in Health

- 1) State health services are provided free of charge and the basic health needs of the population are for the most part met. The maternal mortality ratio (MMR), which has been stable for the last 20 years, is 36.5 per 100,000 live births. The contraceptive use is at about 27% (2008) and the total fertility rate (TFR) is 3.8 (2006). The Ministry of Health seeks to promote more family planning to reduce the TFR to less than 3.0. HIV/AIDS is not a serious problem in Tonga at this time.
- 2) There is little absolute poverty in Tonga, and as a result, no chronic malnutrition has been observed. Instead, new problems have been occurring in the health sector, specifically obesity, and non-communicable diseases (NCD), such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, have been increasing nationwide. The current health system does not have the capacity to provide quality care for these “modern” health problems.

Situation of Women/Gender in Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries

- 1) Although the primary sector accounts for only 20% of GDP, rural people still largely rely on subsistence agriculture and fishing for their existence.
- 2) In rural areas, agro-forestry is widely practiced with root crops (the people’s traditional staple food) being widely cultivated. Women go into the bush and work with the men in performing heavy agricultural work. Most women do not engage in paid work in agriculture and are only involved in household food production. In coastal areas, women hunt along the coast and in the lagoons, catching small fish and gathering various kinds of shellfish. Most of the women’s production is consumed at home with the women selling any surplus in the local market.
- 3) Most of the women’s contributions towards the agriculture and fisheries industries are not reflected in the official statistics as they are part of the informal economy.

Situation of Women/Gender in Economic Activities

- 1) In the past 30 years, the number of females in formal employment has increased almost fourfold. However, there has been little progress in the type of occupations that women are engaged in. Most women were and still are employed in unskilled menial work or subordinate positions (and thus being low-paid). It is considered that women’s job opportunities are limited because of the cultural values that

Tongans, males and females, have concerning gender roles. Although women occupy almost 30% of the employment in the public sector, few are at the decision-making level.

- 2) There is no official system for supporting female workers with the exception of maternity leave for public servants. Moreover, in Tonga, women cannot legally own land with leasing land as well being very difficult in a women's name. This is a significant obstacle when women attempt to pursue business opportunities.
- 3) In the informal sector, particular kinds of handicrafts are in high demand by expatriates and urban Tongan women. In rural areas, where males have few opportunities to earn money, the females' contribution to the household income through handicraft production and marketing is greatly significant.

Situation of Women/Gender in Disaster Management and Environment

- 1) Gender issues are not specifically incorporated into either disaster management or environmental policy.
- 2) When a disaster strikes, men and women are treated the same with the government and NGOs conducting projects/programs on disaster preparedness without gender being specifically emphasized.
- 3) In the area of environmental protection, women show more interests than men. Women have been shown to be more active in awareness-raising meetings and waste management activities.

List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BMI	Body Mass Index
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
DV	Domestic Violence
GAD	Gender And Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
HIV/AIDS	Human-Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MoAFFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forests and Fisheries
MoLSNRE	Ministry of Lands, Survey, Natural Resources and Environment
NCD	Non-communicable Disease
NEMO	National Emergency Management Office
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

<p>Exchange Rate</p> <p>1 Pa'Anga (TOP) 48.70 JPY</p> <p>February 2010</p>
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This study was conducted between November 2009 and February 2010 by IMG Inc, based on a review of secondary data and a field survey in Tonga. This report was produced as a reference material for JICA to implement its projects in the country. The views and recommendations presented here do not necessarily reflect the official views and opinions of JICA.

1. Basic profiles

1-1 Socio-Economic Profile

Socio-economic profile							Ref.	
Social indicators								
<u>International development indicators</u>		Human development index (Value/Rank)*		Gender-related development index (Value/Rank)*		Gender empowerment measurement (Value)*	1)	
		0.768/99 (2007)		0.765/78 (2007)		0.363 (2009)		
		0.787/63 (2002)		0.809/46 (2004)		NA		
<u>Demographic indicators</u>		Total ¹ (millions)		% of urban population ²		Annual Population growth rate ²	Total fertility rate ³	1) 2) 3) 4)
		% of female population		% of female population				
		0.102 (2006)	49.2% (2006)	23.2% (2006)	NA	0.5% (2005-2010)	3.8 (2006)	
		0.098 (1996)	49.3% (1996)	NA	NA	0.4% (2000-2005)	3.8 (2000)	
		Life expectancy ¹		Households number by head of households (HH) ²				1) 5) 2)
		Male	Female	Total	Male-headed	Female-headed		
		67.3(2008)	73.0 (2008)	17,462 (2006)	13,855 (2006)	3,607 (2006)		
		NA	NA	16,194 (1996)	NA	NA		
Economic indicators								
		GNP/Capita (US\$) ¹	Growth rate of real GDP ¹	GDP implicit deflator* ¹	Gini index* ²	Aid/GNP ¹		6)
2007		\$2,460	-0.3%	6.0%	NA	12.0%		
2000		\$1,650	3.6%	1.4%	NA	11.9%		
<u>Public sector expenditure on sectors</u>		Health	Education	Social welfare	Defense	Gender	Others	7)
2005		20.45%	10.73%	4.25%	2.22%	NA	NA	
2000		13.86%	12.90%	4.63%	2.84%	NA	NA	
		/GDP	/GDP	/GDP	/GDP	/GDP	/GDP	
2005		5.44%	2.85%	1.54%	0.59%	NA	NA	
2000		3.95%	3.70%	1.32%	0.81%	NA	NA	
<u>Industry/GDP</u>		Agriculture	Industry	Service	Others			6)
2007		28%	13%	60%	-			
2000		28%	16%	56%	-			
<u>Labour indicators</u>		Total No. ¹ (thousand)		Unemployment rate ¹		Minimum wage ²		1) 8) 2) 9)
			Female labour force/total labour force (%)	Total unemployed/total labour force (%)	Female unemployed/total female labour force (%)	Male	Female	
2003		36.5	41.9%	5.2%	7.4%	No minimum wage law in Tonga (As of 2009).		
1996		33.9	36.0%	13.3%	9.9%			
<u>Employment rate</u>		Agriculture	Non-agriculture					8)
			Industry	Service				
Total (%)		31.8% (2003)	30.6% (2003)	37.6% (2003)				
% of female population		5.9% (2003)	74.0% (2003)	43.6% (2003)				
Approaches to gender issues								
<u>Ratification and signature of international laws</u>						Year		10)
Revised Pacific Platform of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015						2005		
Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015						2005		
Millennium Development Goals						2005		
Beijing Platform for Action of Women						1995		

Socio-economic profile						Ref.
<u>Women in decision-making (% of female population)</u>						
Government	Seats in parliament ¹	3% (2008)	Private sector	Legislators, senior officials, and managers ¹	27% (1997-2007)	¹) ² 11)
	Ministerial Position ²	0.8%		Professional and technical workers ¹	43% (1997-2007)	
<u>Policy of gender</u>					Year	12)
National Policy on Gender and Development					2001	
<u>Laws of gender</u>					Year	9)
Penal Code					NA	
<u>Public organization of gender</u>						
Name of the national machinery		Women's Affairs Division, Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture				

Note: Refer to the definitions for the words attached with *

1-2 Health Profile

Health Indicators							Ref.			
Prevalence of health services	No. of Hospital beds per 1,000 persons ¹		No. of physicians per 1,000 persons ²				¹ 4) ² 1)			
	2.9 (2004)		0.34 (2000-2004)							
	NA		0.35 (1990-2003)							
Infant mortality rate* (per 1,000)	2008	Total	9.1		Female	NA		5)		
	2000		9.1			NA				
Under-five mortality rate* (per 1,000)	2006	Total	24		Female	25		4)		
	2000		26			29				
Prevalence rate associated with tuberculosis (per 100,000)	2006	Total	34.0		Female	NA				
	2001		42.0			NA				
Prevalence and death rates associated with infectious diseases	NA	Total	NA		Female	NA				
	NA		NA			NA				
% of vaccinated (1 year old)	BCG		DPT1*		Polio		Measles		13)	
	99% (2007)		99% (2007)		99% (2007)		99% (2007)			
Reproductive health	Contraceptive prevalence rate* ¹		Rate of births attended by trained personnel* ²		Anemia prevalence among pregnant women			¹ 14) ² 15)		
	27% (2008)		98.0 % (2004)		NA					
	NA		95.3% (2000)		NA					
	Maternal mortality ratio* ¹ (per 100,000 live birth)		Total fertility rate* ²		Average age of first marriage ³			¹ 5) ² 4) ³ 15)		
36.5 (2007)		3.8 (2006)		25.5 (2004)						
NA		3.8 (2000)		25.5 (2000)						
Nutrition	Children under weight for age (and aged under 5)*		Oral re-hydration therapy use rate*		Iodine deficiency					
	NA		NA		NA					
	NA		NA		NA					
Community health service	Access to safe water				Access to improved sanitation*			4)		
	Total		Urban		Rural		Total		Urban	96%
	100%		100%		100%		96%		98%	96%
	100%		100%		100%		96%		98%	96%
HIV/AIDS	HIV prevalence					% of population aged with comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS		16)		
	Total		Male	Female		Male	Female			
						Pregnant women				
						NA	NA			
					NA	NA				

Note: Refer to the definitions for the words attached with *

1-3 Education Profile

Education Indicators								Ref.
Education systems	Primary	6 years	Secondary	5 year (lower) 2 year (upper)	Tertiary	NA		17)
Adult literacy rate* (+15)	Total	99.2% (2007)	Male	99.2% (2007)	Female	99.3% (2007)		18)
Primary education								
Net enrolment rate*	2005	Total	95.8%	Male	97.4%	Female	94.1%	19)
	1999		88.0%		89.9%		85.9%	
Survival rate to last grade	2005	Total	90.8%	Male	89.9%	Female	91.8%	
	2000		94.5%		NA		NA	
Drop-out rate	2005	Total	9.1%	Male	10.0%	Female	8.1%	
	2000		5.4%		NA		NA	
Secondary education								
Net enrolment rate* ¹	2006	Total	60.3%	Male	54.0%	Female	67.4%	¹ 19) ² 20)
	2001		70.8%		67.6%		74.5%	
Progression rate	NA	Total	NA	Male	NA	Female	NA	
	NA		NA		NA		NA	
Drop-out rate ²	2004	Total	7.2%	Male	6.2%	Female	5.1%	
	1999		6.0%		4.8%		3.6%	
Tertiary education								
Gross enrolment rate*	2002	Total	6%	Male	4%	Female	7%	18)
	1999		3%		3%		4%	
Progression rate	NA	Total	NA	Male	NA	Female	NA	
	NA		NA		NA		NA	
Drop-out rate	NA	Total	NA	Male	NA	Female	NA	
	NA		NA		NA		NA	
Tertiary level enrolment by field of study by gender	Education	Arts	Social science	Engineering and Technology	Medicine	Others		
	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		

Note: Refer to the definitions for the words attached with *

Reference:

- 1) Human Development Report, UNDP, 2004, 2007/2008, 2009
- 2) Tonga 2006 Census of Population and Housing, Volume 2; Analytical Report, Tongan Statistics Department and the SPC Statistics and Demography Programme, 2008
- 3) Statistics and Indicators of Women and Men, United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)
- 4) WHO Statistical information System (WHOSIS), World Health Organization
- 5) Tonga: Health Situation and Trend, World Health Organization, 2009
- 6) World Development Indicator Database, World Bank, 2009
- 7) Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific, Asian Development Bank, 2008
- 8) Statistical Abstract 2006 for the Kingdom of Tonga
- 9) 2008 Human Rights Reports: Tonga, U.S. Department of State, 2009
- 10) Obstacle to Growth: gender, discrimination and development in Tonga, Vijaya Nagarajan, 2009
- 11) Parliament of Tonga: members (n.d.)
- 12) Three Year Implementation Plan for Gender and Development 2003/4-2005/6, Women Development Center, 2002
- 13) Info by Country: Tonga, UNICEF
- 14) Interview with Assistant Chief Nurse, Ministry of Health (24 November 2009)
- 15) GenderStats, World Bank
- 16) Country Health Information Profiles, World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific, 2009
- 17) Tonga-Education system, IAU, World Higher Education Database
- 18) UIS Statistics in Brief, UNESCO Institute for Statistics
- 19) UNdata, United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)
- 20) Education, Tonga Department of Statistics

2. General Situation of Women and Government Policy on Gender

2-1 General Situation of Women in the Kingdom of Tonga

General Situation of Women in the Kingdom of Tonga

- 1) In Tonga, women have traditionally held a high social status. However, in recent centuries, there has been a sociological shift with modernization and the adoption of Christian values that has resulted in the society becoming more patriarchal. As a result, Tongan women today face various inequalities in legislative matters and work settings.
- 2) Domestic violence is believed to be seriously underreported with awareness of this issue being extremely low, especially in rural areas, and there being no legislation prohibiting such violence.
- 3) In most cases, men are the decision maker in all-important matters, in both the public (including political) and private spheres with women being poorly represented in the politics with only one female representative in the Legislative Assembly.

[General situation]

The Kingdom of Tonga is made up of a group of small islands (archipelago), in Oceania, in the South Pacific Ocean; with a population of 101,000 (2006), of which 23% reside in urban areas.

“Paradoxical”, in the meaning of a contradictory existence, would be a good word to use to portray gender issues in Tonga. Traditionally, women held a high status in the social system (see [Issues originating from religions and traditional customs] below). However, in recent centuries, there has been a sociological shift. Modernization and an adoption of Christian values have resulted in society becoming more patriarchal. While women are, in general still respectfully treated, their status has reduced and their roles as a result have changed, becoming predominantly more constrained to the home and seen increasingly as solely wives and mothers.

Since the late 1950s, there has been intensified pressure on individual household units to earn more money to support domestic requirements, as a result of the growth in the cash based economy; an ever increasing number of women have had the opportunity to gain education with the number of those working outside the domestic environment also increasing. However, legislation, social attitude (especially male) and norms have been unable to keep up with all these changes. Women now face various inequalities in legislative matters and work settings, such as denial of land ownership for women (see 3-4 Economic Activities) and a non-existence of legislation to protect, amongst other rights, women’s employment and inheritance rights.

As traditionally there has been a great regard for women by all the populace, even though gender inequality exists, the majority of Tongans including many women, do not regard gender issues as a

problem in the country. Although the fundamental issue is that “men’s rights are written down and therefore legitimate (to be upheld and defended), while women’s privileges are not officially recorded in any way”¹, meaning that women’s rights are not protected by law. As the socio-economic circumstances have changed, their high status due to traditional practices has been reduced and undermined, leaving them without any official authority or rights, while men’s position has been reinforced and strengthened.

[Sexual harassment and violence against women]

Both sexual harassment and domestic violence are believed to be seriously underreported due to the sensitive and private nature of the problems and people’s desire to maintain the notion that Tongan society respects women. Research is lacking for both problems, which makes an analysis based on present data virtually impossible. However, one estimate² indicates that one in five women cohabiting with a partner or a husband are the victims of domestic violence.

Out of six homicide cases in 2009³, four were women murdered by their husbands. Domestic violence has received little publicity in the past, but since 2008 there have been reports of cases in the media. There are various interpretations about why media attention has increased. Some surmise that domestic violence has been increasing⁴, while others deduce that domestic violence was already an eventuality⁵, only that prior to 2008 public awareness was so low that it did not catch media attention⁶. Domestic violence awareness is still extremely low, especially in rural areas and there is no legislation against it.

[Women’s low representation in key decision making positions in the government]

The Legislative Assembly is currently made up of 31 seats divided up into three groups⁷; the one group is cabinet ministers taking 14 seats all appointed by the King (mostly male), one group is eight seats all reserved for Nobles⁸ and the remaining nine seats are for commoners’ representatives, for which women have to compete with men, if they want representation. As of November 2009, there was only one woman in the Assembly, who was an appointed minister⁹. In the 2008 election no commoners’ representative seats were won by women and in the past three decades to this point, only 4 women have held a seat in parliament.

Common conception is that only men should engage in the politics, and until 2006, no female minister had been appointed; since then there has been no more than one female minister at any one time.

¹ Expression used by a prominent women’s leader of the country, Ms. Fuiiva Kavaliku (27 November 2009), as well as by an AusAID’s senior program officer, Ms. Telusa Hepisipa Fotu (26 November 2009)

² Discussions with Ms. ‘Ofa Guttenbeil-Likiliki, Representative, Women and Children Crisis Centre (an NGO working for victims of gender-based violence).

³ As of 24th November 2009. Information provided by Women and Children Crisis Centre.

⁴ View expressed by Tonga Family Health Association and Tongan National Women’s Congress.

⁵ View expressed by AusAID Tonga.

⁶ View expressed by Women and Children Crisis Center.

⁷ Parliament of Tonga: members (n.d.)

⁸ Nobles can only be men; women cannot inherit the title.

⁹ She is the Minister of Information and Communication.

Tongan Women National Congress, an NGO advocating women's rights, requested the government to consider a quota for women in the Assembly, but the government has not responded.

There is no female judiciary and in the public sector as a whole (public administration and the defense agency), out of the 2,861 positions, 784 (27.4%) positions are filled by women (according to 2006 census data).

[Issues originating from religions and traditional customs]

In the traditional social system, unlike in the other Pacific cultures, women ate with men (not after men), drank the local alcohol, and went to sea, including long voyages in canoes. Younger brothers and maternal uncles had cultural obligations to provide food and other materials to woman (elder sister/niece). The compliance to this is wavering, with some men still providing¹⁰. Women still eat with men, but they do not usually drink alcohol¹¹ and have ceased to go on sea voyages (voyages in canoes are not practiced anymore).

There have been some fields where women have traditionally been excluded, such as the inheritance of a Noble title, but in general women have participated in most social events, as well as in performing general duties e.g. farming and fishing. Elder sisters outrank brothers in the family.

Tongans are mostly (more than 97%) Christians and generally adhere to it closely; acceptance and adoption of Christianity started in the 19th century. This coupled with modernization and a simultaneous expansion of the economy being based on currency, have fundamentally changed the socio-cultural and socio-economic structure of the country. Christianity has promoted values based on a patriarchal approach, which has reduced women's previously high status within the family and general society.

Since the 1950s, traditional lifestyle and values have been further eroded; people holding the money, now command respect. In culturally important occasions such as funerals, roles which are traditionally supposed to be played by an elder woman are now taken on by a more affluent woman or in some cases by a man.

Another complicated gender-related issue is conjugal relationships; despite a sibling respect, with a brother having regard for his sisters, husbands tend not to respect their wives. Advocates for women's rights claim that this is a strong contributing factor for domestic violence incidents. Whether or not the woman is respected in the household, in most cases, the man is the decision maker for important family matters¹².

¹⁰ Discussion with Ms. Fuiwa Kavaliku. Technical Advisor, National Women's Council and Interim President of Women and Children Centre.

¹¹ Excessive alcohol consumption by men has become a social problem in the last decade, in both urban and rural areas. Discussions with Tonga Community Development Trust, Women and Children Crisis Centre.

¹² Discussions with Mr. Mr. Faleata Leha, Programme Coordinator, Tonga Family Health Association, and Ms. Tuna Fielakepa, President, National Council of Women.

2-2 Government Policy on Gender

Government Policy on Gender

- 1) The government's awareness of gender issues is low with the current National Strategic Planning Framework, which came into operation in July 2009, not acknowledging gender as one of the country's development issues.
- 2) In 2001, the National Policy on Gender and Development was formulated, and subsequently in 2002, a Three Year Implementation Plan for Gender and Development 2003/4-2005/6 was prepared. However, little budget was allocated for the Plan, so it has not been implemented. There are no laws relating to gender specifically, such as a prohibition on sexual discrimination.
- 3) In September 2009, the government failed to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). It is considered that the government is avoiding passing the convention as it would require them to amend the land ownership system, which almost completely restricts women's rights to own land.

[Government policy on women]

Most government officials interviewed for this study claim that there are no gender issues in Tonga, citing that women are traditionally respected and well off in the country. Thereby, the current National Strategic Planning Framework, which came into operation in July 2009, does not acknowledge gender as a country's development issue.

[Government plan for women]

In 2001, National Policy on Gender and Development was formulated; the goal for the Policy was to promote equality between genders within the first quarter of the 21st century. Ten areas selected for policy emphasis and guidelines were:

- Gender and the Family,
- Gender and Religion,
- Gender and, Culture and Society,
- Gender and Health,
- Gender and Education,
- Gender and Politics,
- Gender and the Economy,
- Gender and, Regional, Outer Island and Rural Development,
- Gender and the Public Sector,

- Gender and the Private Sector.

In order to implement the Policy, subsequently in 2002, a Three Year Implementation Plan for Gender and Development 2003/4-2005/6 was prepared. However, due in part to governmental attitude, little budget was allocated for the Plan, so it could not be implemented.

[Gender related laws and regulations]

There are no affirmative action laws, maternity law¹³, laws prohibiting sexual discriminations, or minimal wage law.

The law controlling sexual offence (the penal code) defines rape as the unpermitted (without consent) penetration of the penis into the vagina, and as such any other type of sexual abuse is not regarded or recognized as rape but indecent assault¹⁴.

An “employment bill” has been discussed in the Legislative Assembly, but not yet been approved. Thus there is no legal protection for any employees, male or female.

[International gender equality commitment]

Tonga has committed itself to the following international/regional gender equality conventions /agreements:

- Beijing Platform for Action of Women (Sep 1995)
- Millennium Development Goals (Sep 2005)
- Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015
- Revised Pacific Platform of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015

However, in September 2009, the government failed to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), on the ground that this would undermine the cultural and social heritage of Tonga. Critics and donors have mooted the notion that the government is avoiding passing the convention as it would require them to amend the land ownership system, which, currently, almost completely restricts woman’s right to own land at all (see 3-4 Economic Activities: [Women and land ownership]).

¹³ As an exception, public servants are entitled to maternity leave through a policy (not a law). In private sector, the majority of the companies do not give maternity leave, with some exceptional cases in which around 10 days leave is provided.

¹⁴ Discussions with Ms. ‘Ofa Guttenbeil-Likiliki.

2-3 National Machinery for the Advancement of Women

Women's Affairs Division, Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture

- 1) The National Machinery, the Women's Affairs Division of the Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture, is not able to function sufficiently due to the lack of human and financial resources.
- 2) The Women's Affairs Division is seeking to revise the National Policy on Gender and Development (2001) and the Three Year Implementation Plan for Gender and Development (2002).
- 3) As gender is not specifically mentioned in the National Strategic Planning Framework, it is unlikely that other ministries or government offices will incorporate and emphasize gender issues in their activity plans.

[Background]

In 1993, the Cabinet created the Women's Affairs Unit within the Prime Minister's Office. Original emphasis was only on women, since then it has shifted to include gender and development (GAD) as well; thus the Unit was transformed into the Women Development Center in 1996. In 2006, the Center was moved out of the Prime Minister's Office and placed in the Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture and now being called the Women's Affairs Division.

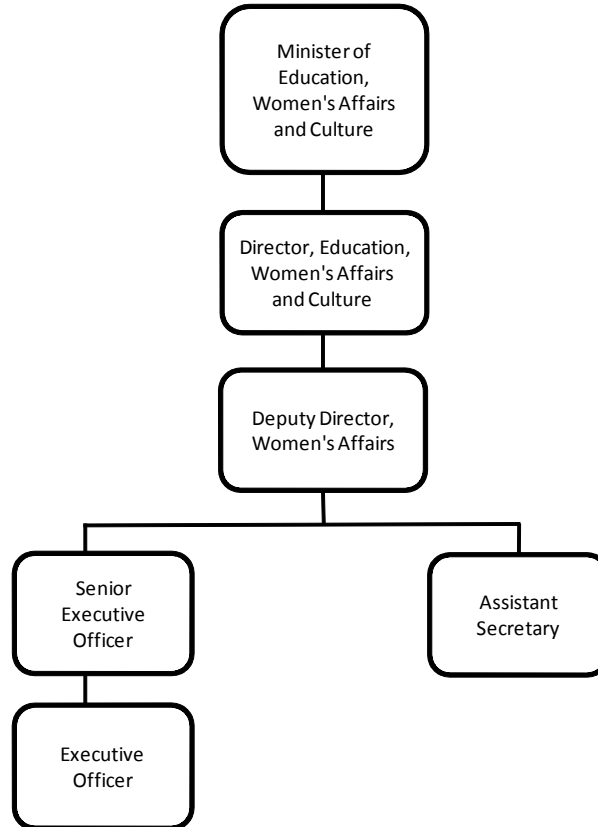
[National machinery]

Name of National Machinery	Women's Affairs Division, Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture
No. of personnel	4 (including the Deputy Director who is the Head of Division)
Budget	TOP 200,000 per annum (US\$ 110,000 ¹⁵)
Objectives	Development of women in Tonga ¹⁶ , by promoting universal and free participation, and partnership of women and men in all spheres of life ¹⁷
Roles	Gender policy advice and development, and collaboration with stakeholders, including women's organizations

¹⁵ As of November 2009.

¹⁶ Women's Affairs Division (2009)

¹⁷ Women Development Center (2002)



As of November 2009

[Main activities of Women’s Affairs Division]

Due to the lack of financial and human resources, the Women’s Affairs Division could not apply the Three Year Implementation Plan for Gender and Development (2002), originally being scheduled for deployment from 2003/4 to 2005/6.

The Women’s Affairs Division is seeking, with the involvement of stakeholders, including people at a grass root levels, as well as the international donor community, to revise the National Policy on Gender and Development (2001). The Division also intends to revise the outdated Implementation Plan for Gender and Development, so that both the National Policy and Implementation Plan will fit into the objectives of the National Strategic Planning Framework and receive more attention within the government.

[Activities of other ministries]

The National Strategic Planning Framework requires each of the ministries and government offices to produce a corporate plan¹⁸ on how they plan to achieve their “primary outcome objectives”. However, as gender is not specifically mentioned in the Framework, it is unlikely that other ministries’ and offices’ plan to emphasize gender.

¹⁸ A corporate plan is an action plan in line with which the ministry/government office will work in order to realize the concerned objective(s) in the National Strategic Planning Framework.

3. Current Situation of Women by Sector

3-1 Education

Education

- 1) Education is compulsory and free of charge for all Tongans from age 6 to 14; 6 years of primary and 3 years of junior secondary education. The literacy rate is impressive at 99.2% for males and 99.3% for females as of 2007.
- 2) The net enrolment rate for girls in primary education is slightly lower than for boys, but the rates for both genders are higher than 90%.
- 3) The net enrolment rate for girls in secondary education is higher than for boys, and the drop-out rate is lower for girls than for boys.
- 4) As there is no accredited university in Tonga, most students wishing to obtain a university degree must go overseas.
- 5) The gross enrolment rate for women (7%) in tertiary education is higher than that of men(4%). However, the majority of female graduates choose to marry and remain at home. This is considered to be due to the mindset of the majority of the population that “women should stay home and make good wives/mothers”.

[Government policy and gender conscious educational development plan]

Since the Education Act of 1974, the government has endeavored to execute its policy to provide free basic education for all the nations’ children¹⁹. In 2007, a review of this Act began, and the consultation and reviewing process was still underway as of November 2009.

Education is compulsory and free of charge for all Tongans from age 6 to 14; 6 years of primary and 3 years of junior secondary education. According to 2006 Census, the percentage of those who should be enrolled in school and not attending was very low, at 1% in both males and females. The Tonga literacy rate in its own language is impressive, at 99.2% for males and 99.3% for females, in 2007²⁰.

No specific consideration is given to gender in education. Tonga provides education for all children, regardless of which gender.

[Primary education]

The net enrolment rate for girls in primary education is slightly lower (94.1%) than for boys (97.4%) (2005)²¹. The drop-out rate from primary school was 8.1% for females and 10.0% for males in 2005²².

¹⁹ The primary education has become compulsory since 1876 (State University.com (n.d.))

²⁰ UIS Statistics in Brief, UNESCO Institute for Statistics

²¹ UNdata, United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)

²² Ibid.

In the population group of 15 years or older, those who have attained only a primary school education is 26% for females, and 25% for males (2006)²³.

[Secondary education]

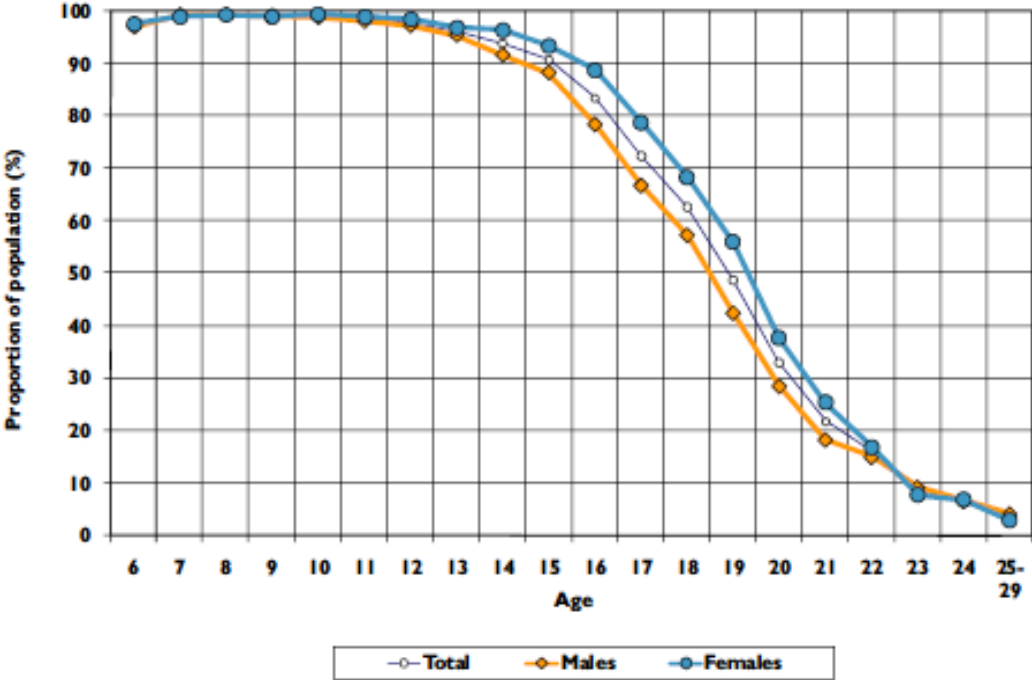
he net enrolment rate for girls (67.4%) in secondary education is higher than for boys (54.0%) (2006)²⁴, and the drop-out rate is lower for girls (5.1%) than for boys (6.2%) (2004)²⁵.

In secondary level education, girls are reported to perform better in the exams required to progress to the next grade²⁶. It is reported that many of the boys who failed in their exams, choose to quit school and help on their family farm²⁷.

Many students drop out after failing the exam for Tonga School Certificate (secondary education certificate, end of Form 5). According to an officer of Ministry of Education, Women’s Affairs and Culture, around 50% of the students pass the Certificate exam; the gender disparity data for this is unavailable.

In the secondary education age group (13-19 years of age), female attendance is always higher than males, as shown in the Figure below:

Figure 1 Population aged 6 and older, divided by gender, attending school, Tonga 2006



Source: Tongan Statistics Department and the SPC Statistics and Demography Programme (2008)

²³ Tongan Statistics Department and the SPC Statistics and Demography Programme (2008)
²⁴ UNdata, United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)
²⁵ Education, Tonga Department of Statistics
²⁶ Grade is called “Form” in secondary level.
²⁷ The information in this paragraph was given by Mr. Malakai H. Kaufusi, the NZAID Development Programme Coordinator.

[Tertiary education]

In Tonga, there is no accredited university that can issue a bachelor's degree²⁸. The University of South Pacific (based in Suva, Fiji) has a satellite school in Tonga where students can receive a university level education, but the students are required to go to Suva for the last year, with the exception of those in the Education Faculty, to obtain their degree. Thus, most students who are wishing to obtain a university degree go overseas, mainly to New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, and the United States of America.

The gross enrolment rate for women (7%) in tertiary education is higher than for men (4%) (2002)²⁹ According to the 2006 Census, the proportion of the population with tertiary education is slightly higher for males (10.9%) than for females (9.7%).

While there is no reliable data, sources state³⁰ that although some of the young women who graduate from higher education institutes, such as universities, pursue a further university education overseas, the majority chooses to get married and remain home (Tonga) in the domestic setting; as (1) there are not many employment opportunities in Tonga's small scale economy; (2) the mindset of the majority of the population is still that "women should stay home and make good wives/mothers".

[Vocational and technical education, higher education]

There are a few, both public and private, vocational and technical schools in Tonga, providing education in subjects like teaching (primary and secondary school), nursing (including midwifery), electronics, IT and journalism. Most of them require either a Form 5 or a 6 graduation certificate to enter, and duration of an educational program is either two or three years. The percentage of the population who hold a vocational/professional qualification³¹ is 8% in both males and females³². Gender-segregated data for each educational subject area/program is unavailable.

²⁸ There is one private university but the government does not recognize it.

²⁹ UIS Statistics in Brief, UNESCO Institute for Statistics

³⁰ Discussions with Ms. 'Ofa Guttenbeil-Likiliki and Ms. Fuiva Kavaliku.

³¹ Such as teacher's or nurse's certificate.

³² Tongan Statistics Department and the SPC Statistics and Demography Programme (2008)

3-2 Health

Health

- 1) State health services are provided free of charge and the basic health needs of the population are for the most part met.
- 2) The maternal mortality ratio (MMR), which has been stable for the last 20 years, is 36.5 per 100,000 live births.
- 3) There is little absolute poverty in Tonga, and as a result, no chronic malnutrition has been observed. Instead, new problems have been occurring in the health sector, specifically obesity, and non-communicable diseases (NCD), such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, have been increasing nationwide. The current health system does not have the capacity to provide quality care for these “modern” health problems.
- 4) The contraceptive use is at about 27% (2008) and the total fertility rate (TFR) is 3.8 (2006). The Ministry of Health seeks to promote more family planning to reduce the TFR to less than 3.0.
- 5) HIV/AIDS is not a serious problem in Tonga at this time.

[Government policy]

State health services are provided free of charge and, apart from those live on remote islands, access to health care is adequate. Public health care covers the cost for most of both curative and preventive care³³, excluding the payment to the traditional healers.

For the last two decades, the government has spent between 10-15% of its total budget on healthcare. Increases in the health budget have been difficult, as there have only been small advances in the government's income.

A Reproductive Health Policy was to be launched³⁴ in December 2009.

[Medical health³⁵ and gender]

Life expectancy at birth has increased dramatically in the past several decades; it was 40 years of age in 1939, but in 2008 it has risen to 67.3 years for male and 73 years for female. The proportion of death caused by infectious diseases has fallen from 32% in the 1950's to 6% in the 1990's.

The maternal mortality ratio (MMR), which has been stable for the last 20 years, was 36.5 per 100,000 live births in 2007. The infant mortality rate (IMR) is 9.1 deaths per 1,000 live births, which is the best performance in the Pacific countries. 98% of pregnant women attend antenatal clinics, 98.5% deliver

³³ The private health sector is very small, there are only a few private clinics, which operate part-time (in the evening) by the doctors who work at public hospitals during the daytime.

³⁴ At the time of research for this report, the Policy was yet to be published.

³⁵ The information in this section is, unless specified otherwise, taken from WHO (2009a) and WHO (2009b).

in a health facility. According to the Ministry of Health, the rate of deliveries attended by trained health staff in 2008 were 97.4%, while official statistics for the rate is 98.0% (2004)³⁶.

New problems have been occurring in the health sector. Non-communicable disease (NCD), such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases have been increasing nationwide. Obesity is widespread; the overall adult obesity rate (BMI³⁷>30) was 60% in the 2004 survey, and obese is greater among female than male; in the overall age group, women's mean BMI was 34.5 while men's was 31.0. Girls and young women in particular tend to gain weight during adolescence and pregnancy. The average weight of a Tongan woman increased by 21.1kg to 95.0kg over 30 years (that of a man increased by 17.4kg to 95.7kg). Consequently, women have higher rates of diabetes (female: 19.1%, men: 16.5%). Economic development, using cars instead of walking, improved access to processed (fatty) imported food, and westernization of eating habit are considered to be the main reasons for the trend, which has had a strong negative impact on people's health.

One survey in 2000³⁸ revealed that around 80% of people with diabetes remain undiagnosed and untreated, with it speculated that the same trend occurs with cardiovascular disease. However in Tonga, the current health system does not have the capacity to provide quality care for these "modern" health problems.

[Nutrition conditions]

There is little absolute poverty in Tonga, as a result is no chronic under-nutrition and no important micronutrient deficiencies have been observed.

Instead, "over" (or unbalanced) nutrition is problematic. A study³⁹ showed that an average Tongan male consumes double the quantity of food and amount of calories consumed by an average Australian male. As females have a higher rate of obesity than males, the same tendency could apply. Tongan females consume many more calories than the equivalent Australian females.

[Family planning]

According to the Ministry of Health, contraceptive use was about 27% in 2008. Various contraceptives are available from public health posts, as well as NGOs such as Tonga Family Health Association. The most adopted method for contraception is by injection. Condoms are only popular among the younger generation and the purpose of their use is not only for contraception, but primarily for safe sex reasons.

³⁶ GenderStats, World Bank

³⁷ Body Mass Index.

³⁸ A research result cited in WHO (2009a)

³⁹ A research result cited in WHO (2009a)

As the total fertility rate (TFR) is 3.8 (2006)⁴⁰, the Ministry of Health seeks to promote more family planning to reduce the TFR to less than 3.0.

[HIV/AIDS]

Very few HIV/AIDS cases have been reported; according to the Ministry of Health, there have been only 14 people diagnosed as infected with HIV. Two are still presumed to be alive.

[Brain drain of the nurses]

It is a concern in the Health Sector that qualified nurses continue to leave for other countries for better jobs and higher incomes. Their major choice of destination is: Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America. Thus, a decision has been made to increase the number of student admissions to the Queen Salote School of Nursing, the only nursing school in the country.

⁴⁰ WHO Statistical information System (WHOSIS)

3-3 Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

- 1) Although the primary sector accounts for only 20% of GDP, rural people still largely rely on subsistence agriculture and fishing for their existence.
- 2) In rural areas, agro-forestry is widely practiced with root crops (the people's traditional staple food) being widely cultivated. Women go into the bush and work with the men in performing heavy agricultural work. Most women do not engage in paid work in agriculture and are only involved in household food production.
- 3) In coastal areas, women hunt along the coast and in the lagoons, catching small fish and gathering various kinds of shellfish. Most of the women's production is consumed at home with the women selling any surplus in the local market.
- 4) Most of the women's contributions towards the agriculture and fisheries industries are not reflected in the official statistics as they are part of the informal economy.

[Agricultural policy and gender]

According to the latest forecast by the Ministry of Finance and National Planning, Tonga's primary sector, composed of agriculture, forestry and fisheries accounts for 19.8% of GDP in 2009/10⁴¹. The primary sector has long been a major contributor to the economy, but now the tertiary sector accounts for more than 60% of GDP.

However, in rural areas, people still largely rely on subsistence agriculture and fishing for their livelihoods.

In 2008, a division named Food, Women and Youth in Community Development was created in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forests and Fisheries (MoAFFF). The purpose of the division is to support the development of women and communities as a whole.

[Ownership of farming land and agrarian reform]

Land ownership is virtually denied to all women (see 3-4 Economic Activities: [Women and land ownership]). Women usually use land which is owned by male family members, such as husbands or sons. The government is reluctant to change the land ownership laws and/or upset the status-quo, as seen in its refusal to ratify CEDAW (see 2-2 Government Policy on Gender: [International gender equality commitment]).

⁴¹ The World Bank's latest figure for agriculture, fisheries and forestry is 28% of GDP (2007).

[Rural life and gender]

While there is a small amount of cash crop agriculture⁴², rural people still largely rely on subsistence agriculture and fishing for their existence. A recorded ideal that in Tongan society, men are/were responsible for hard physical labor in agriculture, while women take/took on lighter labor, such as home gardening for vegetables and craft making, is fallacy. In reality, women take active roles in the core parts of subsistence agriculture.

In rural Tonga, agro-forestry is widely practiced, where root crops which are the people's traditional staple food are widely cultivated. Women go to the bush, and work with the men, performing heavy agricultural work. If they have surplus produce after securing their household needs, either man or woman goes to the local market to sell it. Some women prefer going to the market by themselves because of fears that men would spend the money earned on alcohol⁴³.

According to the 2006 Census, the number of women in paid employed in agriculture/fisheries/quarrying was only 417, compared to that of men being 9,486. The category for skilled agricultural and fisheries jobs shows the same trend; women being 400, while men being 9,868. This shows that most women do not engage in paid work in agriculture and that they are only involved in household food production⁴⁴.

Employment opportunities for women in commercial agriculture are scarce. The director of a squash exporting company, which is one of the biggest exporters in the agriculture sector in Tonga, explained that most paid jobs are temporary and require muscular labor which is, according to the director, not suitable for women.

[Extension activities and training for women]

Food, Women and Youth in Community Development division in MoAFFF promotes chicken rearing and having a vegetable garden for rural women so that they can reduce food purchases to a minimum. Due to budget limitations, the operation remains relatively small and is mainly conducted in the main island of Tongatapu.

In the outer islands, a District Agriculture Committee for Women, composed of women representatives from villages as well as local government officers, were set up to support women's agricultural activities. NGOs have also been working for rural women in the outer islands by supporting village women's organizations and providing information on growing vegetables and how to cook the crops, as well as health related information.

⁴² No detailed data on cash crop agriculture is available.

⁴³ Discussions with Ms. Oketi Feletau, Project Coordinator, Tonga Community Development Trust.

⁴⁴ Although the women can and do go out to sell the surplus, if there is any, in the local market, the earning from this does not appear in the official data as it is in the informal economy.

[Forestry and gender]

As there are few commercial forestry operations in Tonga, analysis in this area is nearly impossible. In rural subsistence agriculture, which is agro-forestry, both men and women participate in maintaining and preserving the forest, while utilizing forest products such as fruits and timber mainly for household consumption.

[Fisheries and gender]

According to MoAFFF, fisheries account for only 0.6% of GDP (2008). Most of this small contribution is from exporting fish caught in deep-sea fishing, which is a “man’s job”. This figure fails to demonstrate the actual importance of women’s fishing activities.

The Fisheries industry is made up of two types; one is a small scale one, carried out by women who hunt along the coast and in the lagoons, catching small fish and gathering various kinds of shellfish. The second type is large scale, where men go deep-sea fishing on boats. Most of the women’s produce is consumed at home, which contributes greatly to rural people’s protein intake. Some women sell the surplus in the local market. All of the women’s activities and contributions towards the fisheries industry do not appear in the statistics, as they are part of the informal economy.

3-4 Economic Activities

Economic Activities

- 1) In the past 30 years, the number of females in formal employment has increased almost fourfold. However, there has been little progress in the type of occupations that women are engaged in. Most women were and still are employed in unskilled menial work or subordinate positions (and thus being low-paid). It is considered that women's job opportunities are limited because of the cultural values that Tongans, males and females, have concerning gender roles.
- 2) Although women occupy almost 30% of the employment in the public sector, few are at the decision-making level.
- 3) There is no official system for supporting female workers with the exception of maternity leave for public servants.
- 4) In the informal sector, particular kinds of handicrafts are in high demand by expatriates and urban Tongan women. In rural areas, where males have few opportunities to earn money, the females' contribution to the household income through handicraft production and marketing is greatly significant.
- 5) In Tonga, women cannot legally own land with leasing land as well being very difficult in a women's name. This is a significant obstacle when women attempt to pursue business opportunities.

[Employment opportunities]

In the past 30 years, there has been a noticeable change in the labor market. As the number of young women with educational qualifications has increased, the number of female in formal employment has also increased: from 2,743 in 1976 to 11,004 in 1996⁴⁵. In the 2006 Census, the number of employed women was 9,165⁴⁶, which was a decrease since 1996 in overall numbers; however, if taken as a percentage of the total number of employees (male and female), females' had slightly increased, from 37.4% of the total work force in 1996 to 39% in 2006.

Compared to the number of female employment, there has been little progress in the type of occupations that women are engaged in. Most women were and still are employed in unskilled menial work or subordinate positions (and thus low-paid), or jobs involving caring/serving work, such as clerical, secretarial, service, sales, and craft work.

It is generally considered that women's job opportunities are limited because of the cultural values that Tongans, males and females, have about gender roles. An explanation given by an NGO

⁴⁵ Emberson-Bain (1998)

⁴⁶ The number is for paid-workers (subsistence workers excluded).

representative⁴⁷ is that the current education practices reinforces the nation's mindset by providing textbooks in which traditional gender roles are portrayed and revered from the Grade 1 onwards.

There are observations that women in offices can act with a domineering attitude, especially toward younger males. Both sides accept this work relationship, since the general predisposition of Tongans is to respect women (see 2-1 General Situation of Women in the Kingdom of Tonga: [General situation]). The acceptance of individual's attitude in the workplace, by both males and females, does not necessarily correspond to their official positions and/or salary levels.

[Female workers in public and private sector⁴⁸]

Women occupy 27.4% of the employment in the public administration and defense sectors. Out of the two sectors it is acceptable to assume that the majority of women are in the public sector and not the defense sector which is more male-dominated, although more detailed data is unavailable.

Advocates for women's rights⁴⁹ claim that even though a considerable number of women are working in public administration, very few of them are at the decision-making level. Although there are female deputy directors, there is a meager amount of female directors. At the minister's level, as described in 2-1 General Situations of Women in the Kingdom of Tonga, there is only 1 female out of 14 cabinet ministerial positions.

In the private sector, there are 423 male and 169 female employers, while there are 8,361 male and 4,900 female employees (paid-workers). There are also self-employed people, 5,085 male and 3,713 female.

Most women are working in the craft or the craft-related trade sectors (9,181 females compared to 2,463 males). Less than 1,500 females are working in other occupational categories.

[Support system for female workers]

There is no official system for supporting female workers, since there is no legislation for the protection of workers.

The absence of an official maternity leave scheme, except for public servants⁵⁰, also discourages women of reproductive age to seek paid work. If women become employed, they bear a "double-burden"; they have their job at their workplace while taking the responsibilities for raising

⁴⁷ Discussions with Ms. 'Ofa Guttenbeil-Likiliki.

⁴⁸ This section is based mainly on Tongan Statistics Department and the SPC Statistics and Demography Programme (2008) unless specified otherwise. In the report, both paid and subsistence workers are included in the people "employed".

⁴⁹ Discussions with Ms. Polotu Fakafanua-Paunga, Deputy Director, Women's Affairs Division, Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs, and Culture, and NGOs including Center for Women and Children, Tongan Women National Congress, Women and Children Crisis Center.

⁵⁰ See footnote 13 at page 9.

children and domestic duties. Even the few professionals, such as higher-ranking government officials, are under the expectation of being good wives and mothers⁵¹.

[Female workers in the informal sector]

Though not clearly shown in statistics, the informal economy constitutes a very important part in Tongan economy in general and Tongan women's life in particular. Women spend a long time engaged in manual tasks, such as handcrafts, agriculture, and lagoon fishing, to contribute to the household consumption requirements. When there is a surplus, many of them sell the products (root crops, vegetables, fruits, handcrafts, etc.) by putting makeshift shops in flea markets or at the roadside.

Tapa⁵² and fine-mats⁵³, called *koloa faka-Tonga* (meaning Tongan goods in Tongan language), are the two most personally valued handcrafts for many Tongan women in and out of the country. Both tapa and fine-mats are indispensable in Tongan cultural life⁵⁴. For rural women, in the past several decades, making tapa and/or fine-mats has become a lucrative informal business, due to the high demand from Tongan expatriates⁵⁵, as well as city-dwelling, Tongan women.

While there is no reliable data available, anecdotal evidence suggests that especially in rural areas, where males have few opportunities to earn money, the female's contribution to the household economy through tapa/fine-mats production and marketing is of great significance. An example is where a husband, who lost his wife in a ferry accident in August 2009, claimed that his family would suffer as the income from her tapa making was the sole cash income for the family.

[Support for micro enterprises]

In 2009, on the main island of Tongatapu, two microfinance schemes started: (1) microloans product, by Tonga Development Bank; (2) micro-enterprise development program, by South Pacific Business Development (SPBD) Microfinance Ltd. The latter so far seems to be more successful, with 700 clients (all women) in less than half a year. The former targets both men and women and have around 170 clients. In both cases, the most popular women's business is handcraft-related (selling in local and overseas markets, producing, and wholesaling to existing souvenir/craft shops). Other businesses include growing and selling vegetables, small restaurants and catering, and bakeries. SPBD Microfinance Ltd. attributes its popularity to the gap in the market for affordable small loans unsecured and targeted lower-income citizens⁵⁶.

⁵¹ Discussions with Deputy Director of Women's Affairs Division, Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture.

⁵² Made from bark of trees, pounded into sheets and dyed various brown colors with wood colorant.

⁵³ Made from various leaves thus have many varieties.

⁵⁴ Both tapa and fine-mats are used for ceremonial gifts in situations such as child-birth, funerals and weddings. Tapa is used to cover the body of the diseased. Having many tapa and/or fine-mats is the symbol of status for Tongan women.

⁵⁵ Many expatriate Tongan women want to buy and own as many tapa and fine-mats as possible, since these are possessions that boost their pride as Tongan women and symbolize their traditional and ethnic identity.

⁵⁶ There are many commercial money-lenders, but their rates are higher (in terms of interests), and some require collateral. There have been microfinance schemes by local NGOs, but, according to SPBD Microfinance Ltd, they have been small in scale and hardly sustainable.

In the outer islands, an NGO, Tonga Community Development Trust, started in 2008 to organize village Credit Unions. The Union program emphasizes on building up rural people's habit to save money for future, but the members can borrow money from the Union when they want to start a micro-business.

[International migration]

The 2006 Census estimates that 1,800 people⁵⁷ (roughly 1.8% of the whole population) left the country (emigrated) every year in the period starting in 1996 and ending in 2006. The 15-24 years age group is the largest cohort to leave Tonga, followed by 15-19 years age group. In most age cohorts, male emigrants are 1-2% more than females. Their destinations are mainly Australia, New Zealand, and the United States of America⁵⁸. The major reason for emigration is considered to be for economic or academic reasons, seeking better-paid jobs or higher education.

International migration has had both positive and negative impacts on Tonga's socio-economic situation. The continual and steady funds (remittances) sent by expatriate Tongans into the country are a positive impact. In 2008, remittances sent from relatives overseas amounted to US\$ 100 million, which is 37% of the country's Gross National Income (GNI)⁵⁹.

Numerous people, especially those of a working age⁶⁰ emigrate, meaning that a significant proportion of workforce, especially well-educated/skilled, are leaving the country. While there is no specific research or data, it is observed in neighboring Pacific countries that women and children are greatly affected by male migration as it adds significantly to their workload. It is also reported that there also has been an increasing number of women and girls being sexual harassed while male family members are absent from the village⁶¹. As a similar phenomenon could be happening in Tonga, researches on this issue are needed.

[Domestic migration]

Continuous domestic migration to the main island, Tongatapu, is occurring. In 2006, the population of the capital, Nuku'alofa, was 24,000, of which one-quarter has been born in other parts of the country. The population of Nuku'alofa is now more than 40,000, according to a recent estimate⁶².

Gender-specific data for domestic migration is not available. It is reported that a majority of migrants are family groups, not individual males or females. According to one donor officer⁶³ who is Tongan,

⁵⁷ AusAID estimates the number of emigrants being 2,500 a year (AusAID (2007)).

⁵⁸ Estimated collective migration figures show that at least 100,000 Tongans live overseas (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia Government (2009)), which is similarly comparable to the number Tongan nationals. Although there is no accurate data, another source (a bilateral donor officer who likes to remain anonymous) asserts that figures for Tongans residing as expatriate worldwide are more likely to be between 150,000 and 200,000.

⁵⁹ World Bank (2009)

⁶⁰ 15-34 years of age consists 60% of emigrants. Tongan Statistics Department and the SPC Statistics and Demography Programme (2008)

⁶¹ Amnesty International (2004)

⁶² Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia Government (2009)

⁶³ Discussions with Mr. Siosaia T. Faletau, World Bank/ADB joint Focal Office Country Officer for Tonga.

one of the major reasons for domestic migration, to Nuku'alofa, is better education for children⁶⁴. Looking for a better job is only a secondary factor.

[Women and land ownership]

Legally women cannot own land; only men can inherit and own land. Leasing land is also very difficult in a women's name. A widow can use the land of her late husband, but if she remarries or commits "adultery"⁶⁵, she will lose the right to access the land, thus a widow must be faithful to the dead husband if she wishes to keep the land. The problem of land ownership is a significant obstacle when women want to pursue business opportunities, as land is "the basis of most business activity, including the space where most entrepreneurial activities are conducted and which can be used as collateral for the purposes of borrowing money"⁶⁶. In practice, women who want to utilize the options that land provides, do so by using her husband's or son's right to the land. Woman who does not have a husband or son does therefore not have this option.

A discussion has been underway on the land law reform, which would allow women to own land if there is no male heir inline. Even if this is introduced, it will still be far from gender-equal land ownership system.

⁶⁴ If a child, whether a boy or a girl, performs well at school, then the parents will try to send him/her to a foreign university. If the parents alone cannot afford it, they will seek help from the extended family who have already-emigrated.

⁶⁵ to have another partner.

⁶⁶ P.134, Nagarajan (2009).

3-5 Disaster Management and Environment

Disaster Management and Environment

- 1) Gender issues are not specifically incorporated into either disaster management or environmental policy.
- 2) When a disaster strikes, men and women are treated the same with the government and NGOs conducting projects/programs on disaster preparedness without gender being specifically emphasized.
- 3) In the area of environmental protection, women show more interests than men. Women have been shown to be more active in awareness-raising meetings and waste management activities.

[Government policy]

A new policy direction was adopted for disaster management in 1996, from the previous policy, of disaster response (immediate rescue, recovery and reconstruction), to an all-encompassing approach, including both preparation and response. Since then, the overall policy has not changed. The National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) located in the Ministry of Works is responsible for national disaster management. The duties of the Office are: 1) to mitigate natural disasters' negative impacts on people's lives; 2) to encourage communities' self-help actions and preparations; 3) to acknowledge different components of disaster management such as: preparedness, rescue, recovery /reconstruction /rehabilitation, all points, one to three, are meant to support community as a whole⁶⁷.

The National Strategic Planning Framework acknowledges that environmental issues are one of the most important areas in Tonga's development. There are two Acts (Environmental Impact Assessment and Waste Management), but no specific bills that prescribe detailed procedures, thus the Environment Division of the Ministry of Lands, Survey, Natural Resources and Environment (MoLSNRE) has little enforcing power.

Gender issues are not specifically incorporated into either disaster management or environment policy.

[Gender situation in disasters]

Tonga often suffers from natural disasters such as; cyclones, earthquakes, rise in sea-level (which results in coastal erosion) and drought.

At the end of September 2009, the first-ever recorded Tsunami stroke one of the islands, Niua Toputapu. There is no evidence that women are more vulnerable than men in a period of natural disaster in Tonga, although by number more women were affected by the Tsunami than men: four

⁶⁷ Discussions with Mr. Makiw Takai, Deputy Director, National Emergency Management Office, Ministry of Works. The information on disaster management was provided by Mr. Takai, unless specified otherwise.

women were killed (including one child) and five seriously injured, while three men killed and two (including one child) seriously injured.

[Disaster management and gender]

The NEMO has a guiding document called National Emergency Management Plan, which does not have gender specific components. According to the plan, when a disaster strikes, men and women are treated the same, although the different needs of men and women are recognized. For example, in an effort to restore livelihoods, men would be provided with fishing nets, while weaving huts for handcraft making would be built for women.

[Extension activities and training for women]

The activities of NEMO, when not engaged in disaster response/recovery, are constrained to awareness-raising activities, largely due to human and budget limitation. The Office holds workshops in disaster prone areas (including small islands) once or twice a month and broadcasts a radio show. Both in workshops and in the broadcast, gender is not specifically emphasized.

NGOs such as Tonga Community Development Trust have been conducting projects on disaster preparedness. Their activities are essentially concentrated on awareness-raising and do not specifically target women. Other NGOs including Caritas Oceania conduct Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) counseling for disaster-affected people.

[Environment and gender]

Conserving the environment is one of the key areas of the newly launched National Strategic Planning Framework. As an island country, Tonga suffers from coastal erosion in many places on its islands. Being a small country, waste management is also a problem. However, due to human and budget limitations, the Environment Division, MoLSNRE, has not been able to show a strong initiative to improve these issues.

The Framework does not implement a gender perspective into its core. The Environment Division recognizes the impact of environmental degradation on women, for example; coastal erosion would cause a decrease in the areas to procure seafood produce from (see 3-3 Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries: [Fisheries and gender]), it would also lead to high-salinity of water, which would affect women who are responsible for collecting water for their families.

The experience of the Environment Division shows that women are more interested in environmental issues, be it coastal erosion or waste management. When awareness-raising meetings are held, more women than men gather. In the waste management project, which is struggling to change people's mindset to the idea that they would pay for waste treatment, women's groups are the most active in collecting and sorting garbage for recycling.

4. Gender Issues and the Importance of Their Consideration when Planning Future Country Interventions

(1) Gender-specific socio-cultural analysis for better gender-focused development programs/projects

In today's Tonga, the participation of women in development has largely been limited with women generally being regarded as having a lower economic and legal status than that of men. It has become clear that ensuring women's participation in all levels of the development process is vital, and the development activities should be attempted by fully recognizing the specific needs of women and their roles in the society. On the other hand, like women in other Pacific regions, the women of Tonga are not homogeneous, having differing senses of values depending on their age, socio-economic status, and educational backgrounds.

In planning and implementing programs and projects, all these complex attributes will need to be considered and a full gender analysis conducted, taking into account social, economic, political and cultural factors relating to the women. Based on the findings of detailed studies assessing the needs of women in the community, programs and projects that are more gender-sensitive could be designed and implemented. Such studies and analysis could be completed by having close coordination and discussion with other stakeholders within the country who work for gender equality and women's rights, such as local women's NGOs, church organizations⁶⁸, and other donors⁶⁹.

(2) Gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in economic development

In formulating programs/projects in Tonga, it would be optimal to place women's economic empowerment, an area where little support has been provided until now, as a target as opposed to sectors such as health and education, in which government policy and implementation have been shown to be quite adequate and women's basic needs in these sectors have been mostly met.

Although the number of females in formal employment has increased within Tonga, the types of occupations in which women are engaged have been limited over the years. Legal and other support systems for women workers have been far from satisfactory, and more lacking than most other Pacific nations. This appears to be a significant area of concern in the supporting of women's economic empowerment in Tonga through the support of the government in mainstreaming gender into its policies and programs. Protection for women workers, and the promotion of formal and self employment of women by providing support to build more gender-sensitive legal and institutional working environments would be necessary in order to uplift and empower Tongan women.

⁶⁸ Church organizations and their women's union are playing a vital role in terms of economic empowerment (through the support of handicraft production and marketing) for rural women in the community. Thus, it is important to conduct hearings and consultations with these organizations when planning and implementing programs and/or projects.

⁶⁹ It would be beneficial to learn from the organizational initiatives of AusAID and NZAID, within which gender advisors check each and every project plan and document to ensure that gender perspectives are effectively incorporated in all projects they conduct.

Should women become more active in economic activities, this would contribute to the Tongan economy as a whole since the country has continued to lose its working-age population due to emigration. However, in designing and implementing women's economic empowerment programs/projects, careful consideration should be taken as the society itself expects women to play the role of good wives/mothers and, consequently, economic activities of women would need to be designed so as not to increase their workloads. The involvement of men around the target women would also be desirable.

(3) Need for in-depth research on domestic violence (DV)

Advocates of women's rights and donors in Tonga are concerned that domestic violence (DV) has been seriously underreported. However, there is no reliable research/data on this issue and the actual situation is as of yet unknown. Other forms of gender-based violence are also considered to be widespread, however, likewise no reliable research or analysis has been conducted. In-depth and thorough research and analysis on DV and other gender-based violence, thus, are seriously required.

(4) Support for government level gender mainstreaming

The Tongan National Machinery, the Women's Affairs Division of the Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture, is completely lacking in both human and financial resources, and has not been able to function effectively. Gender-sorted databases have not been developed to date and gender-related information gathering and analysis on all sectors, and advocacy for gender mainstreaming have not been sufficiently conducted. Capacity development and the organizational strengthening of the Women's Affairs Division are necessary in order to allow Tonga to mainstream gender as one of its development requirements.

5. On-going Gender Projects

Project / Program	Implementing Organization	Donor Organization	Duration	Budget (US\$)	Area
Women / General					
SPC Stocktake and Strategic Support Initiative for PICT Gender Mainstreaming Capacity	SPC (Secretariat of the Pacific Community)	ADB UNIFEM	2009-On-going	N.A.	Gender analysis in the country
Village Women Development Project	Tonga Community Development Trust	Christian World Services	2008-2010	103,500	Rural development focusing on women
Education					
Education and Training Program	AusAID	AusAid	On-going	1.5 million (per year)	Higher education
Scholarship Program	NZAID	NZAID	On-going	N.A.	Higher education
Technical Vocational Education and Training Support Project	Government of Tonga	NZAID AusAID	End of 2009-ongoing	N.A.	Technical and vocational education
Health / Medicine					
Reproductive Health commodity Security Project	N.A.	UNFPA, AusAID, NZAID	On-going	N.A.	RH commodity management and delivery
Single Mother project	Tonga Family Health Association	International Planned Parenthood Federation	On-going	N.A.	Support for single mothers
Promoting health for all in Tonga	WHO	WHO	On-going	N.A.	Country and gender analysis research
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishery					
Food, Women and Youth in community development	MoAFFF	EC	2008-on-going	N.A.	Food security (small livestock rearing, vegetable gardens)
Economic Activities					
Micro enterprise development program	SPBD Microfinance Ltd.	South Pacific Business Development (SPBD)	2009-on-going	N.A.	Technical training for micro business start-up and microfinance
Disaster management and Environment					
Disaster Preparedness Project	Tonga Community Development Trust	NZAID	2008-2010	69,000 (for 3 years)	Awareness raising for disaster preparedness

6. Gender Information Sources

6-1 List of Organizations related to Gender

Name of Organization	Area of Specialization	Activity	Contact
Government Organizations			
Women's Affairs Division, Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture	Gender in general	Policy formulation and advice	Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture P.O.Box 851, Nuku'alofa Tel: 27145 Fax: 27099
Economic, Social Policy and Planning Division, Ministry of Finance and National Planning	Finance, national planning	Development Policy and Plan formulation and implementation	P. O. Box 87, Nuku'alofa Tel: 28115 Fax: 24260
Ministry of Health	Health	Policy, planning, implementation	Taufa'ahau Rd. Nuku'alofa Tel: 23200
Food, Women and Youth in Community Development Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forestry and Fisheries	Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Food Security	Agriculture and Food production promotion targeting women and youth	Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Forestry Tel: 23038
National Emergency Management Office, Ministry of Works	Disaster management	Disaster management (prevention, rescue, reconstruction), advocacy	Ministry of Works Tel: 26340 Fax: 7776458
International Organisations			
UNFPA	Reproductive health/rights(RH/R), health and rights of mothers and children	Improvement of RH/R, support for the Ministry of Health and NGOs	c/o Ministry of Health Taufa'ahau Rd. Nuku'alofa Tel: 23200
WHO	Health	Support for the Ministry of Health	c/o Vaiola Hospital, P. O. Box 70, Nuku'alofa Tel: 23217 Fax: 23938
ADB-World Bank Group Joint Focal Office	Poverty reduction, development	Support for infrastructure construction and financial management, poverty reduction	TDB Building, Ministry of Finance and national Planning, Nuku'alofa Tel: 28290 Fax: 28735
AusAID	Human resource development, community development	Human resource development through education and training, support for waste management, community development, support for the health sector	c/o Australian High Commission, Salote Rd., Nuku'alofa Tel: 23244 Fax: 25007
NZAID	Human resource development, administrative capacity building	Human resource development through education and training, support for capacity development of the government, support for the touring industry development (in planning)	c/o New Zealand High Commission, P. O. Box 830, Nuku'alofa Tel 23122 Fax 23487
NGOs			
National Council for Women	Gender in general, improvement of	Advocacy for and awareness raising of	P. O. Box 267, Nuku'alofa Tel / Fax: 25988

Name of Organization	Area of Specialization	Activity	Contact
	women's life	women's rights, support for women through handicrafts making and marketing	
Centre for Women and Children	Women's rights, care of victims of gender-based violence, advocacy	Counselling and shelter for victims of gender-based violence, awareness raising	Fasi-moe-Afi, Nuku'alofa Tel / Fax: 26567
Women and Children Crisis Center	Women's rights, care of victims of gender-based violence, advocacy	Counselling and shelter for victims of gender-based violence, awareness raising, research	Fanga-'o-Pilolevu Nuku'alofa Tel: 22240
Tongan Women National Congress	Women's rights, Quota for Legislative Assembly, CEDAW ratification	Advocacy	P. O. Box 2005 Nuku'alofa Tel: 63344
Catholic Women's League of Tonga	Gender in general, improvement of women's life	Support for women through handicrafts making and marketing, mental care for women	P.O. Box 304747, Nuku'alofa Tel / Fax: 27524
Tonga Family Health Association	Reproductive health/rights	RH/R, RH Clinic, support for single mothers	Vaiola Motu'a, Kolofo'ou, Nuku'alofa Tel: 22770
Tonga Community Development Trust	Community development	Women's development in rural areas, community credit unions, disaster prevention	Tofoa, Nuku'alofa Tel: 23478
Consultants and Others			
SPBD Microfinance Ltd.	Support for women's micro-enterprises	Training for micro-enterprise start-up, microfinance	Taufa'ahau Rd. Kolofo'ou, Nuku'alofa Tel: 27087

As of November 2009

6-2 List of reports and references related Gender

Title	Author	Publisher/Source	Year
Economic Activities			
Persistence of the gift: Tongan tradition in transnational context	Evans, M.	Wilfrid Laurier University Press / Maca (Pacific) Tonga LTD	2001
Social/Gender Analysis			
National Strategic Planning Framework (draft)	Prime Minister's Office	Ministry of Finance and National Planning	2009
Strategic Development Plan 8: Looking to the Future Building on the Past	Government of the Kingdom of Tonga	Ministry of Finance and National Planning	2006
Three Year Implementation Plan for Gender and Development 2003/4-2005/6	Women Development Center	Women's Affairs, Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs, and Culture	2002
Country Briefing Paper: Women in Tonga	Emberson-Bain, 'A, 'oH	Asian Development Bank	1998
Others			
Salaries and Benefits 2008: A Survey in the Kingdom of Tonga	'Uta'atu and Associates	'Uta'atu and Associates	2008

7. Definitions

<Technical Terms>

Terms	Definition
Informal sector	Part of economy consisting of small competitive individual or family firms listed in the labor indicators. According to the definition of ILO, those engaged in this sector have simple technology, insufficient amount of capital, unidentified business location, minimum number of employees (or none of them), lack of legality and registration, and no capability of bookkeeping.
Reproductive health/rights	Part of economy consisting of small competitive individual or family firms listed in the labor indicators. According to the definition of ILO, those engaged in this sector have simple technology, insufficient amount of capital, unidentified business location, minimum number of employees (or none of them), lack of legality and registration, and no capability of bookkeeping.
National machinery	Administrative organization to promote equal participation between men and women, and to implement and strengthen policies related to women, and to supplement organization for women.
Affirmative action	Prioritized positive measure to promptly correct the difference, in the case that discriminated groups are placed in extremely unequal conditions to other groups, due to the discrimination accumulated in the past.

<Indicators>

Indicator	Explanation
Human development Index (HDI)	The Human Development Index (HDI) is measure of a country's achievement in three basic dimensions of human development: (a) longevity, as measured by life expectancy at birth, (b) educational and combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment and (c) standard of living, as measured by real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (in purchasing power parity). It is used in annual Human Development Reports, published by UNDP.
Gender-related development index (GDI)	The Gender-related Development Index (GDI) is a measure of a country's achievement in the three basic dimensions captured in the human development index, life expectancy, educational attainment and income, adjusted to account for inequalities between men and women. It is used in annual Human Development Reports, published by UNDP.
Gender empowerment measurement (GEM)	The Gender empowerment measure (GEM) is a measure of gender inequality in three basic dimensions of empowerment, (a) economic participation and decision-making, (b) political participation, and (c) decision making and power over economic resources. It is used in annual Human Development Reports, published by UNDP.
Total fertility rate	The number of children that would be born to each women if she were to live to the end of her child-bearing years and bear children at each age in accordance with prevailing age-specific fertility rates in a given year / period, for a given country, territory or geographical area.
GDP implicit deflator	It is an indicator of inflation. Ratio of current-dollar GDP to constant-dollar GDP.
Gini index	Aggregate numerical measures of income inequality ranging from 0 to 100. A Gini index of zero represents absolute equality, while an index of 100 implies absolute inequality.

Infant mortality rate	Infant mortality rate is the probability of a child born in a specific year or period dying before reaching the age of one, if subject to age-specific mortality rates of that period. It is a probability of death expressed as rate per 1000 live births.
Under-five mortality rate	Under-five mortality rate is the probability of a child born in a specific year or period dying before reaching the age of five. It is a probability of death expressed as rate per 1000 live births.
DPT1	The percentage of 1 year old children immunized against diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus at least once.
Contraceptive prevalence rate	The percentage of women between 15-49 years who are practising, or whose sexual partners are practising, any form of contraception.
Rate of births attended by trained personnel	The percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel. A skilled birth attendant is an accredited health professional, such as a midwife, doctor or nurse, who has been educated and trained to proficiency in the skills needed to manage normal (uncomplicated) pregnancies, childbirth and the immediate postnatal period, and in the identification, management and referral of complications in women and newborns. Traditional birth attendants, trained or not, are excluded from the category of skilled attendant at delivery
Maternal mortality ratio	Number of maternal deaths per 100 000 live births in one year.
Children under weight for age	The rate of newborn children of which the birth weight is less than 2,500 grams
Oral re-hydration therapy use rate	The rate of using oral rehydration salt or substitute solution for infants having diarrhea.
Access to improved sanitation	Access to improved sanitation is the percentage of population with access to improved sanitation in a given year. Improved sanitation includes connection to public sewers, connection to septic systems, pour-flush latrines, simple pit latrines and ventilated improved pit latrines.
Adult literacy rate	The percentage of males and females age 15 and above who can, with understanding, both read and writes a short, simple statement related to their everyday life.
Gross enrolment rate	The percentage of students enrolled in a given level of education regardless of age expressed as a percentage of the population in the theoretical age group for that level of education. Gross enrollment rate include students who are not in a scholastic year appropriate to their age due to late enrollment and/or failure to progress to the appropriate school year.
Net enrolment rate	The percentage of students in a theoretical age group who are enrolled expressed as a percentage of the same population.

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