



**Convention on the Elimination  
of All Forms of Discrimination  
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**

**Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth  
periodic reports of Samoa**

**Addendum**

**Information provided by Samoa in follow-up to the  
concluding observations\***

[Date received: 12 October 2015]


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*Note:* The present document is being circulated in English, French and Spanish only.

\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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## I. Introduction

1. The following report provides an overview of responses from the Government of Samoa in relation to recommendations identified in paragraphs 14 and 28 of the CEDAW Concluding Comments. Also, we wish to note for the information of the Committee that the Government through the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development will continue to monitor the specific follow up concerns as well as all the issues raised in July 2012 as practice develops and will provide a detailed report for each of the issues in its next periodic report due in 2016.

## II. CEDAW principal areas of concern and recommendations

### National machinery for the advancement of women

*While welcoming the efforts by the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development to ensure women's development across all sectors in the State party, including the adoption of a national plan for the advancement of women covering the period 2008-2012, the Committee is concerned that only 21 of the 104 people working in the Ministry deal with gender issues and that only 10 per cent of the general budget is allocated to the advancement of women, which may not be sufficient to ensure that gender equality policies are properly developed and fully implemented throughout the work of all ministries and Government offices.*

*The Committee encourages the State party:*

(a) *to expeditiously strengthen the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development by providing it with adequate human, financial and technical resources for it to coordinate and work effectively for the promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes across all sectors and levels of the Government;*

(b) *to strengthen its impact assessment mechanisms so as to ensure that its gender equality policies are properly monitored and evaluated and their implementation assessed.*

### Education

*The Committee welcomes the State party's National Education for All Programme and Action Plan and commends the State party on the progress achieved in the education of girls and women, as reflected by the attainment of parity in primary education. The Committee is, however, concerned at the high dropout rates between the primary and secondary levels (46 per cent) and the lack of information on tertiary enrolment. While noting the adoption by the State party in 2009 of the Education Act providing zero tolerance for corporal punishment in schools, the Committee is concerned at the high number of girls who are victims of sexual abuse and harassment in schools by teachers. The Committee is further concerned at the high dropout rate and the low retention and completion rates for girls, especially at the secondary and tertiary levels, owing to teenage pregnancy, discriminatory traditional and cultural practices and poverty, especially in rural areas.*

*The Committee is also concerned that the traditional views of both students and teachers orient female students into areas of study perceived as appropriate to their social roles and participation in public life.*

*The Committee urges the State party to enhance its compliance with article 10 of the Convention and to raise awareness of the importance of education as a human right and as the basis for the empowerment of women. To this end, it urges the State party:*

*(a) to address barriers to the education of women and girls, such as negative cultural attitudes and excessive domestic duties, to take steps to reduce and prevent dropouts among girls and to strengthen the implementation of re-entry policies enabling girls who dropout to return to school;*

*(b) to implement measures to eliminate traditional stereotypes and structural barriers that might deter girls from enrolling in science and mathematics education at the secondary and tertiary levels;*

*(c) to step up efforts to provide girls with career counselling that exposes them to non-traditional career paths, in particular in technical-vocational areas;*

*(d) to provide safe educational environments free from discrimination and violence and to institute measures to protect girls from sexual harassment and violence in schools, in particular in rural areas;*

*(e) to strengthen awareness-raising and training for school officials and students, and for children through the media, and to establish reporting and accountability mechanisms to ensure that perpetrators of sexual abuse and harassment in schools are prosecuted and punished; and*

*To ensure that the attention paid to underperformance of boys does not result in a refocus of policies and strategies away from girls and their educational needs.*

#### **Follow-up to concluding observations**

*The Committee requests the state party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 14 and 28 above.*

### **III. Country responses**

#### **Information on the national machinery for the advancement of women**

2. The Government recognizes the concern addressed by the Committee and wishes to note the following measures taken to address the issues raised in relation to paragraph 14; As Government continues to exercise a “whole of government” approach there is strong recognition that gender equality cannot be achieved by the Ministry for Women alone. The Ministry of Finance (MOF) as the lead coordinating agency for sector planning across government, has issued a policy mandate through the development of sector planning guidelines for the mainstreaming of gender and disability across sector plans. This mandate presents an opportunity to strongly promote gender mainstreaming across government and across all development and donor partner AID coordination assistance. The move to improve “engendering” the national government budgetary process, is also dependent upon the active advocacy

and policy engagement role of the AID coordination and the National Planning Office of the Ministry of Finance to strengthen the Finance Sector Coordination Unit (and has the farthest reach) which is a key promotion and accountability mechanism to help facilitate gender mainstreaming inter-linkages across all Government sectors.

3. Also encouraging looking ahead, the Cabinet Development Committee has introduced gender analysis as a requirement for any aid project proposal, which represents a positive step in enhancing the role of gender development policies in the Government's resource allocation decisions. Where it looks to amplify results and minimize resource pressures, key policy initiatives that are inclusive of gender equality and violence elimination efforts are now being introduced and addressed at the sector-wide level. The Samoa Education Sector Plan: July 2013-June 2018 (available online) is a major milestone, providing the short-, medium- and long-term strategic direction of the education sector, focusing on improved access, equity for all and the provision of high quality education opportunities. The 2013 Samoa Education Statistical Digest reflects sex and gender disaggregated data and analysis in terms of school enrolment.

4. Aside from "whole of government, sector-wide approach" there has been strong emphasis in enhancing workforce capacities and institutional mechanisms, to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of programmes for communities and villages. Many of the MWCSO staff attended trainings, workshops and meetings at the national, regional and global levels, which allowed for staff exposure and capacity development. Following a gender stocktake of public sector systems in 2013, a series of training support for Ministry of Women key staff alongside key personnel from the different sectors of Government have also commenced on gender analysis and gender mainstreaming with support from the secretariats of the Pacific Community and Pacific Island Forums.

5. With respect to strengthening the MWCSO in the driver's seat for strengthening gender equality mechanisms across Government and the national level, the Government of Australia has earmarked 4.3 million Australian dollars towards a five-year Samoa Women Shaping Development Programme. This support is facilitated under the Australian Pacific Women initiative, which aims to "improve gender equality". The Samoa Women Shaping Development Programme will also provide direct support to UNDP's programme for increasing women's political participation (in the lead-up to the 2016 election) in collaboration with key stakeholders. The Expected Key Outcomes for this programme are aligned to the Government priority areas identified under the Samoa National Policy for Women and reflected under the current Community Development Sector Programme and other relevant DFAT partner programmes which are: (i) increased women's economic empowerment; (ii) increased participation of women in public life and decision making; (iii) reduced incidence of gender based violence; (iv) capacity development support for the MWCSO to strengthen gender policy development and monitoring and evaluation (including research and gender disaggregated database). The programme is also supporting human resource staff for the Division for Women including a Gender Specialist and Gender Programme Manager that Government will absorb at the end of project cycle. Some of the initial work that have commenced under the support of this Gender Programme includes; major symposiums and workshops to advancing gender equality in decision making and political governance were conducted for women and selected youth representing

different political constituencies from across the whole of Samoa. The symposiums were spearheaded by the National Council of Women whom have been extremely active and have forged an alliance with the Samoa Women's Committee Development Organization and Samoa National Youth Council. This was followed by a number of activities work-shopping the Community Conversations approach on engendering the vote: Make it happen for increasing women's political participation and raising awareness on ending violence against women. The targeted participants in these community-level workshops will in turn, conduct their own community conversations village processes with guidance and monitoring from the implementing organizations.

6. The Government of Samoa has demonstrated full commitment by increasing the allocation towards the work of the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSO). The budgetary allocation is based on the Ministry's gender development outcomes-based outputs namely, advancement of women, of youth development, protection of children, and village-based development services and research Planning and Policy Development. The Ministry is placed eleventh out of a total of 23 Government ministries for the share of national Government budget expenditure for the financial year 2014-2015. The table completed below is to report on some of the substantial budgetary allocations to support the gender development work of the lead and mandated Ministry-based on emerging priority needs since July 2012.

Table 1  
**Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development summary total over 3 years**

<i>2012-2013 (Samoa Tala, ST)</i>	<i>2013-2014 (ST)</i>	<i>2014-2015 (ST)</i>
ST 10 790 395 million	10 770 835 million	10 436 807

7. The budget allocation trend shown in Table 1 above reflects the fluctuations in budget allocations to the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSO) over a period of three (3) years. This fluctuations is a result of different development initiatives that the MWCSO was specifically tasked to coordinate. The increase in budget assistance in 2012 compared with 2014 is mainly a result of natural disasters recovery works<sup>1</sup> and Samoa's preparations for the Small Island Development States Conference that was held in September 2014. Following the aftermath of Cyclone Evan that devastated Samoa in December 2012, funds amounting to one (1) million Samoa Tala (equivalent to USD 423,693) were injected into the MWCSO budget line to support national recovery efforts on building community resilience through livelihood support and restoration. This noticeable significant increase from the 2011-2012 budget indicated an improvement in the availability of human resources to support disaster preparedness and livelihood rehabilitation works for families (including women and children) who had suffered significant losses as a result of the Cyclone.

8. In terms of the Small Island Development States Conference, Samoa through the Ministry of Women hosted the Small Island Development States Youth Forum

<sup>1</sup> Natural Disaster recovery works included livelihood and rehabilitation recovery programme support to families affected by Cyclone Evan that struck in December 2012.

which facilitated and gave recognition to the voices of young men and women from small island States into the (SAMOA)<sup>2</sup> Pathway outcomes document in particular engaging with young people on priority issues in relation to climate change and resilience. As noted with the trend from 2013 to 2014, the slightly decrease in financial resources to the MWCSO reflects the winding down of recovery and reconstruction works related to the Post-Cyclone efforts.

9. In line with the new Strategic Plan (2013-2017) for the Ministry that was approved in 2013, Government and development partner investments toward gender, youth and disability focused areas increased, as our efforts towards facilitating an enabling environment responsive to the socioeconomic needs of the different villages became an essential development priority to ensure sustainable community development initiatives to improve the quality of life for all. These development priority concerns included mainstreaming gender, youth development and disability across all sectors. As such; the Ministry received additional budget support for both human and operational costs over the three-year period. In late 2012, there was recruitment of additional senior staff to support the scale up of Ministry programmes in the areas of disability, advancement of women, youth development. In addition, a newly established Community Development Sector Unit became active, in order to recruit qualified staff to carry out the functions of the Community Sector Unit which strengthens the strategic position of the MWCSO to be able to better influence plans of other Government sectors at a policy and planning level in line with the sector-wide approach.

10. In December 2014, a proposal for a major salary increase for village women representatives operating at community level was approved. This is a positive reflection of how serious the Government is in terms of applying gender equity and supporting achievement of gender parity when it comes to reducing the pay gap inequality amongst females and males serving as village representatives. The Government relies heavily on the role of village women representatives who act as the “intermediary” between Government and women at the village level. In addition, resource assistance from other key Government ministries for capacity development and programme implementation at the village level by the female village representatives increased. For example; support in particular for disaster management and risk reduction, climate change resilience, agricultural livelihood restoration, and energy and water management where women as managers and beneficiaries of these programmes were expanded.

11. Measures to implement Millennium Development Goal 3 has been facilitated through a whole of Government water and sanitation sector approach (forging alliances across the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Women and a civil society organization known as the Samoa Red Cross) whereby 1,100 families are direct beneficiaries of domestic scale vegetable gardens and the installation of latrines and rain water harvested tanks. The implementation of this Millennium Development Goal initiative started in 2013, and is implemented in phases on an annual basis and is supported with financial assistance from the European Union and from the national Government. A significant resource support from the Ministry of Women’s village women representatives has been the driving force in the implementation, monitoring and reporting on the Millennium Development Goal initiative.

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<sup>2</sup> SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

12. Samoa is similar to other PICs where technical and financial assistance from donor and development partners often provide substantive budgets support for work on gender equality. The table (2) reported below highlights budgetary support to the work of the National Women's machinery.

Table 2

**Donor funds and technical assistance to support gender equality programmes to the MWCSO 2013-2014-2015**

UNDP — support for Transformational Leadership Programme in 2014	230 000 ST
UNICEF — Child Protection Programme	100 000 ST
UNFPA — Youth Sexual Reproductive Health Services	150 000 ST
Other sources (UN-Women, PIFS)	10 000 ST
AusAID/DFAT Disability Programme	770 000 ST
AusAID/DFAT Samoa Shaping (over a period of 5 years 4.3 million AUD) <sup>3</sup>	378 000 ST

13. Since 2013, the opportunity for MWCSO staff capacity development was made possible through a series of work attachments, as part of a professional exchange between the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) New Zealand and the Government of Samoa. The programme is facilitated under the Government of New Zealand bilateral AID support to the Pacific including Samoa. It focuses on three outcomes: (1) strengthening of staff capacity through improved skills in leadership; (2) policy development; (3) service delivery. MWCSO has in the past few years deployed several staff attachments to MSD, for training in policy development, child protection training skills and information technology skills.

14. To date, the work of the Ministry continues to be mostly funded by the local budget which is reflection of Government's ownership and commitment to gender equality. While many programmes and activities continue to rely greatly on the financial support of regional and international partners, particularly in the areas of village governance, youth participation, domestic violence and child protection, the majority of the Ministry's work continues to be resourced from the national Government budget.

15. Also, we wish to draw the attention of the committee to recent efforts by Government to put to reality gender mainstreaming and gender promotion. These are in the form of a number of reforms across the legislative framework to develop further the National Mechanisms. To date, the Government of Samoa in its efforts towards gender equality has progressed amendments or reforms and the enforcement of legislation which include, but are not limited to the following:

- Constitutional amendment for women in Parliament i.e. the 10 per cent quota;
- Gender neutral language in all legislations;
- Broadening the definition of rape to include rape in all orifices, by any object and by any person (Crimes Act 2013);
- Making available restraining orders for victims of domestic violence irrespective of marital status (Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act 2012);

<sup>3</sup> 4.3 million AUD earmarked by the Government of Australia will be accessible in 2015.

review of the progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action in Samoa;

- Abolishing archaic means of obtaining divorce (Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act 2012);
- Enacting the Family Safety Act 2013, which outlines the procedure to apply for protection orders in the case of domestic violence. Section 15 specifically outlines the duties of police officers, namely that they must provide assistance as soon as possible and must not discriminate against applicants on the basis of sex, race and other status;
- Establishment and functioning of the Family Violence Court in 2013;
- Enacting and enforcement of the Labour and Employment Relations Act 2013 which prohibits discrimination based on sex, disability, race, sex orientation and religion.

16. Under the Ombudsman Act 2013, the National Human Rights Institute of Samoa was established in June of the same year. The Institute operates on Government funds and is now equipped with its own staff which has allowed the Institute to commence its mandated functions of inquiring into and reporting on human rights violations. To date, the Institute has recently launched Samoa's first State of Human Rights Report as part of its mandates and international reporting obligations. The report makes strong recommendations for a whole of Government approach to improving resources towards accelerating efforts towards human rights of women and children.

17. The Government of Samoa signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in September 2014. The Ministry of Women has been identified as the national focal point for the promotion and coordination of sector wide approach on the Convention. The MWCSO continues to provide secretarial support to the national Disability Task Force that was set up in 2010; and have been tasked with the development of a disability access discussion paper, a national community based rehabilitation framework, review of the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, and coordination of International Disability Week which falls in December every year. The Ministry also continues to provide support to the Disability Sector through provision of technical advice on social inclusive education through board membership and the Olympics Samoa Disability Programme. In November 2013, the Samoa Disability Programme — an AUD 4 million partnership between the MWCSO and Government of Australia for four years — was launched. Through this programme support will be channelled in the form of financial resources, and technical expertise to complement Samoa's efforts, on strengthening of government mechanisms, improvement of access to disability support services, and investments in capacity development and ongoing learning. For the first time, a budget line support for marking of International Day for Persons with Disabilities (which falls on 3 December every year) has been approved by Cabinet under the MWCSO budget allocation.

18. The MWCSO are working collaboratively with technical assistance from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community to strengthen staff capacity in the areas of gender analysis and reporting. This has started with a gender stocktake that has been finalized with a workplan and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for implementation within the next five years. The MOU would facilitate additional



technical support for the MWCSO and public sector partners in strengthening its accountability frameworks for implementing, monitoring and reporting on the processes of gender mainstreaming across Government sectors. It would also mean more support for gender specialist technical assistance for a review of the current public sector human resource policies and manuals on improving gender sensitizing and mainstreaming, where much of the gaps have been.

19. Efforts to improve the capability of staff to undertake gender analysis and related assessments are gradually being applied as staff become more confident with newly acquired skills. Examples of key social impact assessments with a gender focus and research staff have conducted include the following; In early 2013, a post-Disaster National Assessment following the aftermath of Cyclone Evans was completed and framed interventions for the recovery of Samoa's affected population. In line with Samoa's Constitutional Amendment Act 2013 for increasing women seats in parliament, a Women's Matai and Leadership Survey was conducted as a yardstick to facilitate women's empowerment via political representation as a lead up to the 2016 General Elections and beyond. This is also complemented by a major Governance and Leadership Survey by the National University of Samoa which has provided additional baseline information for forming Government strategies towards strengthening an enabling environment for women's political and participation in leadership positions at all levels.

20. Efforts by the Government towards strengthening its monitoring systems and databases within the national women's machinery have been given more attention in the last two years to enable more sensitive gender monitoring and reporting. In 2014, the first ever Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the Ministry was approved and serves as a policy guideline for programme reporting. One of the templates that serves as part of the main monitoring and evaluation tool is a gender checklist and glossary of gender terminologies to assist staff in practicing gender disaggregated data collection, analysis, and reporting at a national scale. Several ongoing trainings have begun with staff of the whole Ministry to familiarize them with the framework and most importantly be able to address the challenges and enable staff confidence to use it as part of their daily work. Additional human resource personnel to assist with capacity gaps in the monitoring and evaluation functions of the Ministry of Women has recently been approved with four new senior-level positions.

21. With the Samoa Bureau of Statistics (SBS) as the lead government statisticians, work started in August 2014 on the establishment of a set of core minimum gender indicators for Samoa modelled on the ESCAP Regional Gender Framework adopted for the review of the Beijing Platform for Action. The dialogue on developing the indicators and framework started with an All of Government Sectoral training that was organized by the SBS in partnership with the MWCSO. However, there is still a long way to go to arrive at a final set of indicators and the support from the secretariat of the Pacific Community Gender Statistician will be secured as the government moves forward with this work.

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*lack of information on tertiary enrolment. While noting the adoption by the State party in 2009 of the Education Act providing zero tolerance for corporal punishment in schools, the Committee is concerned at the high number of girls who are victims of sexual abuse and harassment in schools by teachers. The Committee is further concerned at the high dropout rate and the low retention and completion rates for girls, especially at the secondary and tertiary levels, owing to teenage pregnancy, discriminatory traditional and cultural practices and poverty, especially in rural areas.*

#### **IV. Information on the implementation of paragraph 28: education**

22. Efforts to demonstrate Government's commitment in relation to addressing high dropout rates between primary and secondary levels include the following measures; the Governments of New Zealand and Australia have supported a school fees relief scheme which is administered by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture. The grant scheme covers the costs of education such as tuition fees, stationary, textbooks and some operational maintenance costs. The Government of Samoa has fully absorbed into national budgetary expenditure the costs for the grant scheme since 2015 for the primary schools with similar arrangements for taking on full costs of secondary schools come 2017. Initially the scheme was intended for primary schools but has now extended to the secondary level as a step forward in addressing school dropouts and non-enrolment due to issues of financial constraints. This scheme has promoted school attendance and retention for both primary and secondary levels. The New Zealand Government extended the scheme to cover students until Year 11 from July 2013, with funding anticipated to cease in the financial year 2016-2017. Once again access to educational resources has enhanced learning for these secondary students. However, parents in rural areas, in particular, often lack the means to educate their children due to other schooling costs such as uniforms, registration fees, and lunches. Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture Attendance Officers have worked with school staff to "extend grace" to non-attending families, allowing them time to sew their school uniforms or pay their registration fees in instalments. These strategies have worked well to encourage parents to send their children to school. There are penalties for parents/guardians who fail to enrol their children; four parents have recently been charged.

23. The total enrolment for all schools in Samoa in 2014 is 57,672 students, a 1 per cent increase from 57,112 students in 2013. There are 40,535 students (71 per cent) enrolled in primary schools, and 17,137 students (29 per cent) enrolled in secondary schools. Primary schools show a decline of 1 per cent from 40,538 students in 2013 to 40,535 in 2014, while secondary experienced a 3 per cent increase from 16,360 students in 2013 to 17,137 students in 2014. It assumed that secondary enrolment increase due to the introduction of the SSFGS.<sup>4</sup> And the result of the enforcement of the compulsory education legislation supported by the Education Act 2009. However, some parents continue to restrict their children's education due to education not being a priority. The Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture (MESC) runs awareness programmes with school committees, principals, teachers and the business community to promote children's right to

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<sup>4</sup> MESC, Education Statistical Digest 2014.

education. Schools have Attendance Officers whose role is to enforce compulsory attendance. MESC also works in collaboration with the Ministry of Police and the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development to enforce compulsory education by conducting spot check patrols to identify students not attending school. Three patrol teams are assigned throughout the country to focus on one route twice a week between 9am-3pm. Routes are selected based on previous data showing areas where children are often seen roaming the community or working as vendors. Improvement in data collection based on spot checks of non-school attendance of children working as vendors has also assisted the work of key government ministries and non-governmental bodies to look at using more transformative strategies to address issues of child vendors and child labour through the development of a significant legislation called the Child Care and Protection Bill and outreach programmes. In November 2014, the National Human Rights Institute completed a general population consultation to form its first Human Rights report to Parliament. With regard to children's education, the Report highly recommended Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture to increase the coverage of human rights in the school curriculum, with a focus on Years 5-13. In addition, The National Human Rights Institution delivered introductory training to police recruits for the first time in July 2015. A session relating to "vulnerable people" included a section on children's rights which focused on three areas: *child labour/street vendors* which emphasised the need for children to access education as a pathway to breaking the cycle of poverty; *definitions of child abuse, sexual abuse and incest* according to the CRC, Samoan law and protection orders; and *juvenile offenders* which discussed CRC standards and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice.<sup>5</sup>

### **Tertiary enrolment**

24. In relation to concerns from the Committee regarding the lack of information on tertiary enrolment, we wish to provide the following the committee with the following updates; A total number of 15,673 students were enrolled at the National University of Samoa (NUS) from 2012-2014. This number consists of students from the Institute of Higher Education and the Institute of Technology. The female group continues to be the majority group from the year 2012-2014 with a total of 8,810 and with 6,863 being represented by male. In 2012 a total number of 4,066 students were enrolled at NUS taking courses at the Institute of Higher Education (IHE) with female outnumbering males. The number of students enrolled at NUS continues to increase, from 2012 to 5,159 students while in 2013 the figures inflated to 5,225 enrolled in the year 2013 for both Semester 1 and 2 with a slight increase in 2014. Within this three-year period the number of students seems to always drop in the second semester and there are various reasons to explain this pattern. In the year 2013, 2,939 students were enrolled for semester one, however, this number dropped with only 2,286 students enrolling the last semester. The reduced in number of students enrolling for semester two continues to be seen in 2012 where 2,801 enrolled for semester one dropped to 2,358 for semester two. Moreover, in 2014 the same pattern appeared on the results from NUS Database but with only 225 losing out compared to 2,757 students in Semester one and 2,532 in semester two.

<sup>5</sup> E-mail from Chris Rummery, Human Rights Officer, National Human Rights Institution, dated 11 August 2015.

25. The majority of students are enrolled in the Faculty of Education with males being the dominant gender in this discipline. Females are well represented in Commerce, Science Arts and Nursing fields while males are prominent in Samoan studies. There were also students who enrolled in special degree courses such as Master in Samoan Studies and Post Graduate Diploma in Samoan Studies.

26. The Australian Pacific Technical College consists of four other branches scattered in the Pacific this includes Pacific island countries like Vanuatu, Fiji, PNG and Samoa. There are 39 courses all together and with 39 courses 14 are seen as male dominated arenas. From the year 2012-2014 a total number of 613 Samoan students were enrolled at APTC in 4 different Pacific campuses. A breakdown of this shows that total numbers of females enrolled is 326, which outnumbers 287 males enrolled. Certificate in Disability and Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care and Allied Health were the highest female participation. On the other hand males are more active in courses where it includes manual labour for instance carpentry, construction and fabrication trade.

27. The Samoa Qualifications Authority (SQA) with its Post-Secondary Education and Training (PSET) skills programme enforces the standards and qualifications in accordance with the national needs. According to data from PSET, the period 2007-2011 showed steady enrolment with a range of 4,000 to 4,500. A total of 4,280 students enrolled in 18 formal PSET providers in the year 2011. Out of 4,280, females comprised 53 per cent of those students enrolled in the National University of Samoa (NUS), Commerce Discipline. In 2012 there were nine Post-School Education and Training (PSET) Institutions that offered education for 1,669 students. Majority of this number represented by 1,092 is made up of males while the remaining 577 are females. Out of the nine PSET Institution females headed three of these institutions particularly in the field of Early Childhood Education, General Studies and Information Management and Computer Studies/Office Administration. While males topped the remaining six PSET providers in terms of the number of them taking courses within these institutions. In 2013 the number of PSET providers increased by one with the Samoa Shipping Services Corporation offering two courses to contribute to the programme. A total of 1,685 students were enrolled this year with 1,193 of males and 564 being females. Out of the 10 PSET providers National University of Samoa continues to be recognized as the institute with most females and when comparing to other PSET providers.

28. Also worth mentioning, is the increase in transition rates from secondary/college to tertiary/university level has been prompted by increase in opportunities for scholarships offered by the Samoan Government and supported by New Zealand and Australian Governments. The Ministry of Education (MESC) in early 2014 initiated a programme for all science subjects to be taught in one college out of all colleges of a district. A total of 60 scholarship opportunities have been awarded to science teachers by the University of the South Pacific (USP), to raise the standards of teachers to the Bachelor's degree level. The students studying Science subjects can do so from Year 9 to Year 11 in their own local college but will have to study at these Science centres for Years 12 and 13. The rise in enrolment figures above indicates changing attitudes towards breaking traditional stereotypes that prevent girls from enrolling in science and mathematics subjects.

29. A partnership was established with the MESC (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture) and MWCSO and High Tech Youth Network New Zealand to develop and establish a High Tech Youth project in Samoa. This partnership will envisage to establish a High Tech Youth Studio as an extended learning through improving high school and tertiary retention and graduation rates where students are digitally literate, are able to participate in industry recognized credentialing while still at high school and are motivated learners. The network increases online information sharing opportunities amongst young people and develops cyber skills to promote development pathways for youth from middle school through to higher learning or career opportunities. This is part of the MESC effort to mainstream TVET in school programmes as highlighted in the recommendations of the TVET in secondary schools feasibility study for Samoa report. Some of the key forward-looking strategies to put in place are:

- Legislative requirements for supporting teachers;
- Vocational training to meet industry demands and relevancy of skills;
- Creating pathways focused modules for young women and men.

#### **Efforts to address teenage pregnancy**

30. While there is no legislation or policy prohibiting any pregnant teenager from attending a government or private school during pregnancy and/or after giving birth, pregnant students have a tendency to discontinue their education (although very few continue) due to discouragement rooted in societal attitudes. In Samoa's context, pregnancy has been a cause for student dropout, discontinued schooling by a school administrator or parental choice to remove their pregnant daughter. The amended Education Act 2009 does not have a specific provision on teenage pregnancy although the Ministry of Education states that the Act is sufficient enough to protect and promote the right to education for young pregnant teenagers. In 2015, MWCSO Division for Women has provided policy advice to MESC in order to develop policy and legislation that ensures pregnant students will not be expelled, that education is accessible and inclusive for these young women and supports the completion of their education. This advice promotes the work of Government and school staff to remove stigma, discrimination and labelling which further exacerbates the likelihood that pregnant students will discontinue their education either during or after pregnancy. MESC anticipates the inclusion of this policy advice within their currently developing "National Violence-Free Schools Policy". In line with the CRC Article 28, the adoption of this policy advice will further enable female children of Samoa to achieve their right to education and to have some barriers to education retention/completion removed.

31. The Government wishes to provide the Committee with additional updates in the following paragraphs, in relation to efforts to address issues relating to teenage pregnancy from a holistic sexual reproductive health perspective; In 2015, UNESCO released the "Attitudinal Survey Report on the Delivery of HIV and Sexual Reproductive Health Education in School Settings in Samoa" in 2015, which established key baseline information on the attitudes of principals, teachers, parents and students towards HIV and SRH education awareness and prevention. The report found that all participants supported the introduction of Comprehensive Sexuality Education that would include topics such as HIV and AIDS education, gender

equality, stigma and discrimination issues, life skills, SRH, and sexual orientation.<sup>6</sup> The report made many recommendations which include the development of policy for the implementation of relevant curriculum which is well articulated in the policies of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture; the development of HIV and SRH curriculum that is appropriate for primary and secondary students and that commences at Year 1; the development of teacher training for new recruits and refresher/in-service training for those teachers already in the field; public support from community and religious leaders for these changes; continue with support from external agencies.<sup>7</sup>

32. The Samoa Law Reform Commission has recently concluded public consultations on a comprehensive CEDAW issues paper to review the level of compliance on all legislation relevant to the articles of the CEDAW and make additional recommendations for legislative reform. The review highlights pressing issues relating to the welfare of women in Samoa including teenage pregnancy and legal measures taken to address them. At the time of submitting this follow up report, the final compliance report as a result of the consultations has not been finalized. The passing of the Family Safety Act 2013 (FSA) provides for substantial protection of families and the handling of domestic violence and related matters which offers protection to young mothers residing in both urban and rural areas. It ultimately provides the mandate for the courts to act promptly when requests for protection orders are made. It also provides for representatives of victims to act on their behalf when seeking a protection order.

33. The most exciting milestone over this reporting period has been the long journey from baseline research to a drafted Child Care and Protection Bill in the process of being tabled in Parliament with the child's best interests as paramount. This includes also principles of safety and wellbeing. It promotes responsibilities on persons for ensuring protection, risk from harm and children's upbringing, protection and development. Protection orders will be a critical mechanism available to the court and respective law enforcement agencies for the protection of the child. It is expected the Act will be consistent with international conventions and standards. We look forward in the next reporting phase to report on the administration and enforcement of rights as provided for in the proposed legislation.

34. A Teen Mums Programme was launched in early 2013 by the MWCSO in partnership with Ministry of Police, Samoa Family Health as a commemorative activity for International Women's Day and has been translated into a community outreach programme on an annual basis. The highlight of the programme is on sexual and reproductive health rights with a close link to gender based violence. Initiated in 2013 is the "Girl Rising" Forum targeting secondary and college female students, which is now an annual forum conducted every International Women's day. The forum brings in other inspiring young girls including women in leadership positions in the public sector to provide mentoring testimonies for these girls to stay and pursue higher education. Additionally, the conduct of ongoing mothers and daughters' village outreach programmes addresses social issues including teenage pregnancy, sexual reproductive health and rights and focuses on mother-father and parent-child relationship with regards to positive parenting and appropriate

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<sup>6</sup> UNESCO 2015, Attitudinal Survey Report on the Delivery of HIV and Sexual Reproductive Health Education in School Settings in Samoa, p. viii.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 24-25.

childcare. The programme contents go as far as discussion of cultural and religious attitudes associated with teenage pregnancy, school dropout and sexual and physical violence against women and children. Other services and capacity building programmes targeting women and girls are being conducted by NGOs and civil society organizations. Girls Leading Our World is coordinated by the United States Peace Corps Volunteers programme in partnership with School Principals of selected Primary schools as part of celebrations for National Youth Week. The programme in its indirect way encourages positive lifestyle choices as girls prepare for the transition to secondary school and teaches girls simple communication and building self-esteem skills needed to assist with smart choices and to address peer pressure.

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  - Draft Child Protection Baseline Survey Report Update by Susan Kitto;
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