

FINAL REPORT

**VANUATU: Country Gender Profile**

January 2007

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BIC	Bahá' í International Community
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRP	Comprehensive Reform Programme
CVA	Cardio-vascular arrests
DPA	Disability Promotion & Advocacy Association
DWA	Department of Women's Affairs
GAD	Gender and Development
GDI	Gender-related Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	Gender Empowerment Index
GRB	Gender Responsive Budget
HDI	Human Development Index
HIS	Health Information System
HPI	Human Poverty Index/Happy Planet Index
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
IWRAW	International Women's Rights Action Watch
NCD	Non Communicable Diseases
NGOs	Non Government Organizations
PRISM	Pacific Regional Information System
RRRT	Regional Rights Resource Team
RTC	Rural Training Centres
SPC	South Pacific Community
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USP	University of the South Pacific
VANGO	Vanuatu Association of Non Government Organizations
VNCW	Vanuatu National Council of Women
VRDTC	Vanuatu Rural Development Training Centres
VP	Vanua' aku Party
WHO	World Health Organization
WID	Women in Development

## 1. BASIC PROFILE

Vanuatu is a small Pacific island nation located within the Pacific ring of fire. It has over 80 islands, 65 of which are inhabited by a population which is described as Melanesian. Nearly 80 percent of the population live in the rural areas and engage in subsistence agriculture. It has a total land mass of 12,190km<sup>2</sup> or 4,707 square miles. Divided administratively into six Provinces, the country is highly homogeneous, with 99 percent of its population indigenous ni-Vanuatu. Linguistically it is the most diverse in the world with over 100 languages of which approximately 80 are actively spoken. Bislama, the *lingua franca* of the nation, has been Constitutionally accorded the national language while English and French are the official languages. Adult literacy ranges from 66 percent to 74 percent.

The 1999 national census puts the population at 186,678 of which 90,996 or 49 percent were women with a sex ratio of 108 males to every 100 females. The annual growth rate was 2.6 percent. In 2004 the mid-year population was estimated at 215,541. Over the past two decades there has been an increasing trend toward urban migration. The fertility rate is estimated to be 4.6 which has implications for the health of both mother and child, as well as education, employment, access to social services, and overall quality of life for women and children. The main feature of Vanuatu's population is its youthfulness, with 42 percent under the age of 15 years in 1999. In mid-2004 it is estimated that 41 percent are under 15 years (National Statistics, 2000; National Statistics [PRISM], 2005) <sup>1</sup>.

Vanuatu was accorded the status of a Least Developed Country in 1995, a status which is expected to be reviewed in 2012. According to UNDP's 1999 Human Development Index (HDI), Vanuatu ranked 140<sup>th</sup> out of 164 developing countries. In 2005 it was ranked 118<sup>th</sup>. On the Human Poverty Index, it was ranked 63<sup>rd</sup> in 1999 and by 2005 it had progressed to 52<sup>nd</sup> (UNDP, 2005).

The country's economy is based primarily on agriculture and Vanuatu receives income from two principal exports: goods and services. For example, 27 percent of the country's earnings in 2001 were from exports of agricultural produces such as copra, cocoa, beef, kava, timber and cocoa; 73 percent were from earnings from the export of services from tourism and the Finance Centre while 61 percent of the earnings from exports of services were from tourism alone (CEDAW, 2004). Based on the UNDP's Human Development Report for 2005, earnings from services has increased to 77 percent while agriculture has dropped from 27 percent to 14 percent (see Table 1.1.2)

An alternative index by the New Economic Foundation/Friends of the Earth (2006) called the Happy Planet Index which is based on three main national attributes of reasonable longevity, rich natural capital with unspoilt coastlines and unique rainforests and excellent levels of democracy, ranked Vanuatu as No. 1 in the world. Appreciating the currently unspoilt condition of the environment and cognizant of potential environment damages through development, a call by the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, Chiefs and NGOs to establish a new « minimal ecological footprint » law to put the responsibility on developers to clean up the development at the developers cost and return it back to as close as possible to the natural « pre-development » environmental state was made in Port Vila at the National Summit held in September 2006.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Pioni Willie, National Statistics Office, for directing me to the PRISM website.

<sup>2</sup> Presentation made by Ralph Regenvanu. Director, Vanuatu Cultural Centre.

## 1.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

**Table 1.1.1 Economic Indicators** (Source: UNDP, 2005; National Statistics Office [PRISM], 2005)

GDP/Capita (PPP US\$) (2002)	GDP/Capita US\$ (2003) <sup>1</sup>	GDP Index	GDP per capita PPP US\$ rank minus HDI rank	GNP/Capita (US\$)	Growth rate of real GDP	ODA received/ Per Capita 2003
121	2,944	0.56	-1		2.3 ('06)	154.4
Contribution to Gross Domestic Product (Source: UNDP, 2005)						
Agriculture: 14%		Industry: 9%			Service: 77%	

**Table 1.1.2 Human Development Index** (UNDP, 2005)

New Economic Foundation (2006)

Year	Human Development Index	Human Poverty Index	Happy Planet Index
1999	140	124	-
2005	118	52	1

**Table 1.1.3 Demographic Indicators** (National Statistics Office [PRISM], 2005)

Year	Population				Annual Population Growth Rate	Life Expectancy		Infant Mortality Rate (1-4 years)	
	Females	Males	Total	% Females		Female	Males	Girls	Boys
1999	90,997	95,683	186,678	48.7	2.6	69	65.6	26	27
2004	105,399	110,141	215,541	48.8	-	-	-	-	-
2009	121,065	125,973	247,036	49.0	-	-	-	-	-

**Table 1.1.4 Public Expenditure by Sectors** ( National Statistics Office [PRISM], 2005; Republic of Vanuatu 2006 Appropriation)

Year	Health	Education	Women	Agriculture	Others
2003	12.8%	28.9%	na	3.8%	54.5%
2004	10.8%	26.9%	na	3.5%	58.8%
2006 Appropriation	10%	22%	0.1%	4%	66%

**Table 1.1.5 Labour Indicators** (National Statistics Office, 2000(a) & [PRISM], 2005; CEDAW Report, 2004)

Total employment	Females	Males	Median Salary ('00)	Median Salary:('00)	Unemployment rate (Females)	Minimum Wages Urban & rural		
75,110	45.1%	54.9%	Females: VT 38,000	Males: VT 37,000	1.3%	VT 23,500 (2005)		
Economically Active Population	Total Labour Force Rate: 76,370				Number of wage and salary earners employed: 75,110			
	Females	%	Males	%	Females	%	Males	%
97,642	34,298	44.9	42,072	55.1	33,874	45	41,236	55

**Table 1.1.6 Women in Decision Making** (CEDAW Report, 2004)

Year	Female Members of Parliament	Ministers	Director Generals	Directors	Technicians
2000	0/51 (0%)	0/13 (0%)	1/9 (11%)	9/56 (16%)	na
2006	2/51 (4%)	1/13 (8%)	1/9(11%)	10/57 (17%)	na

**Table 1.1.7 Laws Recognizing Women**

Article 5(1) of the Constitution: Equal rights under the law and non-discrimination on the grounds of sex
Most other laws recognize women. In 2000 12 out of 208 Acts reviewed were found to be discriminatory.
Family Protection Order Bill: Drafted 1997; 1 <sup>st</sup> reading in Parliament December 2005
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women: Non Discrimination against women ratified 1995

**Table 1.1.8 Policies Incorporating Women and Gender**

1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> National Development Plan, 1983, 1987: States commitment to advancing the status of women
CRP Gender Equity Policy, 1997: Nine Benchmarks with actions to promote gender equity
Ministry of Education: Gender Equity Policy provides for equity including scholarships
Ministry of Health Policy: Provides for non-discrimination based on Article 1 of CEDAW. Grounds for non-discrimination includes age, disability, marital status
Ministry of Justice & Social Welfare: The National Disability Policy 2007 and National Plan of Action 2007-2015 recognizes the dual discrimination and exclusion of women with disabilities in mainstream development and is placed as Priority No. 3.

**Table 1.1.9 International Conventions / Declarations / Agreements Related to Women**

Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women	Ratified in 1995	Initial, 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> report submitted to the UN in 2004; 4 <sup>th</sup> CEDAW report due in 2008
Optional Protocol to CEDAW	Ratified by Parliament in November 2006.	
Beijing Platform for Action: Working of Women Together, 1996	Adopted by Government and NGOs in 1996	Reviewed September 2006
Biwako Millennium Framework for Action Toward the Asian & Pacific Decade of Persons with Disability 2003-2012		Priority No. 2: Women with Disabilities
Pacific Plan adopted by Forum Heads of Government in 2005: Support to women's NGOs and national machinery		

## 1.2 HEALTH PROFILE

**Table 1.2.1 Health Indicators** (National Statistics Office, 2000(a); CEDAW Report, 2004; Abel 2006)

Number of hospitals	No. of Health Facilities	No. of Dispensaries	No. of Aid Posts	Ratio of facilities to population	No. of hospital beds	No. of physicians	Female nurses	Crude birth rate	Total fertility rate
5	25	103	217 ('06)	1:1,761	Rural: 50 Urban: 100+	1995: 12 2004: 41	76% ('01)	1999: 33 1989: 37	1999: 4.5 1989: 5.3

**Table 1.2.2 Maternal Health** (NSO [PRISM], 2005; Grace & Vurobaravu, 2002)

Contraceptive prevalence rate	Births attended by skilled health personnel	Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000)	Age at first marriage	Total fertility rate
28% ('99)	89% ('95-'03)	7 (Port Vila)	Females: 23 Males: 25	4.8

**Table 1.2.3 Labour Ward Statistics: 1978 -2001** (Grace & Vurobaravu, 2002)

**Table 1.2.4 Teenage Pregnancies** (Abel, 2006)

Ratio of males born to each female	Mean caesarean section rate	Mean instrumental delivery	Mean breach rate	Ante-partum hemorrhage	Post-partum hemorrhage	Births before arrival (Port Vila)	Year	Teenage Pregnancies Recorded at all Hospitals			
1.04%	5.2%	1.8%	23/1000	3/1000	21/1000	1.6%		11 -15 years	16 years	17 years	18 years
							2001	11	26	31	73
							2002	13	17	32	56
STI				HIV/AIDS			2003	11	17	17	65
Rate detected at 1 <sup>st</sup> visit to antenatal clinic (2002)				No. of confirmed HIV/AIDS (2002-2006)			2004	11	9	28	42
Port Vila: 50 percent				Female		Male	Total	46	69	108	235
				2		-					

**Table 1.2.5 Substance Use** (Mitchell, 1997)

**Table 1.2.6 National Trends of NCD by Admission and Year** (Harrison, 2004)

Type of Drug	% Used by Females	Year	Type of Non-Communicable Diseases					Total NCD	
Alcohol	20		Hypertension	Diabetes	Heart Diseases	Cancer	Stroke/CVA		
Kava	15	1999	113	92	140	79	30	454	
Tobacco	18	2000	122	129	186	115	38	590	
Marijuana	na	2001	111	134	164	90	37	536	
Prescription drugs	na	2002	171	110	118	65	14	478	
Use of other mind altering drugs not currently available			2003	189	168	175	153	27	712
			Total	706	633	783	502	146	2770
			%	25.5	22.8	28.3	18.1	5.3	100 %

**Table 1.2.7 Crimes Recorded at the Criminal Records Office** (National Statistics Office [PRISM], 2005)

Year	Total	Reported crimes committed			
		Against Persons	Against Morality	Against Property	Against Public Order
2004	916	287	64	457	108
2000	1,809	845	56	730	178
1996	1,344	406	37	730	171

**Table 1.2.8 Crimes Against Morality 1988-2003** (CEDAW Report, 2004)

Crime	Rank out of 28	As % of total crimes reported	SUMMARY
Intentional Assault	2	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intentional Assault is the No. 1 crime against persons in Vanuatu.</li> <li>Rape is the No. 1 sexual crime against women and No. 10 out of 28 most reported crimes in Vanuatu.</li> <li>34 percent or over 1/3 of all sexual crimes committed is rape.</li> <li>43 percent of sexual offences of Indecent Assault &amp; Unlawful Sexual Intercourse committed are committed against children.</li> <li>Almost all offenders of sexual crimes against children are repeat offenders.</li> </ul>
Rape	10	1	
Unlawful sexual assault	14	1	
Indecent assault	15	1	
Incest	18	0	

## 1.3 EDUCATION PROFILE

**Table 1.3.1 Education Profile** (CEDAW, 2004; Lapi & Jimmy, 2006)

Year	Enrolments in Primary Schools		Enrolments in Secondary Schools		Number of Schools (2004)	
	% Females	% Males	% Females	% Males	Primary	Junior Secondary
1996	47	53	46.4	53.6	441	74
2006	48.5	51.5	52	48	-	-

Year	Compulsory Education	Basic Education	Adult literacy rate (% aged 15 years and above)	Public expenditure on education as % of total government expenditure	Public expenditure on education as % of GDP
1980	NO	Grade 6	74 ('03)	28.1 ('00/02)	11.0
2006	NO	Grade 8	-	20	-

## 2. GENERAL SITUATION OF WOMEN IN VANUATU

### 2.1 SUMMARY

Women in Vanuatu are at a cross road: they live in a society that is both traditional and modern and influenced by both customary and modern values. In the traditional sphere, women's gendered roles as mothers and housewives has seen few women enter the public domain such as politics and positions of seniority in both public and private sectors. With focus on preventive medical services since the 1970s, women's health have improved. Similarly, Government has incorporated development of women in national plans, some of which have yet to be realized. In other areas, women's access to education in the junior secondary has reached 48.5 percent and 52 percent of girls now access education at the secondary level. Issues of gender equity and gender equality has now been recognized as important in any development plans. However, in doing so, discussions and claims to various basic rights have been overshadowed or disappearing by emphasizing 'gender' as the overall focus without considering the inequality that continues to exist. There are now other new and emerging issues that have not been adequately addressed: globalization and the resultant trade agreements with potential labour mobility within the region and impacts on service delivery at the national level; increase in the incidence of STIs amongst young women and presence of HIV/AIDS; increase in domestic violence and sexual abuse; pre-occupation with economic development over social development; corruption in high offices and the inadequacy of national women's machinery and NGOs which place tremendous strain on their ability to advocate and address these issues.

### 2.2 GENERAL SITUATION OF WOMEN

The Constitution of Vanuatu clearly incorporates non-discrimination on the grounds of sex in Article 5(1) and provides for affirmative actions under the provisions on fundamental rights and responsibilities in 5(1)(k). Its commitment to including and advancing women has been part of the development plans over the past 26 years. In 1983 the first national plan sought "*to promote a change in the role of women in the Ni-Vanuatu society and to work towards their full and equal participation in domestic, local and national affairs*". In 1987 the objective of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Plan was "*to realize the potential of women as partners and beneficiaries of the development process in Vanuatu*". The 3<sup>rd</sup> development plan of 1991 continued to maintain these aims for women and further planned "*to incorporate women's issues in main-stream development planning; increase the participation of women in economic activities and to improve the status of women and their families*". While there has been major progress in many areas there remains a need to review these national plans in light of the prevailing conflicting attitudes that impacts the advancement of women.

As in many parts of the world where culture plays an important part in the lives of individuals, women in Vanuatu too are incased in a society that is both traditional and modern. The gendered roles imposed by society on women has seen them keep the traditions necessary for the continuation of the culture of their society. Superimposed on these traditions are also the modern ways of thinking and the changing values held by women which often conflict with custom. One clear example of this is in the area of domestic violence. In a study on *Gender, Kastom & Domestic Violence* which looked at historical trends, extent and factors within the differing customs and cultures of Vanuatu which perpetuates domestic violence, the authors note that:

"Currently in Vanuatu, there is a significant marginalization of women from pertinent discussions and decisions on areas of social and economic development, governance and human rights at community and national levels. It is not uncommon to observe at public discussions focused on these issues, the under-representation of women and the effective silencing of women's inputs and opinions. The marginalization appears to have been



accompanied by an increase in social problems that directly impact on women. Violence and abuse of women are one of the significant social problems encountered in Vanuatu...

“When issues of gender and the problems faced by women are raised in public debate in Vanuatu, the usual response is that women’s role is based on “kastom”. In other words, that is the way it is, that kastom has dictated that men are the decision makers and women play a supportive or submissive role. This is often cited as the reason which women are not only involved in decision-making but also not have a significant voice in the governance of their society. Because there is no mechanism to voice out women’s concern, particularly domestic violence against women, it is at times excused or hidden behind the cloak of kastom...” (Tor & Toka, 2004, p. 9).

Often believed to be part of *kastom*, this research study found “... no evidence to support this theory. Rather, what was discovered was that *kastom* abhors violence, and that culprits were severely punished...” (Tor & Toka, 2004, p. 10). The importance of including this aspect of women’s situation in background section of this Gender Profile is that often gender-based violence is an indicator of the status of women in any given society.

Women nevertheless continue to play a significant role in contributing to the social and economic development of the nation through their reproductive roles as mothers with responsibilities in child rearing, household management and the health and welfare of the family. They also continue to contribute to social support of meeting family and community obligations, hospitality services to visitors and involvement in community activities as well as their productive roles as producers of agricultural food supplies to maintain their families. Overall advances have been made in nearly all fields particularly in education where nearly 49 percent of girls are now enrolled in primary schools and in the health sector, the mortality rate has decreased. More women are now employed in the cash economy and in particular in the paid labour force, more women are speaking out and calling both Government and society at large to be accountable and taking stands on issues of importance to women and the nation.

As a member of the United Nations and the Commonwealth, Vanuatu’s participation and support includes various commitments including the Beijing Platform for Action. Vanuatu’s support to international commitment for the advancement of women saw Parliament ratify CEDAW in 1995. In March 2005 Vanuatu deposited its Combined Initial, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Report on CEDAW<sup>3</sup> to the United Nations Division of the Advancement of Women and will be reporting to the CEDAW Committee in May 2007. In November 2006 the Optional Protocol to CEDAW was ratified.<sup>4</sup>

International human rights standards play a significant role in assisting and promoting women’s ability to claim their rights. Despite committing itself to international human rights norms through the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ratification of CEDAW in 1995 and awareness raising of these rights, women and men in both the public and private spheres continue to be challenged to incorporate these rights with custom norms and the gendered roles of women and men. Given these challenges and given women’s inability to have more control their lives or be accorded the respect and honour as mothers and girl children, their status remains low. These are exemplified in, for example, the high rate of violence and sexual abuse they face and their low participation rate in public spheres.

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<sup>3</sup> The Government’s CEDAW report was written by Andonia Piau-Lynch.

<sup>4</sup> Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (Ratification) Act No. 28 of 2006. Vanuatu is now the 2<sup>nd</sup> country in the Pacific to ratify this Convention.

## 2.2.1 Violence Against Women

The Gender Equity Policy of Government is very explicit in identifying violence against women and discriminatory laws as a hindrance to the advancement of women and planned to develop policy and legislation on violence against women and children including rape, incest, domestic assault and sexual harassment. To move on this policy directive, the Family Protection Order Bill was drafted. After nine years, it has still not been passed by Parliament. The Department of Women's Affairs continues to struggle with how it will implement its policy paper on *Violence Against Women 2002-2006* to "reduce and eventually eliminate violence against women, protect women who have experienced violence and ensure that perpetrators of violence are held accountable".

Types of Crime	Total	%
1. Theft	8,835	23
2. <b>Intentional Assault</b>	6,406	17
3. Damage	5,352	14
4. Trespass	3,750	10
5. Unlawful Entry	3,624	9
6. Drunkenness	3,112	8
7. Threats	2,136	6
8. Abusive Words	1,176	3
9. Other Crimes Against Persons	491	1
10. <i>Rape</i>	447	1
11. Misappropriation	443	1
12. Cruelty to Animals	408	1
13. Others Against Property	353	1
14. <i>Unlawful Sexual Assault</i>	284	1
15. <i>Indecent Assault</i>	277	1
16. Unlawful Assembly	235	1
17. Others Against Public Order	213	1
18. <i>Incest</i>	155	0
19. Arson	152	0
20. Others Against Morality	145	0
21. Forgery	142	0
22. Escape	142	0
23. Fraud	118	0
24. Riot	59	0
25. Obstruction	35	0
26. Homicide	32	0
27. Obscenity	14	0
28. Corruption	2	0
Total	38,538	100

Records from the Crime Statistics Office show that between 1988 and 2002 a total of 1,208 cases of rape, unlawful sexual intercourse, indecent assault, incest and others against morality were reported. This is 1,208 too many sexual crimes committed against women. In 1996 for example, there were 37 crimes against morality report to police. By 2004 this had increased to 64 reported cases against morality, a 73 percent increase in eight years. Sexual crimes of indecent assault and unlawful sexual intercourse committed against children alone accounted for 43 percent of all sexual assaults. For intentional assaults, a total of 6,406 cases were reported. This is 17 percent of all cases reported to police over a 15 year period.

### SUMMARY

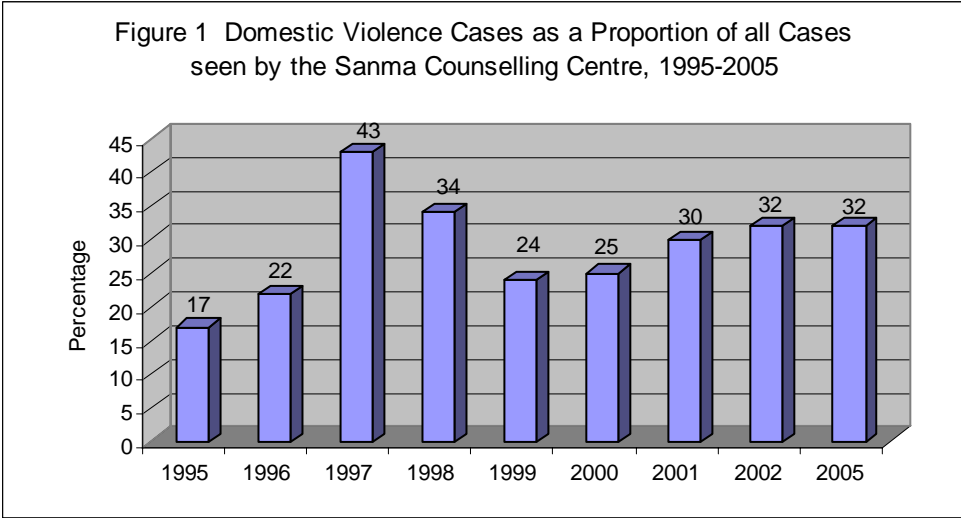
- Intentional Assault is the No. 1 crime against persons in Vanuatu.
- Rape is the No. 1 sexual crime against women and No. 10 out of 28 most reported crimes in Vanuatu.
- 34 percent or over 1/3 of all sexual crimes committed are rapes.
- 43 percent of sexual offences of IA & USI committed are against children.
- Almost all offenders of sexual crimes against children are repeat offenders.

**Source:** Government of Vanuatu (2004). Initial, First and Second Report on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), p. 16.

The Vanuatu Women's Centre has been a staunch NGO struggling to raise violence against women as a national concern. Started in 1992 by a small group of women, this organization is now the leading agency that provides counselling, legal aid and public awareness to halt all types of violence against women. In 1995 it opened the Sanma Counselling Centre in Luganville. Between 1992 and 2002 the Vanuatu Women's Centre recorded a total of 2,754 cases of domestic violence representing 32 percent of its total caseload (CEDAW, 2004). Today the organization has an extensive network in all six Provinces advocating against all violence against women.

Data from the Sanma Counselling Centre shows that between 1995 and 2005 they too had seen an increasing trend of domestic violence cases from 17 percent in 1995 to 32 percent in 2005. While

many reports are written about the Vanuatu Women's Centre speaking of the dedicated work they are carrying out, this profile will look at the most data from the Sanma Counselling Centre which throw some light onto causes of violence that is a reflection of the history of the country. In 1997, for example, the large scale redundancy programme undertaken by Government to downsize the public service under the Comprehensive Reform Programme funded by the Asian Development Bank impacted on the security of women which showed the Sanma Counselling dealing with an almost 100 percent increase of domestic violence cases dealt by it. In 1998 a major riot erupted as a result of the Ombudsman's report on the mismanagement of contributors fund to the Vanuatu National Provident Fund. This could have provided another factor as to why 34 percent of cases in that year were domestic violence-related cases. It is unfortunate that figures from the police for both 1997 and 1998 are not usable to see if there were corresponding increases in reports of intentional assaults and other crimes against the person and against morality.



SOURCE: Combined data from CEDAW (2004) and Piau-Lynch (2006).

Violence against women is a yardstick by which one can measure the violation of all human rights. It can be used to gauge the degree to which a society is governed by aggressivity, dominated by competition and ruled by force. Abusive practices against women have frequently been and are still being justified in the context of cultural norms and religious beliefs. All forms of violence against women degrade not only the victim but the perpetrator as well as they themselves are among the casualties of power-based systems. The challenge is to search out new strategies and adopt fresh models that will encourage a healthier, more cooperative society at all levels and move consciously away from patterns of force and aggressivity and towards methods of consultation and peace-making.

One of the essential ways to encourage more cooperation is through education. While economical disparity and legal inequalities are known to contribute to incidences of violence against women, it is obvious that violence arises from ignorance – the failure to understand such fundamental realities of the oneness of the human race and the mistaken notion that force is the only honourable way to resolve conflicts. Education – moral, material and practical – is therefore not only a fundamental right, but a practical necessity, in today's world. Any attempt to curb societal violence that does not educate individuals to overcome gender prejudice will certainly fall short of achieving equality and thus, it is vitally important to re-emphasize the role of education everywhere if violence is to be controlled. Therefore, it is in the education of women as the first educator that priority must be given to the education of girls (BIC, 1995).

## 2.2.2 Gender and Women, Equality and Equity

In preparing any gender profile of a nation or a sector, there is a need to consciously separate the term '*gender*' from assuming it to be a substitute term for '*women*'. Gender and women are inextricably linked but gender is not another word for women. People are born female or male but learn to be girls and boys who grow into women and men through socialization. Gender aspects of being a man or a woman describes the characteristics that have been socially ascribed to them as appropriate to their culture and, consequently, what rights, resources and powers they can possess. In doing so this has an effect on, and, accounts for the differences in the opportunities and resources available to women and men and in their ability to make decisions, exercise their rights from opportunities, for example, to access education or to health-seeking protective behaviours. These gendered roles often creates unequal gender relations which then interacts with other social and economic variables resulting in the different and, sometimes, inequitable patterns of exposure to participate equally equitably.

Gender equality is the absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's sex in opportunities, in the allocation of resources and benefits or in access to services. Equality of status, however, does not mean identity of function. Men and women have different functions and responsibilities but most notably, honour is conferred on the role of motherhood: Mothers have the unique privilege of being the first educators, the first mentors of their children. Yet this is not evident in the systematic subordination of women as is evident in a number of areas including (1) higher education; (2) violence and abuse at home and in society; (3) discrimination in income-producing opportunities; (4) decision-making in the family; (5) inequality in, or exclusion from, economic and political power structures; (6) male control of (and unaccountable use of) family income; and (7) sole, socially unsupported female responsibility for childrearing. The subordination of women in each of these arena is the result of an almost inextricable combination of, for example, laws, attitudes, institutional arrangements and procedures, economic structures and legal silences (Schweitz, 1996).

Reformation of laws and legal systems are vital avenues toward achieving equality. For example, in the Beijing Platform for Action, strategies for each of the critical areas of concern for women depend at least in part on enacting and enforcing laws at the national level and on reorienting institutions of Government and governance. Such change can only be effective if they occur in tandem with the evolution of personal and social values and attitudes. Similarly, the Gender Equity Policy of Government calls for reviewing legislation to ensure gender neutrality. However, "neutrality" of laws will not guarantee either equity or equality because of the unequal starting points from which men and women are situated. Changes in laws based on non-discrimination as called for in CEDAW provides for the potential reality of an equal starting point.

Importantly, legal and institutional change can be both cause and effect. Laws and institutions change as the result of new attitudes influential enough to muster the necessary legislative vote. In reverse, such change is also strongly conducive to further evolution in attitudes, both through actually enforcing new standards of behaviour and through a gradual process of altering social expectations. Laws and institutions which remain unchanged in the face of new social realities have a similar effect, but work instead in the negative direction of supporting an outdated status quo and those who wish to retard change. One classic case, for example, is the refusal of Parliament to pass the Family Protection Order Bill drafted in 1997 despite extensive consultation.

A further observation of concern to this author has been the almost inappropriate usage of the term of *gender* and subsequently "gender equity" and "gender equality" in recent years. Today it is not uncommon, for example, to see attempts at incorporating gender into mainstream discourse that the incorrect use of the word '*gender*' in phrases such as "*disaggregating data by gender*" seems meaningless, as it is also, incorrect. While statistics can be disaggregated by sex, gender cannot. *Gender equity* therefore refers to fairness and justice in the distribution of

benefits and responsibilities between women and men. This concept recognizes that women and men have different needs and power and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies the imbalance between the sexes.

Two reports have already been produced which provide in-depth observations on gender and its impacts in two sectors. The first one is the study by Jane Strachan (2002) on Gender in the Education sector and the second one is by the current author on Gender and Women's Health in Vanuatu (2004). Both these studies provide more details of the gendered roles ascribed to women and their subsequent impacts on education and health. The Government's CEDAW report of 2004 also provides a comprehensive review on the status of women in Vanuatu as well as including comments on the barriers to the advancement of women based on gendered roles imposed by society on men and women.

### **2.2.3 Women in Decision Making**

There are no legal barriers to the participation of women in any fields but women remain very much in junior positions in both the public and private spheres. Barriers also exist in certain areas that have been seen as 'belonging to men' such that women in certain religions are prohibit women from holding certain and senior positions in the church or the Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs. These and based on erroneous beliefs that only men can participate in these institutions. These two institutions that provide spiritual guidance and the maintenance of customs and traditions, do not hold opposing thoughts about fundamental values within which individuals can develop. Yet the influences that these institutions have on the participation of women in the home reflects their limited participation in decision making outside their homes. For example, only four women have been voted to Parliament since 1980 and attempts to rectify this low participation saw the Electoral Commission recommending an amendment of the Peoples Representation Act in 2003 to enable 30 percent of women to be represented in Parliament. Government moved to implement this recommendation in 2003 but due to political instability this recommendation has not moved any further. In November 2006 the Department of Women's Affairs begun to campaign for the introduction of a quota system as recommended by Government at the National Women's as highlighted below.

In 2006 there were two women in Parliament, one of whom holds a Ministerial portfolio and only the second Minister of State since 1980. Acutely aware of the low level of participation of women in decision making positions, the Department of Women's Affairs has again placed this focus as a high priority area in its work plan. An example of its move has been noted in a recent newspaper article stating that the Department is working with the European Union to strategize how to get more women into the 2008 Parliament. While there has been a call to have 30 percent women in Parliament, this level of participation has yet to be achieved in many parts of the world. With the current beliefs and attitudes prevailing about women's gendered roles, the task ahead will be heavy. In 2004, for example, the SHEFA Provincial Council attempted to get seven women out of 18 members on the Council but was unsuccessful. This has not, however, dampened the spirit of the Provincial Council who are campaigning for the 2008 Provincial election.

A number of political parties have a Women's Wing. In November 2006, for example, the Vanua'aku Party issued a press release on the re-vitalization of its women's wing and the appointment of its Chair, the first female Lord Mayor. Within the Public Service itself the Department of Women's Affairs established the Women in Public Service Network in 2002 and has worked to progress women in Government. According to the 2004 CEDAW report, only 18 percent of women hold senior positions in Government. On the Provincial, Municipal and Area Council levels, very few women have been successful: There has only been one female Lord Mayor of a Municipality and in 2006, only one Area Council was able to secure 100 percent female on the Council. Without a legal framework with which to support affirmative actions such

as the introduction of a quota system, actions by the Department of Women's Affairs, women's NGOs and individual agencies such as the SHEFA Provincial Council will prove difficult.

#### **2.2.4 Women and Poverty**

Poverty is generally considered to mean different things by different people. The United Nations has set a benchmark of income lower than \$2 per day as a sign of poverty while the MDG seeks to eradicate extreme poverty and sets its benchmark as those whose income is less than \$1 per day. The World Bank (2004) defines poverty as follows:

“Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, a fear for the future, living one day at a time. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom.”

Signs of poverty such as lack of income, hunger and malnutrition, ill health, limited or lack of access to education, homelessness and inadequate housing are present in Vanuatu. The 2001 study by the Asian Development Bank, for example, referred to poverty as ‘hardship’ and identified widows and single mothers as the most disadvantaged and suffering from poverty of opportunities. Indicators of hardship as reported by people which were believed to be temporary and manageable life included poor living conditions, inability to get jobs, inability to afford prices of goods, school fees and materials, struggle to provide for family needs, difficulty in accessing health service and worrying about money all the time (Wells, 2006). One of the consequences of these hardship is that the family support systems that existed previously to help people meet their basic needs, is now weakening.

While we might still wait to define what poverty is despite the indicators above, Ralph Regenvanu, Director of the Cultural Centre, warned the nation at the National Land Summit held in September 2006 that poverty already exists in the urban centres of Vanuatu. These issues should be of concern to all women including agencies such as the Department of Women's Affairs and women's NGOs. At present, for example, there are no women's organization which is addressing the impacts of economic policies on women, globalization, trade agreements and their impacts on women, inequitable distribution of national budget and their impact on women, environmental policies and their impact on women and the list goes on. A redirection of the focus to include these issues in the work carried out by the national women's machinery is imperative, as are women's NGO and rights advocates.

#### **2.2.5 Economic Empowerment of Women**

One way in which Government is trying to address disadvantaged women is through the introduction of micro-credit schemes. In 1996, for example, the Department of Women's Affairs introduced VANWODS, a microfinance project to mainstream women's participation in economic activities by targeting disadvantaged women in the resettlement areas around Port Vila. With seed funding from UNDP in 1997, VANWODS has now become a small financial institution providing assistance to some 1,000 women. This project remains largely accessible to women living within the Port Vila area. There are now moves to have this scheme accessible in Santo in 2007 where the Department has also set up a Saving Scheme. In terms of supporting women in areas to participate in economic activities, Provincial Governments have played a more prominent role under the Rural Economic Development Initiative programme. No data has yet been compiled on how many women's projects have been supported under this programme in order that any gender analyses can be made on the distribution of projects submitted and projects funded under the programme.

## 2.3 GOVERNMENT POLICY ON GENDER

Under the Comprehensive Reform Programme introduced in 1997, Government introduced the Gender Equity Policy comprising nine benchmarks to improve the situation of women.

### 2.3.1 NINE BENCHMARKS TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION OF WOMEN

1. Visibility and meaningful participation in decision-making
2. Valuation of the contribution of women
3. Economic equality and independence
4. Violence against women and discriminatory laws
5. General physical and mental health
6. Reproductive health
7. Customs, religion and culture
8. Education
9. Environmental management and subsistence production

Eight priority areas for actions were identified which directed national machineries to address:

i) Incorporation of gender awareness and analysis into policy making at all levels;	including rape, incest, domestic assault and sexual harassment (with the acknowledgement that in theory violence is a gender-neutral issue, but in practice some kinds of violence are disproportionately directed at women);
ii) Introduction of a strong gender dimension into the collection and analysis of statistics;	
iii) Review of all legislation to ensure gender neutrality;	
v) Incorporation of gender awareness education into Government and donor-sponsored community activities on natural resource management and human resource development and at the Government Training Centre;	vi) Creation of a working group to coordinate and monitor the above;
iv) Development of policy and legislation on violence against women and children	vii) Appointment of a planner with specific responsibility for gender policies and programmes, and viii) Adoption of the Nine Benchmarks for periodic reviews of progress toward gender equity.

In September/August 2006 the Department of Women's Affairs organized the 1<sup>st</sup> National Women's Forum where over 100 women from the six provinces met for five days to review the Beijing Platform for Action for Vanuatu that was developed in 1996. In line with Action viii) of the Gender Equity Policy, the Forum also presented the first opportunity for the Department of Strategic Management and Department of Women's Affairs to review the implementation of the goals under the Gender Equity Policy.

21 barriers were identified as to why the actions under the Gender Equity Policy have not been fully implemented. These barriers included i) lack of government resources and commitment; ii) dominance of men in Parliament and political parties, iii) traditional beliefs that a woman's place is not as a leader; iv) belief that custom laws need not be changed; v) continued belief in the inferiority of women by women themselves as well as by men; vi) the idea that promoting women's rights is incompatible with Christian principles and vii) the endemic nature of violence.

### 2.3.2 Recommended Actions to Implement the Gender Equity Policy of 1997

NINE BENCHMARKS OF THE GENDER EQUITY POLICY	RECOMMENDATIONS MADE TO THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S FORUM, SEPTEMBER 2006
1. Visibility and meaningful participation in decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Amend the People's Representative Act by 2007</li> <li>ii. Conduct awareness on fundamental rights, CEDAW and Quota Systems in 2007</li> <li>iii. Re-establish a Task Force to monitor the implementation of the Nine Gender Benchmarks in 2007</li> <li>iv. Amend [policies/Acts] for National Statutory Bodies to include 30% representation of females and stakeholder quotas by 2007</li> </ul>
2. Valuation of the contribution of women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Make relevant legislation to enumerate the important contribution of women by 2007</li> <li>ii. Give awards to recognize the contribution of women in community and Government</li> </ul>
3. Economic equality and independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Include women in National Committees by 2007</li> <li>ii. Amend laws that exclude women and gender equality terminology by 2010</li> <li>iii. Create equitable and healthy work environment</li> <li>iv. Increase female representation in employment positions in Government to 30 percent by 2010</li> <li>v. Carry out programmes that mentor, train and promote women into [higher salary scales] as a priority by 2007</li> <li>vi. Target annual collection of gender data (by sex) and sector for publication and distribution for Government by 2007</li> <li>vii. Reduce health risk of females at the workplace through supporting a Government worker's insurance legislation by 2007</li> <li>viii. Pass Equal Employment legislation, Equal Opportunity legislation by 2007</li> <li>ix. Create work for people with disabilities and toilets to cater for their needs by 2008</li> </ul>
4. Violence Against Women and Discriminatory Laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Family Protection Order Bill to be passed in Parliament by 2007</li> <li>ii. Carry out a national survey to determine the extent and possible causes of violence by 2008</li> </ul>
5. General physical mental health	Gather accurate information on existing water supply and sanitation by 2007
6. Reproductive Health	Allocate sufficient funds towards reproductive health issues through donor funds in 2008
7. Custom, Religion and Culture	Undertake gender sensitivity training for Government officials and civil society in 2007 and secure necessary funds
8. Education	Review the national education system and curriculum to fully implement the Gender Equity in Education Policy by 2008
9. Environmental Management and Subsistence Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Upgrade the Environment Unit to a full Department in 2007</li> <li>ii. Develop National Environment Policy in 2007</li> </ul>

**SOURCE:** John Ezra, 2006.

The review identified the short-lived Gender Equity Task Force created especially to oversee the implementation of the Gender Equity Policy; the lack of a Sexual Harassment policy; the lack of an Equal Opportunities Bill and the inability of the Family Protection Order Bill to be passed by Parliament despite eight years of consultation as further hampering the accomplishment of the policy actions.

In addition to the 23 recommendations made to redress the lack of implementation of the Gender Equity Policy, over 400 other recommendations were presented at the Forum. The Department of Women's Affairs is now incorporating them as targets and actions to focus over the next five years to comply with the Beijing Platform for Action for Vanuatu as well as other



regional and international commitments. Clearly the will is there; however, the way forward has yet to find acceptance that will move the advancement and participation of women in national development beyond just words. In October 2006, for example, the Government, in its 2007 Budget Policy Statement reiterated that:

“Sustainable growth and development is achievable only through the participation and involvement of all sections of society. Unfortunately, women, in almost all sectors of their lives, are disadvantaged, when compared to men. The Government is committed to creating an environment through the development of legislation and positive economic and social policies for the full development of women necessary for the achievement of equality, development and peace” (*Vanuatu Daily Post*, 16 October 2006, Issue 1852).

Legal frameworks within which support can be provided and women’s participation mandated and recognized can be achieved if legislative mechanisms are in place. Legislation such as the Act for the Establishment of the Department of Correctional Services is one option; others could be amendments to the Constitution or affirmative actions to provide, for example, quota systems, or policies requiring equal representation of women in all spheres. Associated with such moves will require other mechanisms to enable financial and human resources and a set timeframes to achieve these goals as exemplified by Ezra (2006) in section 2.3.2 above. The concern about the low budgetary allocation to the Department of Women’s Affairs has been made previously (cf. CEDAW, 2004). This will be re-visited below.

## **2.4 NATIONAL BUDGET**

### **2.4.1 Parliamentary Appropriations**

It has been said that “If you want to see which way a country is headed, look at the country’s budget and how it allocates resources for women and children” (Pregs Govender, quoted in Judd, 2002, front cover). Over the years national allocations to the Department of Women’s Affairs have been small. Indeed only 0.68 percent of the national budget was allocated to the Ministry of Justice and Social Welfare in 2006. The big question therefore is: Why is the Ministry of Justice and Social Welfare which is responsible for 48 percent of the population only getting 0.68 percent of the total national budget? And the Department responsible for women getting only 0.13 percent of the national budget?

### **2.4.2 Gender Responsive Budgets and Gender Budget Analyses**

According to the preliminary report for the Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting in 2004, the Vanuatu “... Government is committed to and making progress on good governance issues which is a favourable element in an otherwise poor context for implementing Gender Responsive Budget activities ... No GRB have been identified as being carried out by the government, NGOs or donor organizations...” (Hardy, 2004). In 2002 the Department indicated the importance of doing a gender budget – but none has been done so far.

Table 2.2.2 2006 Parliamentary Appropriation<sup>5</sup>

APPROPRIATIONS TO CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICES	Vatu <sup>6</sup>	%
Parliament	377,076,028	48
Judiciary	101,690,992	13
Public Service Commission	78,048,338	10
State Law Office	47,769,612	6
Public Prosecutor	33,760,589	4
Office of the Ombudsman	46,582,365	6
Malvatumauri (Council of Chiefs)	21,713,148	3
National Audit Office	26,732,407	3
President of the Republic	30,822,536	4
Public Solicitor	24,771,725	3
Total	788,967,740	
<b>APPROPRIATIONS TO MINISTRIES</b>		
Ministry of Finance & Economic Management	2,994,028,857	31
Ministry of Education	1,970,406,777	20
Ministry of Internal Affairs	1,023,279,200	11
Ministry of Health	997,954,000	10
Constitutional Offices	788,967,740	8
Ministry of Infrastructure & Public Utilities	670,020,000	7
Ministry of Agriculture, Quarantine, Forestry & Fisheries	386,796,236	4
Ministry of Lands, Geology & Mines	229,000,000	2
Ministry of Foreign Affairs & External Trade	197,763,926	2
Prime Minister's Office	110,174,044	1
Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Tourism	99,200,000	1
Ministry of Youth Development & Training	92,330,000	1
Ministry of Comprehensive Reform Programme	66,775,956	1
Ministry of Cooperatives & Ni-Vanuatu Business Development	56,480,000	1
TOTAL	9,683,176,736	100

Table 2.2.3 2006 Budgetary Appropriation to the Ministry of Justice and Social Welfare

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE & SOCIAL WELFARE	2006 <sup>(1)</sup>	%	2007 <sup>(2)</sup>
Cabinet Support	21,083,777	31.57	na
Department of Strategic Management	14,646,223	21.93	na
<i>Department of Women's Affairs</i>	12,795,956	19.16	na
Department of Correctional Services	-	-	na
VANWODS	14,250,956	21.34	na
Assistance to People with Disabilities & Children	4,000,000	5.99	na
Total national budget	9,683,176,736	100	na
Total of overall budget appropriated to Ministry	66,776,912	0.68	128,863,972
Total of overall budget appropriate to DWA	12,795,956	0.13	na

(1) Government of the Republic of Vanuatu. 2006 Budget Volume 2. 2006 Programme Budget Estimates.

(2) Vanuatu Daily Post, 16 October 2006.

In light of the very general budget analyses provided above for the Ministry for Justice and Social Welfare in this paper, a concerted effort to develop a gender responsive budget and

<sup>5</sup> Government of the Republic of Vanuatu. 2006 Budget, Vol. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Government of the Republic of Vanuatu, 2006 Budget, Vol. 1. US\$1=VT112.12.

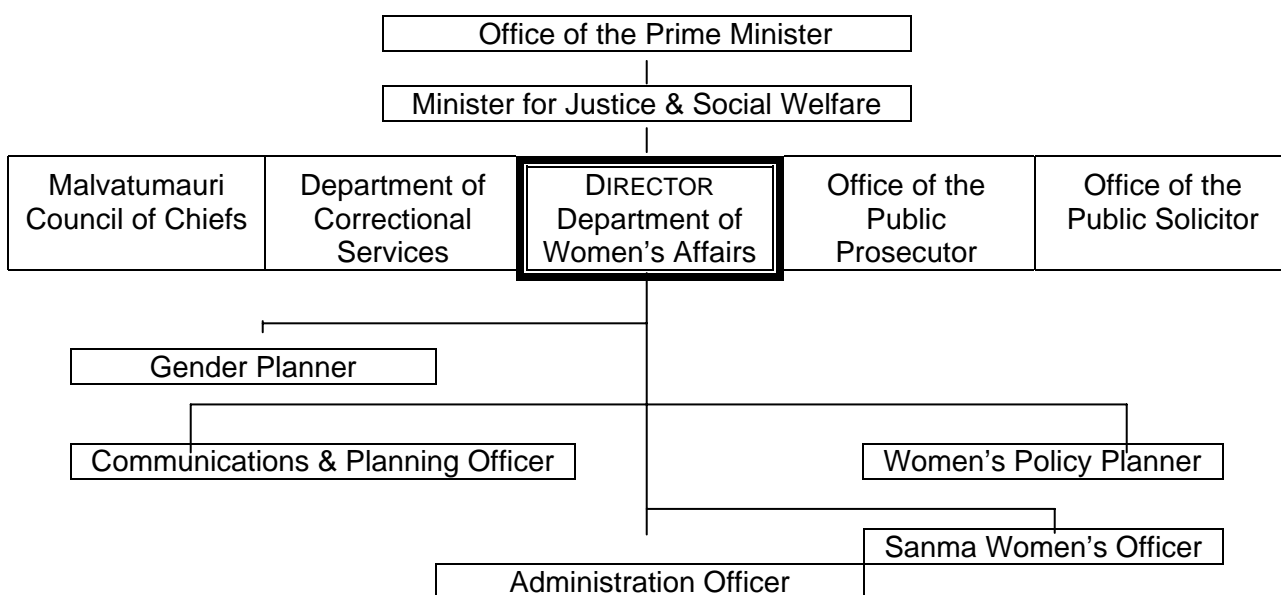
efforts to conduct a gender analyses of the budget is deemed important to redress the contradiction between national policy on women and the inequitable allocation of national funds for the national women’s machinery. As it stands, it would appear that the definition of equity excludes equity of distribution of financial resources which must be addressed by the Department of Women’s Affairs.

It is quite clear that the national machinery needs to be strengthened both in personnel as well as financial commitments. With all but one personnel based in Port Vila, one of the ways in which the office can be strengthened is for the positioning of one Women’s Officer in each of the Province so that the Department can reach more to the community throughout the country. How to incorporate and implement this as well as other recommendations from the Women’s Forum is now being looked at by the Department. As can be seen clearly in the tables above, in 2005 Parliament appropriated a total of VT 66,776,912 for the Ministry of the Comprehensive Reform Programme. The Department was appropriated VT 12,795,956 vatu. This represents only 19 percent of the total budget for this Ministry but only 0.13 percent of the total budgetary appropriation to line ministries. Very few offices with departmental status have such low level of funding for its operations.

## 2.5 NATIONAL MACHINERY FOR WOMEN IN VANUATU

The Department of Women’s Affairs is the national machinery for women in Vanuatu whose mission seeks to advance the status of Ni-Vanuatu women and to enhance their lives through focused policy formation. It is positioned under the Ministry of Justice and Social Welfare. This Ministry was created in 2006 and looks after the three Constitutional offices of the Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs, Office of the Public Solicitor, Office of the Public Prosecutor, the Department of Correctional Services which was established under an Act in 2006 and the Department of Women’s Affairs.

Figure 2 Organizational Chart of the National Machinery for Women



**SOURCE:** DWA [no date]. Statement of Intent 2004 – 2007, p. 12.

The Department has adopted the philosophy of Working in Partnership for Equality to guide their practice and policy development and is mandated to implement, as well as monitor the implementation on the nine gender benchmarks by other Government agencies and NGOs. However, with the reality of limited resources, achievement of these goals can only be accomplished through approved strategic policies and targeted action plans. The Statement of Intent 2004-2007, for example, has identified 12 goals and a strategy that is a combination of a Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD) approaches based on the knowledge that neither of these approaches alone can achieve the goals identified. Two broad policy areas will be focused on during this time: i) women, and ii) gender and gender mainstreaming continues to be the focus of the Department (DWA, *2004-2007 Statement of Intent*, p. 12). These policies must be approved by the Council of Ministers otherwise they remain a working document in the Department itself.

Gender mainstreaming is a core strategy for advancing gender equality and equity and a clear distinction is made by the Department of Women's Affairs between *women* and *gender* as highlighted below. This is a very important step in ensuring that the two terms are not seen to be synonymous and therefore redirect focus on women; however, many continue to remain ignorant of the differences due to lack of awareness provided by the Department. As the policy statement states, the improvement of the status of Vanuatu's women is a human rights issue that has social and economic benefits for the whole country. Using both the WID and GAD approach with commitments made under the Gender Equity Policy of the CRP, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Pacific Platform for Action and Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) all offer concrete guidance to the Department in deciding upon its strategic directions. The 2004-2007 Statement of Intent the Department has identified health, literacy and the particular needs of rural women as a priority as required under Article 14 of CEDAW as new focus areas. Awareness of these goals must be conducted by the Department.

From the 1980s until the Comprehensive Reform Programme in 1997 the Department undertook programmes that would be considered traditional in its nature: sewing, printing, cooking and welfare type activities. Following the restructuring in 1997 the Department as well as NGOs have taken on board the targets under the Gender Equity Policy to assist the progress of women. In 2001 for example, the Department produced its Statement of Intent for the period 2001-2006 which incorporated both a Gender & Development (GAD) and Women in Development (WID) approach as follows:

“... GAD seeks to integrate gender into mainstream development to account for the different life courses and different impacts of development policies on women and men. This approach views barriers to equality as socially constructed and maintained by a complex array of historical, ideological, cultural, economic and religious influences, which are difficult but not impossible to change. Gender roles, relations, and inequalities vary across cultures and through different times in human development; therefore, they can be changed.

... the WID approach recognizes the distinct needs and capacities of women with considerable focus on developing strategies and action programs to facilitate their participation....One of the major strategies of a WID approach to advancing the status of women is to provide strategies that focus on women only...”.

(DWA *Statement of Intent 2001-2006*, pps. 6-7)

The Department of Women's Affairs is positioned within the Ministry of Justice and Social Welfare. In October 2006 there were of six national staff plus two volunteers from New Zealand. From 2001 the Department began to place more emphasis on formulating policies and are undertaken by two separate units, the Gender Unit and the Policy Unit. In line with one of the targets identified under the Equity Policy of the CRP, a Gender Planner was appointed in 2000

to: i) mainstream gender; ii) provide gender awareness training to Government sectors including staff from the Municipal Council as well as Parliamentarians & NGOs; iii) work with relevant agencies with the aim of developing an Equal Opportunities legislation; iv) develop women's policies especially on Women in the Public Service and Women and Health, and iv) develop projects relevant to gender equity.

As reported by the Director of the Department at the Women's Forum in September 2006, the main activities undertaken by the Department under its Corporate Plan over the past six years have been in the following areas: i) Women in Decision Making; ii) Economic Empowerment of Women; iii) Gender Equality and Equity; iv) Violence Against Women; v) Improving Women's Health and vi) Women and Employment (Taleo, 2006). A number of other policies such as the Gender Policy Guidelines and Action Plans, Equal Opportunities Policy, Policy on Women's Health, and Policy on Political Participation have been developed but must be approved to have any national impact. Without the formal approval of such policies, there will be little progress.

No programmes for women and girls with disability have been developed within the Department despite '*Women with Disability*' being identified as Priority No. 3 in the National Disability Policy Directives approved by Government in April 2004.

### **2.5.1 Gender Focal Points**

Gender Focal Points have been established in all Ministries since 2001 although it is not evident what roles they play. It is understood that these Focal Points will be re-vitalized by the Department following the call made at the National Women's Forum.

### **2.5.2 Partnership Between Government and NGOs**

Partnership between the Department of Women's Affairs, religious groups and women's NGOs have been in existence since independence. In 1996 an action plan for the implementation of the 12 Critical Areas under the Beijing Platform for Action was developed by both Government and NGOs. Since 1998 women's NGOs have supported Government's Family Protection Order Bill through awareness raising, consultation and promotion. In 2003 Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with VANGO, the national umbrella organizations for NGOs.

In 2002 the Department adopted a philosophy for "Working in Partnership for Equality" and included representatives from the NGO sector such as the Vanuatu National Council of Women and the Vanuatu Women's Centre in its various committees including the Gender Equity Task Force, the Domestic Violence Task Force, the Vanuatu CEDAW Committee to oversee the preparation of Vanuatu report among other committees. Following a recommendation made to the Vanuatu's CEDAW Committee in 2004, the Department undertook to review the status of the action plans developed in 1996 which saw the staging of the 1<sup>st</sup> National Women's Forum.

While the Government does not as yet have a National Women's Advisory Committee, it has established a new National CEDAW Committee in 2006 to oversee the recommendations from the 2004 CEDAW report, prepare for reporting in 2007 and plan for any recommendations emanating from the Concluding Comments from the UN CEDAW Committee. Again, Government has ensured the inclusion of representatives from the NGO sector including women with disability. The Department of Women's Affairs is the Secretariat.

### **2.5.3 Family Protection Order Bill**

The Family Protection Order Bill was drafted in 1997 by Government as a means to protect women against violence in the home for the purpose of promoting the well-being of the whole family. Despite extensive consultation by the Department and NGOs, the first reading of the Bill occurred in 2005. This failed to get anywhere and a Parliamentary Committee was set up to

review this. The Department of Women's Affairs and the Department of Strategic Management have called for the passing of this Bill by 2007. In conjunction with the Regional Rights Resource Team, a three-day training programme was conducted in December 2006 for Parliamentarians to further their understanding of the Bill. Additional training was also provided to the Ad Hoc Committee on the Family Protection Bill.

## **2.6 EMERGING ISSUES & CONCERNS**

### **2.6.1 DISAPPEARANCE OF RIGHTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

There are many emerging issues that require attention but a few will be mentioned in this profile. Of primary concern is the disappearance of the rights on the national, regional and international development agenda. The underlying principles of non-discrimination as a fundamental right as contained in CEDAW is becoming consumed under the aegis of gender equity. Yet the denial of the right to good health, to primary, secondary, vocational and tertiary education, to employment and training, to legal protection under the law, to enforcement of justice in instances of violation of fundamental rights are not being adequately addressed. More awareness and knowledge of and, use of human rights treaties, need to be conducted. The Regional Rights Resource Team's paralegal training in Vanuatu is assisting in this regard.

### **2.6.2 IMPACTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

Vanuatu is also a signatory to the regional trade and service agreements, PICTA and PACER, the Melanesian Spearhead Group and various bilateral and multilateral agreements within the Pacific and elsewhere. Since 2005 it has committed itself to the Pacific Plan. In all these commitments studies on their impact on women have yet to be conducted. The denial of women to access land to grow food, collection of medicinal herbs, coconuts and firewood through the wonton sale of communal land will become a major issue in the coming years. On Efate alone, over 83 percent of the land has already being sold. Of concern also is the high risk of greater increase in communicable diseases as well as non-communicable diseases such as diabetes in urban centres which are attracted to imported goods with little nutritional value. With population growth outstripping availability of jobs for young people and tourism playing a major part in bringing revenue into the country, the vulnerability of girls and women to prostitution will increase and further impact on the health of men, women and children and the resultant burden on the health system and other social delivery services.

As Vanuatu prepares to be admitted to the World Trade Organization little thought has been given to the impact this admittance will have not only on women but to a whole nation which has little but its wealth based on the land which has sustained its people for over three thousand years. Concern about the privatization of the health system, which is already overburdened with lack of specialized doctors and where the ratio of health facilities accessible to the population is estimated to be 1 facility per 1,761 population paints a frightening picture. Already Vanuatu is the third most expensive country to live in the Pacific where the cost of electricity, for example, is the highest in the region. Rural electrification and telecommunication also remain inaccessible to the majority of the population.

### **3. CURRENT SITUATION OF WOMEN IN VANUATU BY SECTOR**

#### **3.1 Summary**

Women play a significant part in their reproductive and as well as their productive roles. Bounded by tradition yet moving forward in today's changing society, there have been some major advances that have improved the lives of women in Vanuatu. Access to education has improved, health of women has improved, more women are participating in paid labour, more women are informed of their rights. However, there are some fundamental barriers that must be overcome in order that women can participate equally in their own development as well as the development of the country. Barriers resulting from traditional beliefs about women's role play a significant part in the daily lives of women. The importance of understanding the concept of equality between men and women as a precondition to the advancement of women and thus, humanity, must be promoted. These are some of the issues that will be discussed below.

#### **3.2 WOMEN AND EDUCATION**

Education in Vanuatu consists of two sectors, formal and non-formal education. Education is not compulsory nor is it free. In 2006 basic education was extended from Grade 6 to Grade 8. The most comprehensive gender analysis of the education sector was conducted in 2002 by Jane Strachan. Some of the findings which were summarized by Lapi and Jimmy for the 2006 National Women's Forum are as follows:

- 85.1 percent of all males and 81.6 percent of all females aged five years and over were attending or had attended school;
- In 2001 approximately 50 percent of pre-school enrolments were females;
- In primary schools females accessed education almost in equal proportion to their population representation;
- Female enrolment rate was growing faster than enrolments of male;
- A serious concern was the push-out rates for both boys and girls at Years 7, 11 and 13 as a result of the Year 6 and Year 10 national examination and the Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate examination at Year 12. For example, in 2001, enrolment rate in Year 13 was only 1.3 percent of those enrolled in Year 1;
- Between 1992 and 2002 girls' enrolment rates in secondary school increased more than those of boys;
- Both males and females do not access further education either in the formal or non-formal education sectors;
- Females were particularly under-represented as students in vocational, technical and tertiary education;
- Females were particularly under-represented as trainees in the Rural Training Centres;
- Rural females were less likely to have been to school and had lower qualifications than urban females;
- Males have more, and higher, qualifications than females
- Anglophone males and females have the lowest acceptance rate into Year 7 in TORBA and TAFEA provinces
- In 2001 males outperformed females in the Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate examination
- Fewer females than males sat the New Zealand Bursary;
- Overall, Malapoa College females were more successful than males in gaining entry to university through the New Zealand Bursary Examination.

In 2004 there were 441 Primary Schools, 74 Junior and Secondary Schools with a total of 2,646 teachers teaching in these schools. In 2001 it has been reported that female teachers were equally represented at the primary school level. While not representative of secondary schools, 64 percent of the teachers at the Malapoa College were women (CEDAW Report, 2004).

In 2004 it was reported that 21 percent of students at the primary school level attended schools in the two urban centres of Port Vila and Luganville alone. This represents one fifth of all children attending schools in the primary sector. In terms of gender equity in primary and junior secondary schooling, Vanuatu has achieved parity. In the primary school level (Grades 1-6) there has been a steady increase in the proportion of girls attending primary school level from 46 percent in 1991 to 48.5 percent in 2006.

Table 3.2.1 Trends in Primary School Enrolment, 1992-2006

Province	1992		1993		1994		1995		1996		1997	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
MALAMPA	2021	2281	2181	2408	2273	2547	2317	2633	2155	2427	3457	3730
PENAMA	2831	3157	3235	3555	3220	3470	2826	2768	3308	3572	2300	2483
SANMA	2148	2649	2057	3013	2449	2942	2945	3377	2556	2962	2712	3237
SHEFA	2913	3053	3374	3611	3332	3644	3430	3424	3522	3828	3245	3525
TAFEA	2045	2517	2434	2830	2522	2896	2978	3279	2648	3071	2651	2900
TORBA	463	506	491	540	587	588	610	645	587	658	716	791
Sub-Total	12421	14163	13772	15957	14383	16087	15106	16126	14776	16518	15081	16666
TOTAL	26584		29729		30470		31232		31294		31747	
% Female	47		46		47		48		47		48	
Province	1998		1999		2000		2001		2002		2006	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
MALAMPA	3444	3652	3406	3716	3503	3734	3396	3640	3505	3737	3486	3709
PENAMA	2496	2847	2459	2771	2517	2789	2695	2987	2644	2892	3370	3676
SANMA	3043	3407	3076	3470	3111	3409	3298	3619	3464	3793	4255	4422
SHEFA	4041	4368	4099	4416	4383	4692	4517	4900	4798	5125	5793	6272
TAFEA	2622	2937	2629	2927	2612	2906	2777	3061	3806	3088	2912	3051
TORBA	742	767	660	702	678	740	779	813	776	842	1034	1005
Sub-Total	16388	17978	16329	18002	16813	18270	17462	19020	17993	19477	20850	22135
TOTAL	34366		34331		35083		36482		37470		42985	
% Female	48		48		48		48		48		48.5	

**Source:** Figures from 1992-2002 calculated by the author from various data from the Department of Education. 2006 figures were obtained from Lapi & Jimmy (2006).

Table 3.2.2 shows a positive trend in that 52 percent of the students enrolled in secondary schools in 2006 were females, meaning that for the first time there are more girls enrolled at this level than boys. Whilst this is a very encouraging there is now a need to do a gender analyses on why boys are now underrepresented at this level of education.

The data from Lapi & Jimmy does not provide a breakdown between junior secondary school enrolments and enrolments in senior secondary schools. This would provide a comparison to see if there has been any change in the enrolment of girls in secondary school since the 2002 study by Strachan. There are implications for the decrease in the enrollment at senior secondary schools as this forms the basis for entrance for women to tertiary education and access to senior posts in public and private sectors. Traditional beliefs of the gendered roles of women as mothers and wives have played a significant part in girls not completing both senior secondary and tertiary education. Some of the reasons for the higher drop out rates of girls in the senior secondary school include safety issues, financial constraints as well as preference for educating boys over girls.



Table 3.2.2 Trends in Secondary School Enrolments, 1996-2006

Province	1996		2001		2006	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
MALAMPA	367	460	555	595	839	770
PENAMA	540	508	668	675	826	897
SANMA	610	800	843	976	1165	1191
SHEFA	1051	1167	1660	1659	2622	2358
TAFEA	225	297	496	486	1093	795
TORBA	69	65	62	71	57	78
Sub-total	2862	3297	4284	4462	6602	6089
TOTAL	6159		8746		12691	
% Female	46		49		52	

SOURCE: Lapi & Jimmy, 2006

Evidence exists to suggest that the education of girls should be considered a priority. As the first educator of the child, an educated mother is paramount. Evidence of the level of education and impacts on other aspects of life such as the health of a child shows quite clearly that the more a mother is educated, the less the child will die for malnutrition and/or other diseases. While the traditional attitudes might be that girls don't need education, the evidence shown below and its impacts on the health of children speaks clearly for the importance of girls' education. This positive relationship needs active promotion.

Table 3.2.3 Level of Education and Rates of Child Mortality, 1992 – 1997

Level of Education	Infant Mortality	Childhood Mortality	Under Five Mortality
Vanuatu	27	6	33
No school	42	12	54
Primary	24	5	29
Junior Secondary	20	4	24
Senior Secondary	17	3	20

Source: National Statistics Office (2000).

At the tertiary level there are more males than females who access this level of education. Of the ni-Vanuatu students attending the University of the South Pacific Emalus Campus, the enrolment rate in extension courses increased from 26 percent in 1999 to 40 percent in 2002. In an effort to support women access tertiary education, Government introduced a gender equity policy in the distribution of scholarships in 1997. However, the proportion of women obtaining scholarships has been around the 36 percent level (CEDAW Report, 2004).

In almost all forms of technical and vocational education and training facilities, females are underrepresented. In 2004 it was reported that total enrolment for females at the Vanuatu Teachers College was 43 percent; 36 percent for the Vanuatu Institute of Technology and 26 percent at Rural Training Centres. The exception is the Vanuatu Nursing School where 60 percent of the students are females.

In a study conducted in 2006 on Technical-Vocational Skills Development in Vanuatu the enrolment rate for females in the Rural Training Centres has dropped in the last five years from

32 percent in 2002 to 21 percent in 2006 (Johanson, 2006). No explanation was provided for this drop but it could be due to a number of factors including reluctance of families to send their daughters to continue their education as well as financial constraints. The proportion of females teachers at Rural Training Centres on the other hand has increased slightly from 24 percent in 2002 to 25 percent in 2006 (Johanson, 2006).

Table 3.2.4 Enrolment and Teaching Staff in Rural Training Centres, 2002-2006

Year	Students			Teachers			Students per Teacher	Number of RTCs
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total		
2006	414	1600	2014	40	120	160	12.5	36
2005	689	1118	1807	39	119	158	11.4	37
2004	328	831	1159	33	101	134	8.6	33
2003	147	547	700	26	88	114	6.1	28
2002	317	688	1005	31	100	131	7.6	29

SOURCE: VRDTCA Statistics quoted in Johanson, 2006.

Some of the advances evidenced above portray a positive picture of girls accessing education. There are however, a number of actions still needing address such as providing more women opportunities to access senior administrative positions. Accordingly, the Ministry of Education has developed a Gender Equity Logframe and Action Plan for 2005-2015 with the goal to ensure further equity and to provide equal opportunities for everyone in education that are not determined by their 'gender'<sup>7</sup>. 13 objectives were reported by Lapi & Jimmy (2006) to help achieve these goals:

1. Establish an effective gender equity implementation and monitoring system;
2. Reduce girls drop/push out rates in Years 11, 12, 13;
3. Provide a safe learning environment for all students;
4. Increase the number of females applying for and being awarded scholarships, including post graduate scholarships;
5. Increase the number of females taking science, mathematics and technical subjects;
6. Increase the number of female students in technical education;
7. Provide career guidance and subject choice advice to both males and females that do not limit student's employment/work options on the basis of their sex;
8. Develop curricular that are gender inclusive;
9. Increase the number of female principals and females in other senior positions;
10. Increase the number of females employed in the administration particularly in senior positions;
11. Increase women's representation on committees including the Teaching Services Commission;
12. Recruit more women to train as secondary school teachers.

What is also important to note is that the Ministry of Education under the coordination of the Gender Desk has organized the first ever Women's Leadership Workshop for Senior Women in the Education sector in August 2006. The purpose of the workshop was to design, develop and implement culturally relevant leadership programmes for women in this sector. One of the objective is to provide 14 women with leadership skills to take up various senior positions. The programme will continue to 2008 where a total 42 women are expected to undertake this leadership training (Lapi & Jimmy, 2006). It is unclear what 'culturally relevant leadership' is.

<sup>7</sup> As noted earlier, the use of 'gender' in this context is not appropriate. The term should be 'sex'. Actions under Objectives 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11 and 12 above could address, for example, the implications of gendered roles of women in Vanuatu and their subsequent results in the under-representation of women in senior positions or girls not accessing senior secondary school.

Of all the sectors in Government, education has received the highest budgetary allocation over the past eight years with 25 percent in 1999 to 28 percent in 2003 and dropping to 26 percent until 2006. For the first time since 1999 the 2007 budgetary allocation is expected to be reduced to 22 percent.

### **3.3 WOMEN AND HEALTH**

The vision of the Ministry of Health is to protect and promote the health of all people living in Vanuatu. There are five hospitals, 25 Health Centres, 103 Dispensaries and 217 Aid Posts. All the provinces except TORBA have hospitals. In 2006, 76 percent of those in the nursing profession were women.

Since the 1970s the Ministry adopted a policy of Primary Health Care and focused on preventative care. Since 1992 medical services to the public has been fully subsidized by the Government. In other areas, all health expenses are supposed to be free for those under the age of 18 and over the age of 55, people with disabilities and those with certain diseases such as malaria, TB and STI. Many of the major diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and leprosy have decreased and deaths from malaria, for example, has dropped drastically from 32 in 1988 to 8 in 1999 and zero in 2000. At the National Women's Forum, the Director General for Health highlighted some other significant progress that have achieved:

- ✓ a decrease in fertility rate from 6.1 in 1989 to 4.1 in 1999;
- ✓ a reduction in birth rates from 42 per 1000 in 1979 to 33 per 1000 in 1999;
- ✓ a decrease in overall death rate from 13 per 1000 in 1979 to 9 in 1989;
- ✓ a decrease in infant mortality rate;
- ✓ an increase in life expectancy for women from 54 years in 1979 to 70 in 1999;
- ✓ a decrease in maternal mortality rate which was estimated to be 96.30 per 100,000 live births in 1998;
- ✓ a 89 percent of deliveries which are attended by skilled birth attendants<sup>8</sup>.

Ante-natal and post natal clinics provide their services free from charges. Coverage of the most common childhood illnesses such as measles and whooping cough through the Extended Programme of Immunization is approximately 90 percent. There are national policies on Primary Health Care, Food and Nutrition and Family Health and Planning.

The following section will focus only on a few issues including the increase in both communicable and non-communicable diseases. A more in-depth gender analyses of women and health is provided elsewhere (see Piau-Lynch, 2004).

#### **3.3.1 TEENAGE PREGNANCIES**

One issue of concern that will be mentioned firstly is the increasing trend of young children becoming pregnant. Pregnancy itself is not an illness or a disease; however, the fact that girls as young as 12 years old are getting pregnant is direct evidence that a crime has been committed, either through rape, incest and unlawful sexual intercourse and is an indication of the moral decline in our society. These crimes are committed most often by adult members of the family or friends of the family. Fear, shame, stigma, lowering the reputation of the family and violence often overshadows the need for both mothers and female children who have been abused to take action against the perpetrators. The CEDAW report notes that one third of sexual abuse against children are repeat offenders, suggesting the proximity of offenders as well as an ineffective system of bringing perpetrator to justice, a scenario indicating a dangerous situation for children but providing a safe haven for offenders and repeat offenders. The custom of paying

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<sup>8</sup> Abel, M. Report to the National Women's Forum, 31 August 2006.

finer to the victims of these sexual crimes and where limited legal protection providing for redress speaks directly to the denial of the child to be protected by the state as well as the family. This is denial of children to both protection and security.

The impact of becoming pregnant at such a early age poses both physical and psychological damage and trauma on these children. Attitudes that consider discussion about sexuality as forbidden or 'taboo' because of custom further places children at risk. While Vanuatu has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it has yet to repeal the discriminatory provision in the Constitution that allows girls to be married at 16 years yet boys can get married until 18 years. That girls mature physically at an earlier age and therefore are ready for sex is a **myth** that has to be seriously challenged by the Health authorities as well as government and women's rights advocates. This **myth** does not justify the sexual abuse of children.

Table 3.3.1 Number of Teenage Deliveries in all Hospitals, 2001-2004

Year	Age of Child/Mothers								Total	Total Hospital Births
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		
2001	0	3	1	2	5	26	31	73	141	2,551
2002	3	2	0	3	5	17	32	56	118	1,918
2003	0	0	1	1	9	17	17	65	109	2,129
2004	1	0	0	3	7	9	28	42	90	1,938
Total	4	5	2	9	26	69	108	235	450	8,536

**Source:** Abel, M, 2006, p. 19

A significant 50 percent of sexually transmitted infections found in many young mothers attending their first antenatal clinics and the apparent ease of having more than one sexual partners in and out of marriage which provides for a potentially *more* infectious population. The labour ward statistics from 1979 to 2001 provided by Grace & Vurobaravu (2002) highlight that there has been an increase of 4.8 percent of confinement since 1979. This is in excess of the national growth rate which is 2.8 per cent.

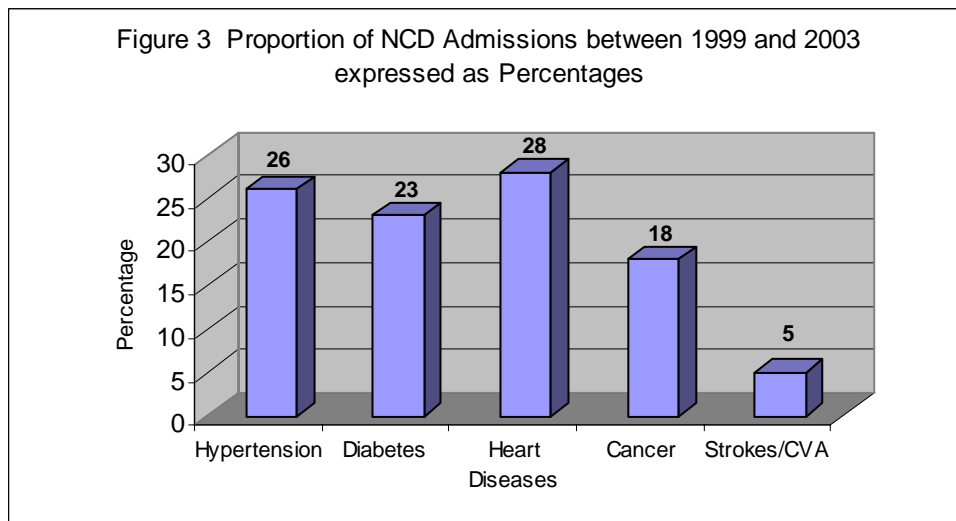
With women's limited ability to demand safe sex and say no to unwanted sex we are set on a brink of a major disaster in the health of our women. Attitudes of sexuality as a taboo subject need to be dispelled and in its stead, promotion of the health rights of women and girls need to be escalated and entrenched in the minds of girls, boys, men and women. Beliefs and values found on religious teachings such chastity, monogamy, respect, responsibilities of parents to care and provide moral and spiritual teachings to their children are options that have not been seriously considered. Yet these values can provide the foundation for reducing the spread of STIs and child sexual abuse and promoted side by side with campaigns promoting safe sex. In addition, enforcement of laws for perpetrators need to be strengthened. Vanuatu, as in many cultures, value children as helpers for parents. It is also said that children of today are considered as leaders of tomorrow. When adults do not be imprisoned for crimes against children, when parents cannot provide safe and protective homes for their children to grow up and be their helpers when they grow old, the experiences these children face today will shape the experiences of children of tomorrow. Thus the vicious cycle of silence and condoning of crimes will continue to fester.

The Director General for Health has called for more research into women's health and a closer monitoring of the overall health status of Vanuatu women at the recent National Women's Forum. It remains to be seen how the Ministry for Health, Ministry of Justice and Social Welfare and NGOs take this call on board and where teenage pregnancy will be placed high on the list of actions to be taken. In 2006 it was reported that 34 percent of women suffered from post-partum

depression; therefore the mental health of mothers points to a hidden aspect of health that is yet to be seriously considered. How many of these young children who become psychologically disturbed as a result of becoming mothers at the tender age of 11 and who have to look after their own children while they themselves are still children warrants grave concern. The Mental Health Act is now in the process of being reviewed by the Health Department.

### 3.3.2 NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The last survey on non-communicable diseases was conducted in 1998. Recent data about NCD-related diseases between 1999 and 2003 is provided in Table 1.2.6 and shows that 2770 cases were admitted. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of this situation.



SOURCE: Dr Griffith Harrison, 2004.

In brief, between 1999 and 2003,

Heart diseases increased from 140 to 175, representing a 25 percent increase;  
 Hypertension increased from 113 to 189, an increase of 67 percent;  
 Diabetes increased from 92 to 168, representing a 82.6 percent increase;  
 Cancer almost doubled from 79 to 153 and representing a 93.7 percent increase.

Cardiovascular arrests appear to remain the same. It should be noted that in 2002 the admission rate for all the diseases reported, with the exception of hypertension, declined. This could be due to non reporting by health facilities.

The following section will briefly look at a few of these diseases.

#### 3.3.2.1 Cancer

The Ministry of Health's Corporate Plan 2004-2006 has placed emphasis on reproductive health services particularly teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and cancers of the cervix and breast as a major focus area. Between 1993 and 1998 a total of 1,057 cancer-related cases were reported for Vanuatu. Of these, 602 or nearly 60 percent of patients presented for cancer-related cases were women. As can be seen in Table 3.3.2, nearly 30 percent of the cases reported by women were for cancer of the cervix, uterus and ovary (CEDAW, 2004).

In 1990 a project was formulated with the aim of finding out if indicators of breast and cervical cancers contribute to mortality and morbidity of women. One of the main finding was that women

with breast and cervical cancers usually presented at such late stages of development that nearly all cases were fatal.

Table 3.3.2 Ten Most Common Cancers in Vanuatu, 1983-1998

Site	Females	Males	Total	% Women
Cervix	121		121	100
Uterus	25	-	25	100
Ovary	27	-	27	100
Breast	98	4	102	96
Thyroid	77	13	90	85
Bone Marrow	22	27	49	45
Stomach	14	19	33	42
Brain	10	14	24	42
Liver	25	90	115	22
Others	167	239	406	41
Total	602	455	1,057	57

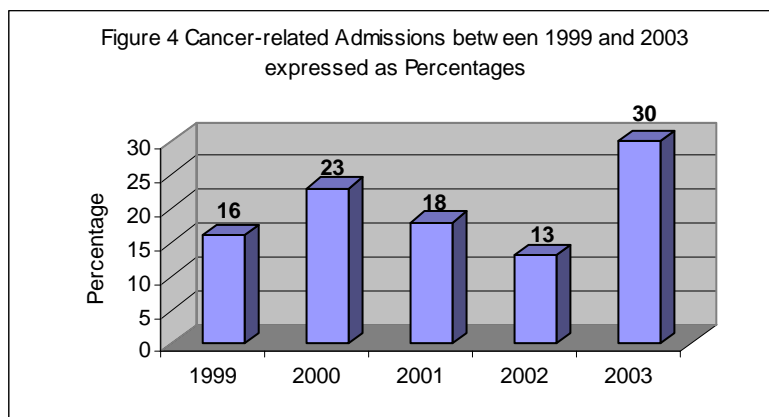
**Source:** Department of Women's Affairs, 2001 quoted in CEDAW, 2004.

These conditions mostly affected older women who were usually beyond childbearing age and had little regular contact with health services. The actual figures for incidences at the national level as reported in the 1<sup>st</sup> National Health Plan gave an estimate of 5-6 new cases of both cervical cancers and breast cancers per year. In 2007 the Department is providing screening for breast and cervical cancers for women in their 30s to 50s (Abel, 2006).

While data on the admission of non-communicable diseases has been provided in Table 1.2.6, these data are not disaggregated by sex and therefore a gender analyses of these diseases cannot be provided. However, it is clear that the rate of admission for cancer-related diseases has almost doubled from 79 in 1999 to 153 in 2003.

That there has been a drop in 2001 and 2002 is most likely due to lack of reporting by health facilities rather than a decrease in the disease itself. This is quite evident in the following figure.

One call by the Director General of Health in 2006 for women to take a more



**SOURCE:** Dr Griffin Harrison, 2004.

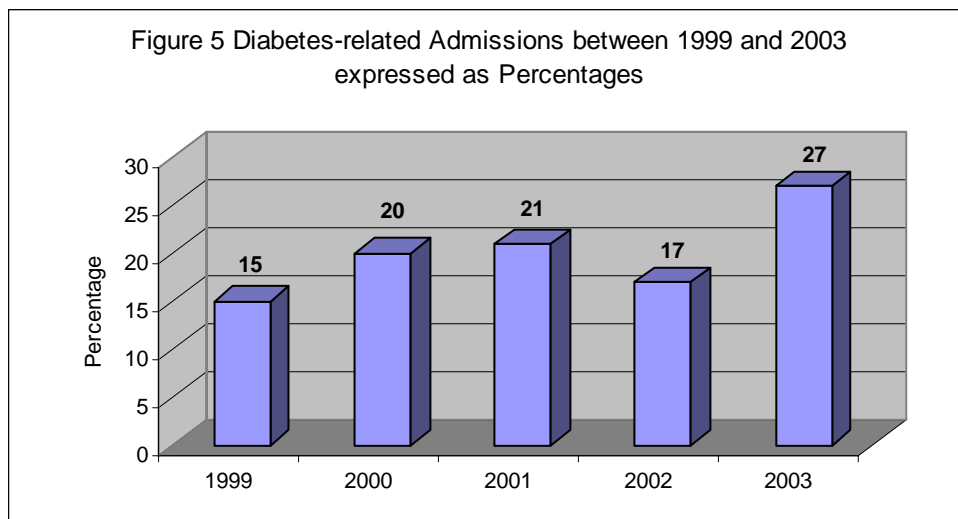
personalized and proactive stance to have one or two examinations yearly is a positive call. How this will be incorporated into the Ministry's plan of action over the years and how women in the country will be made aware of the importance of having a medical check on an annual basis or do self-examinations will be a challenge in the coming years.

At the moment screening for cancers of the breast and cervix is not conducted on all women due to lack of equipment, technical staff and finance. These limitations should not impeded such necessary service to women. The right to health and the right to life are being denied when provisions of such equipment, which can often mean life or death of a woman, must be considered as of paramount consideration in allocation of resources. Muses such as lack of funds and qualified personnel speaks to possible criminal negligence and is one area that women's rights groups must rally for.

### 3.3.2.2 Obesity & Diabetes

The last survey on non-communicable diseases was conducted in 1998. The relevance of including this health issue in this profile stems on the findings that based on the WHO definition of overweight and obese categories, one third of ni-Vanuatu were classified as being overweight. In that study 16 percent of females were reported to having a significantly higher prevalence rate of obesity than males. While the study further noted that in the urban areas the prevalence of overweight was greater amongst males (43%) than females (37%), in the intermediate and rural areas more females than males were overweight. Further, diabetes was more than twice as prevalent amongst females than amongst males (4% compared 2%) and there were significantly more female diabetics than males in urban centres. Corresponding to the higher prevalence rate of diabetes amongst females is the higher number of female amputees. The consumption of less non-traditional foods and food devoid of nutritional values in urban and peri-urban centres, habit forming substances such as tobacco and alcohol and their impact on the health of women, men and children needs critical attention.

While further investigations is required to link any correlations between the different dietary intake between women and men and amputations and programmes to stem this trend in Vanuatu, what is clear from the admission rate as indicated above is that Vanuatu may face a severe increase in disability as a result of diabetes.



The collaboration between the Vanuatu Diabetes Association and the World Diabetes Federation on the 'Food Campaign' should be a wake up call for all concerned (Dr Chris Tari, pers. com).

### 3.3.2.3 Smoking & Drinking

In 1997 a study on youths in Port Vila and surrounding suburbs found that 37 percent of females were using some form of legal substances with alcohol being the most common substance used by both males and females. It may well be that men who hold senior posts in both public and private sectors and the stresses and life style they follow as a consequence of their positions may render them more prone to these diseases. The writer is unaware of any study in Vanuatu linking smoking and drinking to males and females who present with hypertension, heart diseases or strokes. Again, one can better appreciate the situation in Vanuatu from the visual presentations provided in this section. Since 2001 the cultivation and use of marijuana has become a major concern in Vanuatu. No study has yet been done to analyze marijuana use by males and females.

Documentation of the links between these diseases and smoking is well established internationally as has the relationship between the changing dietary consumption from nutritional food to non- or limited nutritional based food such as fast food full of grease. From the figures provided by Dr Harrison of Port Vila Base Hospital, 59 percent of NCD-related admission of cases were for hypertension, heart diseases and strokes. What is important to note is that in almost all cases there has been a steady increase in the presentation of these diseases. The health burden of these diseases in terms of caring and maintenance of the families has not been calculated. Nor has there been any study identifying changing gendered roles within the family whose member suffers from these diseases. From a 2003 clinical study into diabetes, chronic heart problem and respiratory infection, the Ministry of Health reported that over VT 74,000 per person was spent for medical care. This is close to 20 times the health cost per person per year, calculated at VT 4,800 budgeted for the health sector in 2003 by the National Government (Minister for Health, quoted in Piau-Lynch, 2004).

### **3.3.3 COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

#### **3.3.3.1 Sexually Transmitted Infections**

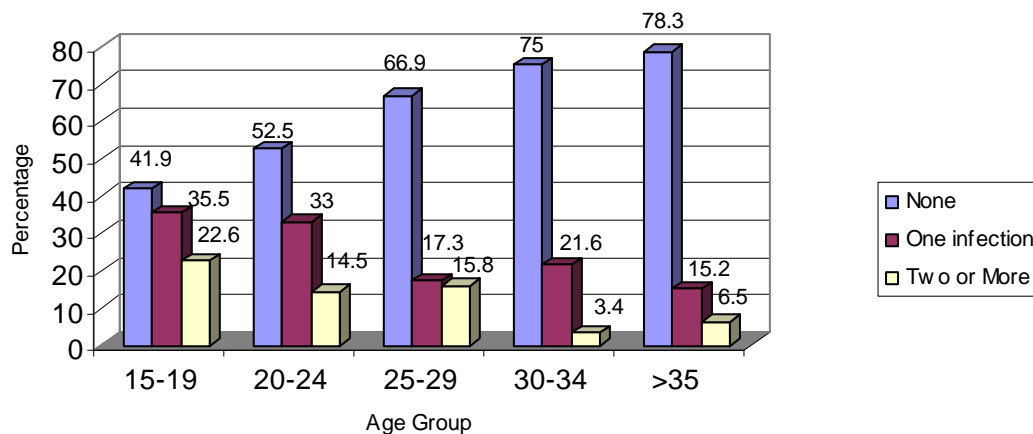
There are two other major health issues of concern to women and their health at this moment are: i) the high incidence of sexually transmitted infections found in pregnant young women attending hospitals and ii) the potential spread of HIV/AIDS in Vanuatu. Figures from a cross-sectional survey of pregnant women aged between 14-49 attending their first antenatal clinic at the Vila Central Hospital showed that the prevalence rate of sexually transmitted infections (STI) among the women was 50 percent (WHO, 2000). The survey results also showed that 40 percent of the 547 women tested had at least one STI and 60 percent of pregnant women under 20 years of age had at least one STI. Other findings of the survey showed that:

- Decreasing maternal age was highly correlated with the presence of infection;
- Younger women (< 25 years) were more likely to have a current infection than older women;
- Almost three in five (58 percent) teenage women had an infection compared to one in two women aged 20-24 years;
- Women with current STIs were significantly younger than women without STIs (median 24.2 years versus median 26.7 years);
- Women with current STIs were significantly more likely to be single women than those without an infection.

No study has been conducted on how many men are infected with STI.



Figure 6 Number of Current Infections by Five-Year Group of Pregnant Women Attending the Vila Central Hospital First-visit Antenatal Clinic, October 1999-February 2000



Source: WHO, 2000.

STIs are a major public health problem because of their impact on maternal and child health. For many women their position in society does not enable them to insist on fidelity, demand condom use, or refuse sex even when they suspect or know that their partner is already infected himself. Further, most women lack the economic power to remove themselves from relationships that carry major risks of infections. Fear of being beaten or thrown out or their inability to go back to their families because they have been 'paid' through bride price places them in a vulnerable position where they cannot protect themselves against STIs and HIV. Girls and teenagers face an extremely difficult growing up period and are vulnerable to sexual abuse, pregnancy and contracting infections.

A number of factors that contribute to the increase of STI relate to the prevailing cultural, social and economic norms existing in society which serve to further increase the vulnerability for women and girls to infections. Some of these include: i) women's low social status and the highly circumscribed roles under custom which limit their power to negotiate safe sex; ii) the practice of polygamy; iii) the taboo of openly discussing sex and sexuality; iv) the high mobility of men in and out of rural villages and urban settlements; iv) the pronounced gender inequalities resulting in women experiencing little economic dependence (small economy with limited employment opportunity, limited income earning opportunities particularly for women); v) general lack of sex education in schools which further creates serious rifts in intergenerational communication and decreasing the likelihood of parents provide sex education; vi) lack of accessible health facilities to test for infections and general health of women, and viii) the lack of specialists such as gynecologists in the health system.

Women with disabilities, already discriminated against and unable to protect themselves, are at greater risk of both sexual abuses and of contracting STIs. They have limited access to education, to information, to being included and participate in awareness raising campaigns by both Government and NGOs in almost all areas leading to their continued disempowerment to claim their right to health or other rights. The NGOs currently working with, and for, people with disability are further restricted by their lack of operational resources to provide information and support. The National Disability Policy 2007 was completed in December 2006 and seeks to support for women with disabilities in high risk situations including situation of sexual abuse.

The issue of using money in marriage ceremonies has also been used by men to mean that the women are their property to do as they wish and dis-empowers women in their ability to control their health as well as other aspects of their lives. Instituted by the Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs in 1998, this was a concern raised in the CEDAW report in 2004. In March 2005 the Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs abolished this ceiling of VT 80,000 for bride price and in its place, the Malvatumauri is promoting exchanges of traditional forms gifts such as mats and pigs between families in marriage ceremonies. While all chiefs have been instructed to follow this new rule, awareness of this significant action to the general public is almost non-existent.

### **3.3.3.2 HIV/AIDS**

In 2002 Vanuatu confirmed its first case of HIV. In 2003 the Ministry of Health produced the Draft Policy and Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections 2003-2007. which identified six key strategic directions to combat HIV/AIDS and STIs:

- Prevention of sexually transmitted HIV & HIV transmission through blood
- Prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV
- Early intervention and care and support to people with HIV
- Monitoring and evaluation of the National AIDS Programme
- Programme management
- Staff training and support to develop professional skills.

Under this Policy, a number of activities and NGOs that will collaborate with the Ministry of Health to carry out the programme activities were identified. Work done in the STI/HIV/AIDS areas is already been undertaken by a number of NGOs such as the Family Health Association, Wan Smol Bag Theatre and Volunteer Services Overseas. Recognizing the susceptibility and vulnerability of sex workers and seamen, the Policy has specifically included them. At present the only NGO working with sex workers is the Kam Pusum Hed clinic of Wan Smol Bag Theatre. While the Policy mentions concern for women, including women with disabilities, it does not clearly articulate how women will be targeted or the timeframe within which these targets should be accomplished (CEDAW, 2004). The only NGO working specifically in the area of HIV/AIDS is the IZA Foundation set up in 2004 by Irene Malachai.

The Ministry of Health's Corporate Plan 2004-2006 provides priority focus on Reproductive Health Services with particular emphasis on teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and cancers of the cervix and breast. Under the Master Health Services Plan the Ministry has developed long-term indicators that are aligned to the Millennium Development Goals. One of the main concern of the Ministry has been insufficient research such as community-based programmes that addresses women's health needs an a call to carry out more research within the health sector has been incorporated in the Corporate Plan to guide effective long-term planning. The types of research into women's health needs should provide more information on the effects of gendered roles and health-seeking behaviours of women.

### **3.3.4 Public Expenditure on Health**

For the past 8 years the health sector has been appropriated between 10 to 13 percent of the national budget. According to the Director General of Health, out of the VT997,954,000 budget in 2006, VT750,000,000 was earmarked for service delivery within hospitals, community health and public health. 60 percent of this is for staff emoluments but only 40 percent is for operational costs (Abel, 2006). In 2007 it is expected to receive 10.3 percent of the budget.

Table 3.3.3 2006 Budgetary Appropriation to the Ministry of Health

Programme	Total Vatu	%
Portfolio Management	26,743,161	2.67
Ministry Executive	6,283,420	0.63
Corporate Services	96,707,683	9.69
Hospital Services	482,979,594	48.39
Community Health Services	219,710,290	22.01
Public Health Services	50,527,852	5.06
Medical Supplies Stock	115,000,000	11.52
Total	997,954,000	99.97

**Source:** Calculated from Abel, M. (2006).

No gender budget analysis has been attempted on Government appropriation to any of the Ministries and Departments as one of the major constraining factor is the limited capacity of the national women's machinery or NGOs to conduct such as analyses. Yet analyses of national, as well as departmental budgets, are important to highlight how much is apportioned to women not only in health but in other sectors such as education, industry, agriculture. Current funding support for strengthening the reproductive health services for the period 2004-2007 is VT 69,112,032. This support includes the provision of contraceptives; training of health workers; equipment/materials; advocacy and awareness programmes. In addition, a gender budget analyses and impact of programmes undertaken by a number of NGOs such as the Vanuatu Family Health Association, Vanuatu Women's Centre, Wan Smol Bag and Kam Pusum Hed, donors and international agencies such as the World Health Organization and UNICEF undertaken in partnership with the Ministry of Health needs to be conducted to measure how much is being targeted to women's health. An important consequence of such analyses would be to highlight existing gaps with the potential for redirecting resources to areas in need of urgent attention.

### 3.4 WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES & FORESTRY

Women's involvement in agriculture/agro-forestry, which predominantly takes place in the subsistence sector, is given token acknowledgements in official data and reports. The conventional wisdom today remains that women do not engage in any substantive capacity in agricultural work. Where they do participate, it is ostensibly in a supportive or subordinate role (i.e. helping their husbands or performing less crucial, light jobs like cooking for male workers). This denial of women's important role in agriculture and agro-forestry is emphatically depicted in the 1989 census data where no mention of women's role was found. This is also reflected in Vanuatu's national census taken in 1999 where only 109 women were found to be employed in agriculture, 16 in forestry and logging, and 10 in fishing as compared with 517 men in agriculture, 247 in forestry and logging and 66 in fishing. Overall these 135 women represented 0.4 percent of employed women in these sectors and just 14 percent of the total number of persons employed in the sector.

Table 3.4.1 Women's Participation in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 1999

Sector	Female	Male	Total	% Women
Agriculture <sup>9</sup>	109	517	626	17
Fisheries	10	66	76	13
Forestry	16	247	263	6
Total	135	830	966	14

**Source:** National Statistics Office (2000). The 1999 National Population and Housing Census Report: Main Report, Tables 5.13-5.15, pps. 188-190.

However, closer investigation of Vanuatu's 1999 national census does provide some important data that acknowledges the significant contribution made by men and women in subsistence agriculture as well as other community services. These other categories are highlighted in Table 3.4.2 below.

Of the 76,370 people who were engaged in various occupations, 54,819 were listed as 'Skilled Agriculture and Fisheries' workers (*highlighted in italics*). This is a significant 72 percent of the population who work where both men and women are equally represented in the sector: Women represented 48 percent of those engaged in this occupation<sup>10</sup>. It is here that the traditional subsistence economy predominates where women continue to play a critical role with their reproductive as well as their socially productive role and balancing their time between meeting family and community obligations and putting food on the table. It is therefore vital that national accounts such as the population census provide such data is acknowledged. Additionally, a more clearer classification of 'Skilled Agricultural and Fisheries' workers and the general 'Agriculture' category needs to be made in future census.

<sup>9</sup> According to the ISIC Category, Agriculture includes the following: i) Marketing gardening, ii) farming of animals, mixed farming, iii) agricultural and animal husbandry services, iv) hunting & trapping (NSO, 2000, p. 227).

<sup>10</sup> In 1999 the National Population Census reported that 48 percent of the total population were women.

Table 3.4.2 Economically Active Population by Occupation and Sex, 1999

Occupation	Female		Male		Persons	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Armed forces	8	5	160	95	168	0
Clerks	1,070	62	663	38	1,733	2
Craft and related workers	393	12	3,034	88	3,427	5
Elementary occupations	2,098	61	1,333	39	3,431	4
Legislators, senior officials and managers	172	22	627	78	799	1
Plant & machine operators and assemblers	67	4	1,688	96	1,755	2
Professionals	312	39	493	61	805	1
Service workers/shop market sales workers	1,638	42	2,307	58	3,945	5
<i>Skilled agricultural and fisheries workers</i>	<i>26,431</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>28,388</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>54,819</i>	<i>72</i>
Technicians and associated professionals	1,594	39	2,494	61	4,088	5
Looking for work	424	34	836	66	1,260	2
Not stated	91	65	49	35	140	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,298</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>42,072</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>76,370</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** National Statistics Office (2000). The 1999 National Population and Housing Census Report: Main Report, Tables 5.5 - 5.7, pps. 180-182.

In another section of the 1999 national census, further information on the 53,737 people who are engaged as subsistence farmers or horticulturalists are provided. Table 3.4.3 therefore highlights the contributions made by those who are not paid for their work such voluntary or community work, those who were helping family business and pastors/religious leaders.

Table 3.4.3 Economically Active Population by Employment Status and Sex, 1999

Employment Status	Female		Male		Persons	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Businessman/woman	375	27	998	73	1,373	2
Government employee	1,770	37	3,074	63	4,848	6
Other employee	4,368	36	7,814	64	12,182	16
Working in the Garden	26,295	49	27,442	51	53,737	70
Helping family business (no pay)	482	34	927	66	1,409	2
Voluntary community worker	108	35	203	65	311	0
Pastor/religious leader	109	15	599	85	708	1
Other position (no money)	333	68	154	32	487	1
Not stated	458	35	857	65	1,315	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,298</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>42,072</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>76,370</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** National Statistics Office (2000). The 1999 National Population and Housing Census Report: Main Report, Tables 5.10-5.12, pps. 185-187.

In other aspects of women's participation in the public sector, there are 10 women currently employed by the Department of Agriculture where the Director is a woman. In 2006 the Chair person of the Tanna Coffee Organization was a woman. In the non-agricultural sectors, two women were employed by the Geological Hazards Unit in volcanology and earthquakes. The head of the Hydro-Geology Unit was a woman. At the National Women's Forum in 2006 it was reported that women were involved at the national level in the work of environment management and conservation in policy development, decision making, planning, project coordination and conducting scientific assessments. Currently there are 7 technical officers and 3 administrative officers at the Environment Unit.

Greater emphasis has now been placed to include gender in the work of Agricultural Field Officers by working through existing women's networks and provision of training in conservation, fish processing, making of canoe sails, fishing boat maintenance and seed production. Traditional attitudes about where women should and should not work often places female officers at a disadvantage in carrying out their official duties.

The Vanuatu Cultural Centre, for example, has had an ongoing programme for the past 10 years where female field workers research and provide information on a number of issues to do with culture. One of the areas include researching and documenting traditional methods of planting, fishing, preparation of food in times of plenty and in times of drought through natural disasters such as cyclones, mudslides, earthquakes and floods.

One concern today, particularly in urban areas, is the increasing consumption of imported food and the move away from local food such as root crops and greens giving rise to a number of diseases such as diabetes. In 2001 for example, importation of rice contributed to 3.8 percent of the consumer goods imported compared to 3.6 percent on pharmaceutical, 3.6 percent on household effects. In an attempt to re-direct this increasing trend to imported goods, the Government supported the Chamber of Commerce & Trade's call for 2002 as the 'Year of Island Food'. In 2006 the Government declared 2007 as the Year of Traditional Economy. In addition to promoting traditional food, this move should emphasize and support the importance of subsistence farming and the contribution of women in the agricultural as well as subsistence agriculture sectors.

Concerns about the invisibility of women's contribution to the country's GDP or other indicators has been raised over the past 20 years. Agriculture is the basis for the livelihood of the country and it can be safely said that women are the backbone of the nation. The National Statistics Office is attempting to redress this by ensuring that the 2006 Agricultural Census fully addresses gender issues as they relate to the agricultural sector. With support from the Operations Office of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific for FAO, the National Statistics Office and the Ministry of Agriculture, Quarantine, Forestry and Fisheries are currently embarking on conducting Vanuatu's second agricultural survey. In order to incorporate gender perspectives into the agricultural census report, this collaborative effort by FAO and the various Governments Departments will be focusing on:

- Reviewing the extent of the Government's programme for including gender concerns in agricultural development planning and monitoring, especially as it relates to agricultural development in general, and food security and poverty alleviation, in particular;
- Preparing and presenting a paper on gender issues related to data collection in the agricultural sector at the users/producers workshop;
- Ensuring that gender aspects are better taken into account in the census;
- Preparing a census tabulation plan with a view towards including aspects of gender in the presentation of statistical tables to demonstrate the roles of women, men, and youth in agricultural production;
- Reviewing training programmes to ensure that gender issues are adequately addressed;
- Preparing data analysis plan for inclusion of gender-related data obtained by the census;
- Preparing a thematic paper on the gender dimension of the agricultural sector.

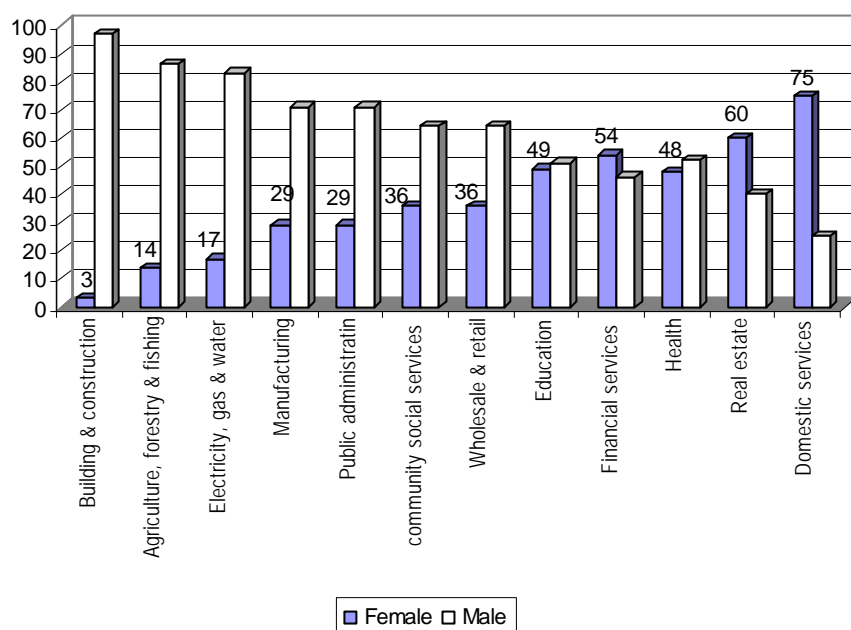
In November 2006 a gender specialist was recruited to undertake this segment of the survey. Reports of this segment of the agricultural census will be available in mid-2007.

### 3.5 PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE

Contribution of women in the subsistence sector has been discussed previously where 72 percent of the labour force are found. According to the 1999 census a total of 97,642 people were aged between 15-64 and are categorized as economically active. Of the 76,370 people were in the labour force, 34,298 were women. While these data are now dated, it can be seen from Figure 4, the occupation engaged by women remains largely in the ‘traditional’ sectors: domestic services, clerks, accounts, nursing and teaching.

The most recent data available shows that 35 percent of those who have regular work are women. In August 2003, for example, the Vanuatu National Provident Fund recorded 19,156 contributors to the Fund. Of these 7,111 or 37 percent were women (CEDAW, 2004). This figure, however, does not take into account the large number of workers in subsistence agriculture, self-employed people or those who might have temporary work. While the law states that anyone who earns more than VT 3,000 per month must register and contribute to the Fund, it is often difficult to enforce this law. Often workers are unaware of this legal requirement and sometimes employers deny their workers this social security. While employment of women in the public and private sector is based on merit, the employment of women in the informal sector is very much left to the honesty and integrity of employers. Women therefore are subject to potential discrimination and denial of their right to lawful entitlements, including maternity leave and wages.

Figure 7 Representation of Women in the Labour Force by Industry, 1999



In the 1999 national census recorded a total of 1,909 people who were employed by private households of which 1,429 or 75 percent were women as seen in Figure 7 (National Statistics Office, 2000, pps. 190-192). In an effort to account for the large number of women working as domestic workers, the Vanuatu National Provident Fund has included ‘Haosgels’ as another category of workers who can contribute to the superannuation scheme. Women who work in this sector remain a concern as their rights as workers are often tested to the extreme. The first documented report of domestic workers highlighting some of the extreme conditions under which they work has been provided by Daniela Kraemer in her 2003 Masters thesis called “*In the House but not at Home: House-Girls in Vanuatu*”. In this document, Kramer noted that:

“Working in private homes is the most common occupation for wage earning women in Vanuatu. It is thus particularly surprising that the problematic conditions within which many ni-Vanuatu haosgels work, have not been publicly addressed. And even though Vanuatu Women’s organizations acknowledge that ni-Vanuatu haosgels “really are the last ones”, little governmental consideration has been given to the circumstances of these women...”

One initiative that the Department took on 8 March 2005 was to target rights of domestic workers. At this meeting a call was made for the change of name from the Workman’s Compensation Act to the Workers Compensation Act and to include domestic workers in the amended Act (Piau-Lynch, 2005) which has subsequently been done by the Department of Labour in its review of the Act. In 2005 the University of the South Pacific Community Legal Aid Centre, in collaboration with the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, produced brochures on Rights of Haosgels. Following 8 March meeting the Domestic Workers Committee was been established. One of the first changes made by the Association was the decision to change the name of the occupation from ‘haosgels’ and be replaced by the term ‘Domestic Workers’. Although Vanuatu has ratified 10 core ILO Conventions in 2005/2006, it has yet to sign ILO Convention 177 on Domestic Workers.

Kraemer also provides important insights into how haosgels are treated by both expatriate and ni-Vanuatu employers. One of her concluding concern is that the central issue for haosgels is not one of equality/inequality, nor one of “difference”, but rather, it is one of respect. What haosgels want, and what haosgels need, is for employers to respect their feelings and their dignity as human beings. As one haosgel ... said, ‘the boss should think about my life, and me, with respect.’ Indeed in Vanuatu, haosgels feel that neither their work, nor they themselves are given the respect they deserve. Haosgels often find themselves belittled, demeaned, berated, taken advantaged of, and ignored. The most extreme example being physical violence, as experience by ‘Irene’<sup>11</sup>, whose expatriate employer, unhappy with the food she had prepared, actually took the frying pan out of her hand, and smashed it against her head. In this instance, as in countless others, where is the consideration and respect for human life and human dignity?” (Kraemer, 2003, p. 201).

That respect is not considered as an integral *precondition* to equality is a wake up call to human rights advocates to intensify their efforts to promote equality and what it means. This is because there continues to exist the popular and shallow misconception that the term ‘equality’ means ‘just the same as men’. Sandra Freeman<sup>12</sup> in her paper on ‘*Beyond the Dichotomy of Formal and Substantive Equality: Towards a new Definition of Equal Rights*’ discusses four concepts of equality that goes beyond these misconceptions. These four concepts are:

1. Treating likes alike or formal equality;
2. Equality of Opportunity;
3. Equality of Results, and
4. Equality as Transformation.

While this is not the space to discuss these concepts, discussions and actions to dispel the popular misconception is implicitly indicated. The verbal and physical abuse experienced by domestic workers is one area that has not been raised as a national issue. As highlighted by Tor & Toka in the introduction, providing space for women to bring their plights of injustice to authorities without fear of reappraisals can only help women to move out of their restricted boundaries, whether in the home or at work, including working in homes as domestic workers.

The concerns highlighted by these women also relate to a number of human rights issues including the right to a safe working environment, freedom from assault and upholding the rule of

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<sup>11</sup> Pseudonym, that is, this is not her real name.

<sup>12</sup> This article was provided by IWRAW as part of the background reading on the Global Consultation on the Optional Protocol held in Kuala Lumpur in September 2005.



law. Knowledge of their rights and where to seek redress are key issues that can support domestic workers to respond to these kinds of employment conditions. According to the National Statistics Office, this is a substantial sector where 11,918 people are doing full time housework (Wells, 2006, p. 20).

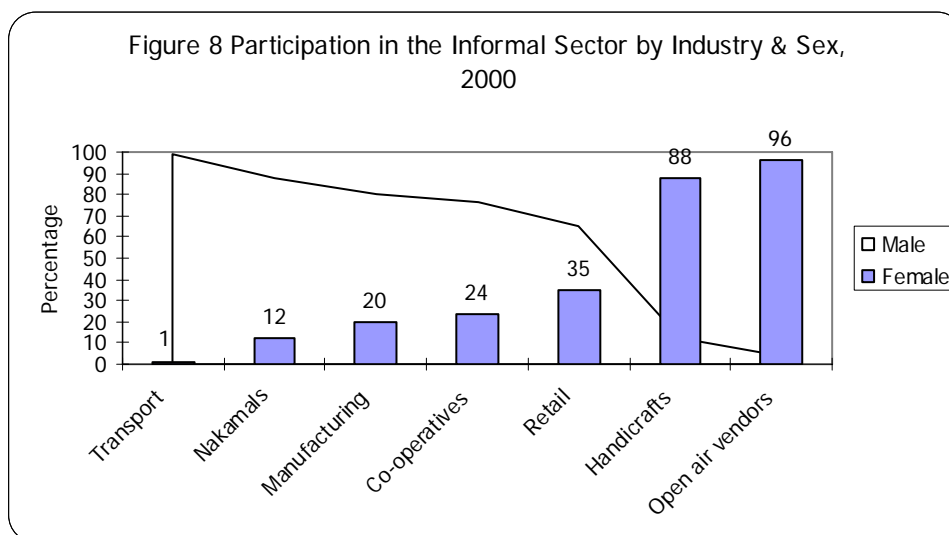
The last labour market survey undertaken by the National Statistics in 2002 identified nearly 33 percent of women employed in various occupation. As mentioned above, the occupation dominated by women is that of clerks. Again, the definition of 'Skilled Agriculture & Fisheries Workers' as reflected in the labour market survey does not fully portray the significant contribution made by women and men in the subsistence agriculture sector.

Table 3.4.4 2000 Labour Market Survey by Type of Occupation and Sex, 2000

Occupation	Female	Male	Total	% Female
Legislators, Senior Officials & Managers	280	1,035	1,315	21
Professions, Technicians & Associated Professionals	1,375	2,157	3,532	39
Clerks	1,060	693	1,753	60
Service & Sales Workers	1,146	1,437	2,583	44
Skilled Agriculture & Fishery Workers	36	424	460	8
Crafts and Related Workers	77	1,418	1,495	5
Plant/Machine Operators & Assemblers	52	813	865	6
Elementary Occupations	658	1,611	2,269	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,684</b>	<b>9,588</b>	<b>14,272</b>	<b>33</b>

SOURCE: Government of Vanuatu. (2000). Labour Market Survey Report. Port Vila: National Statistics Office, p. 17.

Women's participation in the informal sector in 2000 was dominated by the open air vendors and traders of handicrafts. What proportion their contribution make to the gross domestic product has not been calculated. Yet the major industry in Vanuatu, tourism and tourism-related employment, provides opportunities for a wide range of occupation that both women and men can be engaged.



Source: National Statistics, 2000(b)

As yet no study has been conducted on the participation of women in income activities under the category of Open Air Vendors, Handicraft Makers and Sellers, and their domestic or duties performed at home. As 2007 has been declared the Year of Traditional Economy it is hoped that some research will be conducted to provide some baseline data on these activities. There are hidden costs that women bear as horticulturalists, entrepreneurs, mothers, wives and member of the extended that have yet to be acknowledged.

#### 4. WID / GENDER PROJECTS

FOCUS AREA	MINISTRY/NGO RESPONSIBLE	SUPPORTING AGENCIES	FUNDING ALLOCATION
<b>HEALTH</b>			
i. Reproductive Health	Ministry of Health	WHO/Wan Smol Bag	na
ii. Family Planning	Vanuatu Family Health Association	IPPF	na
iii. STI	Wan Smol Bag/Kam Pusum Hed	Kam Pusum Hed	na
iv. HIV/AIDS	IZA Foundation		na
<b>EDUCATION</b>			
Women Leadership Programme	Ministry of Education	NZAID	na
<b>WOMEN IN DECISION MAKING</b>			
i. Women in Politics	VNCW		na
ii. Women in the Public Service	Department of Women's Affairs	Recurrent funds from the Department	na
<b>AGRICULTURE</b>			
Women in Agriculture	National Statistics Office, Ministry of Agriculture, Quarantine, Forestry and Fisheries	Operations Office of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific for Food & Agriculture Organization	Ongoing. No final figures as at Nov 2006
<b>ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN</b>			
i. Micro financing for women	VANWODS	Government of Vanuatu/ EU (2006)	VT 14,250,956
ii. Savem Festaim Scheme	Department of Women's Affairs	Self-generating	na
iii. REDI Programmes	Provincial Governments	Government of Vanuatu/Donors	na
<b>HUMAN RIGHTS</b>			
i. Compilation of the CEDAW Report	Department of Women's Affairs	NZAID/Department of Women's Affairs	VT 9,922,560
ii. Monitoring of CEDAW	National CEDAW Committee		Nil budget
iii. Production of the Alternate CEDAW report	Women's Advocacy Coalition, an issue-based group under VANGO	Vanuatu Rural Training Development & Training Centre/ RRRT	Ongoing therefore no definite figure in Nov 2006.
iv. CRC	Save the Children Australia	na	na
v. Women, Peace & Security	VNCW	na	na
vi. Elimination of domestic violence	Vanuatu Women's Centre	AUSAID Core Funding	VT 25 million per annum
vii. Elimination of domestic violence	Sanma Counselling Centre	NZAID funding from 1995-2005	VT 47,587,305
viii. Paralegal training	Housed under VRDTCA	Regional Rights Resource Team	na

All organizations which have been supported by funding agencies do provide reports to their funders. However, without a central clearing house or a specific study focusing on the exact nature of financial support received, these information will remain inaccessible. This is another area that can be researched.

## 5. WID / GENDER INFORMATION SOURCES

### 5.1 National Sources of Information

NAME	CONTACT PERSON	TITLE	TYPE OF AGENCY	ADDRESS
Department of Women's Affairs	Hilda Taleo / Kathy Rarua	Director / Gender Planner	Government	PMB 9091, Port Vila Tel: 25099
Habitat for Humanity Vanuatu	Vivian Licth	Acting Director	NGO	PMB 9080, Port Vila Tel: 22395
IZA Foundation	Irene Malachai	Coordinator	NGO	-
Kam Pusum Hed	Mrs Bulu	Nurse-in-Charge	NGO	P O Box 1024, Port Vila Tel: 22157
Ministry of Education	Fabiola Bibi / Grayleen Lapi	Statistician / Researcher	Government	PMB 9027, Port Vila Tel: 22309
Ministry of Health	Mrs Myriam Abel	Director General	Government	PMB 9099, Port Vila Tel: 22512
Port Vila Town Council of Women	Lesline Malsungai	President	NGO	c/- P O Box 975, Port Vila Tel: 23180
SANMA Counselling Centre	Kathy Bani	Project Officer	Branch of VWC	P O Box 335, Santo Tel: 26157
Save the Children Fund	Elizabeth Mael	CRC Desk Officer	NGO	P O Box 283, Port Vila Tel: 22794
SHEFA Island Council of Women	Audrey Luan	President	NGO	PMB 9078, Port Vila Tel: 22752
SHEFA Women's Office	Janet Ori	Women's Officer	SHEFA Provincial Government	PMB 9078, Port Vila Tel: 22752
Vanuatu Cultural Centre; Women Cultural Field Workers	Jean Tarisese	Coordinator	Statutory Body	P O Box 184, Port Vila Tel: 22129
Vanuatu Family Health Association	Marie Niklam	Executive Director	NGO	PMB 9065, Port Vila Tel: 22140
Vanuatu Cricket Association	Pierre Chillea	Cricket Development Officer	Sports Organization	P O Box 240, Port Vila Tel: 22280
Vanuatu National Council of Women	Jenny Ligo	CEO	NGO	P O Box 975 Port Vila Tel: 23108
Vanuatu Rural Development Training Centres	Kathy Solomon	Director	NGO	P O Box 925, Port Vila Tel: 27741
Vanuatu Teacher's Union Women's Network	Dorothy Pel	President	Union	P O Box 287, Port Vila Tel: 23679
Vanuatu Women's Centre (VWC)	Merilyn Tahii	Coordinator	NGO	P O Box 1358, Port Vila Tel: 25764/24000
VANWODS Microfinance Inc	Nimrod de la Pena	Managing Director	Microfinance institution	PMB 9077, Port Vila Tel: 26829
VP Women's Wing	Merilyn Abel	President	Political Party	P O Box 472, Port Vila Tel: 25508
DPA Women with Disabilities Committee	Nelly Caleb	Advocator	NGO	Tel: 36047
Women's Advocacy Coalition	Andonia Piau-Lynch	Chair	VANGO	P O Box 1378, Port Vila Tel: 25036

## 5.2 Some Regional & International Organizations Working in Vanuatu on WID/Gender Issues

REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS/ NATIONAL PARTNERS	SECTOR	EXAMPLE OF SOME SPECIFIC FOCUS	CONTACT PERSON	ADDRESS
AusAID/ Vanuatu Women's Centre	Human Rights	Women's Rights; Violence against women	Anna Naupa	P O Box 111, Port Vila Tel: 23341
CUSO	Social Justice	Custom & Gender Violence	Catherine Sparks Country Programme Officer	P O Box 158, Port Vila Tel: 22119
European Union / VANGO	Millennium Development Goals	Promoting the effective participation of civil society in the development process	Henry Vila Secretary General	P O Box 9096 Port Vila Tel: 26034
FAO/NSO	Agriculture	Food security: Gender perspectives in agricultural census	Simil Johnson Acting Director	National Statistics Office P O Box 9019, Port Vila Tel: 22110
ILO/Department of Labour	Employment	Right to work: non discrimination in employment	Lionel Kaluat Commissioner	Department of Labour P O Box 9022, Port Vila Tel: 22610
Leprosy Foundation (NZ)	Health/Social	Welfare benefits for leprosy survivors	Tony Whitley	P O Box 383, Santo Tel: 36830
NZAID / Sanma Counselling Centre	Human Rights	Violence against women	Angela Hassan-Sharp	P O Box 161, Port Vila Tel: 22933
OXFAM	Social Justice	Youths	Anthea Toka Country Programme Officer	Port Vila Tel: 53163
Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT)/VRDTCA	Human Rights	Paralegal Training / CEDAW training	Josephine Kalsok	P O Box 925, Port Vila Tel: 27740
Transparency International Vanuatu Chapter	Good Governance	Anti-Corruption	Marie Noelle Ferrieux-Patterson	P O Box 355, Port Vila Tel: 25715
UNICEF (Vanuatu)	Education	Education	Elham Monsef	P O Box 926, Port Vila Tel: 24655
USP Community Legal Aid Centre	Legal representations; Legal literacy & information	Publication of family law brochure, e.g. Matrimonial Causes Act; Rights of Haosgels; Custody etc	Staffed by various law lecturers and students	PMB 072, Port Vila Tel: 27026
VSO	Health	HIV/AIDS; Women's Rights	Hugh MacLeman	P O Box 514, Port Vila Tel: 26508
WHO/Ministry of Health	Health	Incorporation of gender in all aspects of work by WHO	Dr Corrine Capuano WHO Country Representative	P O Box 177, Port Vila Tel: 27683
Women's Federation for World Peace	Peace	Religious tolerance towards peace		P O Box 1620, Port Vila Tel: 27151
World Diabetes Federation/ Vanuatu Diabetes Association	Health	Diabetes : Foot Campaign	Dr Chris Tari	PMB 9009 , Port Vila Tel: 22512

### 5.3 List of Reports and References Related to WID/Gender

The following reports, almost all of which are mentioned in this profile, can be obtained from the Department of Women's Affairs:

- All Departmental policies and plans of action.
- Jane Strachan's "A Gender Analysis of the Education Sector in Vanuatu" of 2002.
- Government report on CEDAW, 2004.
- Gender, Kastom & Domestic Violence by Tor & Toka, 2004.
- Working Together for Women: A Summary of the Beijing Platform of Action for Vanuatu.
- All reports and summary of papers presented at the 2005 National Women's Forum.
- Review of all Legislation to Ensure Gender Equality by Zina-Toa & Wano, 2002.
- "Human Rights of Haosgels" by Andonia Piau Lynch, 8 March 2005.

Piau-Lynch (2004) "Gender & Women's Health" can be found at the WHO office at P O Box 177, Port Vila, Telephone 27683 or at the USP Library, Port Vila.

Piau-Lynch (2006) "Review of the Sanma Counselling Centre" can be accessed through NZAID, Port Vila and the Vanuatu Women's Centre.

Any reports produced by the National Statistics Office can be source from PMB 9091, Port Vila, Telephone 22110.

On line information from the National Statistics Office can be sourced through PRISM at: <http://www.spc.int/prism/country/vu/stats/Social/Demography/Population.htm>

The Vanuatu MDG Summary Report by the Department of Economic & Sectoral Planning (2005) can be found at the PRISM website as listed above.

Christine Bradley. (2002). Gender Aspects of the Comprehensive Reform Programme can be found at the Vanuatu National Council of Women, P O Box 957, Port Vila, Telephone 23108.

The Government's Budget Reports for the 2006 Appropriation can be sourced from the Ministry of Finance, PMB 9031, Port Vila, Telephone 23119.

Jean Mitchell's 1998 report on the Vanuatu Young People's Project can be found at the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, P O Box 184, Port Vila, Telephone 22129.

Daniela Kramer's thesis on Haosgels can be obtained from the Vanuatu Cultural Centre at P O Box 184, Port Vila, Tel. 22129.

Papers by Dr Grace & Dr Vurobaravu and Dr Harrison can be obtained from the Port Vila Central Hospital, Telephone 22100.

**NOTE:** At present there are no agencies that acts as a clearing house specifically designed to collect, update or disseminate reports, research papers or articles on women or gender-related issues in Vanuatu. This is one area that could potentially benefit policy makers and researchers. There is a National Library that could be supported to establishing a Women's section.

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## DEFINITIONS

**Gender** is used to describe those characteristics of women and men which are socially constructed, while sex refers to those which are biologically determined. Women and men differ biologically, but all cultures interpret and elaborate these innate biological differences into a set of social expectations of what behaviours and activities are appropriate and, consequently, what rights, resources and powers men and women possess.

**Gender analysis** identifies, analyses and informs actions to address inequalities that arise from the different roles of women and men, or the unequal power relationships between them, and the consequences of these inequalities on their lives, their health and well-being. Gender analysis in health, for example, often highlights how inequalities disadvantage women's health, the constraints women face to attain health and ways to address and overcome these.

**Gender Budget Initiatives** analyzes how governments raise and spend public money, with the aim of securing gender equality in decision-making about public resource allocation and in the distribution of the impact of government budgets both in their benefits and their burdens. Gender budget initiatives are diverse and may focus on local, provincial or national budgets with activities that may cover the whole budget or selected areas such as departments particularly important for gender equality, new programmes or particular revenue generating instruments. Attention may be focused on the link between the budget and a particular form of or on policy goals that the government has committed itself to (e.g., the Gender Equity Policy of the Comprehensive Reform Programme).

**Gender-disaggregated data** focuses on issues of relevance to women and men, girls and boys and their different roles and positions in society. Statistics on household distance from water or fuel, for example, have different implications for women and men since it is usually the former who spend time collecting these necessities when they are not readily available. Similarly, disaggregated statistics on the number of road traffic accidents and use of alcohol can throw light on the implications on risk taking behaviours of both men and women.

**Gender Equality** refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that individuals' rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development. It is the absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's sex in opportunities, in the allocation of resources and benefits or in access to services.

**Gender Equity** goes further than equality of opportunity to look at outcomes. Treating women and men, or girls and boys, equally does not automatically ensure that they obtain equal outcomes and benefits, since there are many structural factors that may militate against this. Work towards gender equity therefore looks at structural power relations in society as well as material resources, and may include taking positive or affirmative action to ensure that policies and programmes benefit women/girls and men/boys equally.

**Gender Mainstreaming** as defined by the UN Economic and Social Council Resolution 1997/2 is "... the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned actions, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres, such that inequality between men and women is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality ..."