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Reweaving the Mat, Removing the Silos: Feminist Peacebuilding Lessons for the Post-2030 Agenda

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* The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent those of UN Women, the United Nations or any of its affiliated organizations.

I want to begin with the image of the mat – a place of gathering, dialogue and collective responsibility.

In the Pacific, the mat is never merely an object. It is a political, cultural and relational space: a place where people sit together, where stories are shared, where conflict is mediated, where knowledge moves between generations, and where decisions are shaped through relationship and responsibility.

To speak of “reweaving the mat” is therefore to speak of repair. It is to restore and strengthen the relationships between people, land, ocean, institutions, movements and generations.

For feminist peacebuilders, this image also offers a way to challenge the fragmentation created by policy silos: the separation of gender equality from peace, climate justice from security, ocean protection from human rights and global commitments from local realities. It invites us to ask whether our accountability systems are weaving these strands together or whether they are reinforcing the very separations communities are working to overcome.

This is where the 2030 Agenda became important for civil society: It offered a shared accountability language for connecting these struggles.

For civil society, the value of the 2030 Agenda was that it created a common framework for linking issues that communities had never experienced as separate. Through it, movements could connect Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality with SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions; SDG 13 on climate action; and SDG 14 on life below water.

It gave women’s rights organizations, peacebuilders, climate justice advocates and ocean defenders a shared language for asking harder accountability questions: who is included, who is protected, whose knowledge is recognized, who controls resources and who is answerable when commitments are not met?

Yet this promise has been weakened when accountability is treated as a technical reporting exercise rather than a political process. Too often, SDG monitoring remains state-led and fragmented, with civil society invited to validate decisions after they have already been made.

For the post-2030 agenda, the challenge is not simply to improve indicators. It is to redesign accountability so that communities are recognized as co-designers, monitors and political actors in the systems that shape their lives.

This is where the women, peace and security agenda offers a critical lesson for the post-2030 agenda.

The women, peace and security (WPS) agenda shows that global commitments can open political space, but they do not transform systems on their own. Their value depends on whether they are

backed by accountability, resources and the meaningful participation of those most affected by insecurity.

WPS also reminds us that peace is not simply the absence of conflict. It is the presence of justice, safe and equal participation, prevention, dignity and human security – not a narrow or militarized approach to peace and security.

In the Pacific, women peacebuilders have long worked from this broader understanding of security. They know that climate change, ocean degradation, disaster risk, militarization, nuclear legacies, gender-based violence and economic insecurity cannot be separated from one another.

Together, these are threats to community safety, cultural continuity, ecological survival and regional peace. A post-2030 framework must therefore move beyond separate reporting tracks for development, peace, climate and ocean governance, and instead recognize the relationships between them.

For the Pacific, removing silos means grounding accountability in the gender, peace, climate and ocean nexus.

Our ocean is not just a resource; it is identity, livelihood, memory, mobility and security. When fisheries decline, when coastal communities are displaced, when marine pollution increases or when militarization contaminates land and ocean, women and communities experience this as a peace and security issue. SDG 14 must therefore be understood alongside SDG 5 and SDG 16.

Ocean governance that excludes women peacebuilders, Indigenous knowledge holders, young women and local communities is incomplete governance.

Peacebuilding that does not protect the ocean is incomplete peacebuilding.

The Pacific Women Mediators Network's report, *Advancing Gender Equality, Inclusive Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Human Society*,¹ and the Pacific Feminists' *17 Urgent Demands for Defending the Living Planet*² show that women; youth; rural communities; displaced people; people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics (SOGIESC); persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups are closest to conflict, climate, nuclear, economic and gender-based harms, yet remain underrepresented in formal peacebuilding, climate governance and accountability spaces. Their evidence calls for grant-based climate finance, recognition of loss and damage, stronger government accountability,

¹ Pacific Women Mediators Network. 2026. *Advancing Gender Equality, Inclusive Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Human Society*. Available at: <https://pasifikapeacetalanoa.org/inclusive-infrastructure-for-peace-building-mediation-2/>.

² Pacific Feminists Defending the Living Planet. 2024. *17 Urgent Demands for Defending the Living Planet*. Available at: <https://divafiji.org/join-us-and-support-the-pacific-feminist-defending-the-living-planet-campaign/>.

technology justice and a shift from extractive models toward feminist systems grounded in ecological balance, sovereignty and justice.

The lesson is clear.

Feminist peacebuilding and climate justice agendas should not sit in separate silos. They should be integrated into regional economic, climate, ocean and security governance through public-public partnerships that prioritize collaboration between states, feminist movements, faith and traditional leaders, Indigenous communities, disability and SOGIESC-led groups, youth and civil society. This means ending token consultation, investing in community-led evidence systems, recognizing non-economic loss and damage, and embedding diverse women's leadership in decision-making from village-level dialogue to regional accountability mechanisms.

Feminist peacebuilding teaches us that accountability must measure power, not just participation.

It is not enough to count how many women were in the room or how many action plans have been adopted. We must ask whether women's rights organizations, feminist movements, women mediators, young women, women with disabilities, Indigenous women, rural women and other marginalized constituencies influenced the agenda, the budget, the law, the security decision, the climate response and the peace process. Participation without influence is tokenism.

Accountability must track structural change: who sets priorities, who controls resources, whose evidence is accepted, and whether institutions are actually shifting toward human security.

This further illustrates that feminist accountability is not only about measuring progress; it is about reweaving relationships. It connects peacebuilding with climate finance, ocean governance with human rights, local stories with regional commitments, and participation with power.

The post-2030 agenda will be more credible for small island states, including in the Pacific if it is community-driven, evidence-based, adequately resourced and accountable to those already defending land, ocean, people and the living planet.

A second lesson is that local and feminist evidence must count.

Too often, official accountability systems privilege state data, formal indicators and technical reporting, while overlooking community-based early warning, women's lived experience, traditional knowledge, mediation practice and intergenerational wisdom. Yet these are often the first signs of insecurity and the first tools of prevention.

Pacific women peacebuilders are already identifying tensions, mediating disputes, supporting survivors, strengthening social cohesion, protecting marine resources and sustaining community

resilience. A post-2030 accountability architecture must recognize this work as essential peace infrastructure.

Grassroots work in Fiji and Niue, for example, shows that local feminist leadership can shift climate governance and strengthen institutional capacity, while inclusive safe spaces created by groups such as the Rainbow Pride Foundation in Fiji demonstrate that marginalized communities must be able to lead climate and peace advocacy, not simply be consulted after decisions are made.

A third lesson is that financing is accountability.

If frontline communities are expected to produce evidence, participate in policy processes, prevent violence, respond to displacement, protect marine ecosystems and sustain social cohesion, then resources must reach them directly and flexibly.

The “17 Urgent Demands of Pacific Feminists Defending the Living Planet” campaign calls for gender-responsive funds for feminist and grassroots-led groups, while the Human Security Mapping recommendations call for targeted support for displaced and vulnerable groups, stronger government accountability, inclusive dialogue and improved use of community stories and baseline data. Together, they challenge the post-2030 agenda to move beyond technical reporting and ask who controls resources, whose knowledge counts, and whether accountability processes are redistributing power.

Oxfam in the Pacific’s work on gender justice, violence prevention and inclusive governance shows how feminist accountability is built from the ground up. Through programmes such as Eliminating Family and Community Violence in Papua New Guinea and Shifting Power, Shifting Voice in Fiji, community-based actors have shifted harmful norms, strengthened survivor support and expanded women’s leadership in decision-making.

Accountability gap: Despite this impact, grassroots feminist work is often invisible in formal SDG and Voluntary National Review processes. Community evidence is fragmented across data silos, women’s rights organizations remain under-resourced, and global reporting systems often privilege technical indicators over the relational, non-linear work of transforming power, preventing violence and sustaining peace.

Feminist accountability practice: Oxfam in the Pacific’s model demonstrates that accountability is strongest when it is rooted in local feminist infrastructure. Participatory methods such as storytelling, listening guides and collective reflection treat process as an outcome. In Papua New Guinea, local community work has been linked to national policy forums, showing how grassroots actors can help shape national strategies. In Vanuatu, programmes such as Tugeta Yumi Stanap Strong centre LGBTQI+ people, persons with disabilities and rural women, moving them from the margins to the centre of accountability frameworks.

Key lesson: The case shows that post-2030 accountability must move beyond state-led reporting and token consultation. It should recognize women's rights organizations and feminist movements as structural partners, invest in long-term and flexible financing, value community-driven evidence, and create direct pathways from local action to national, regional and global accountability spaces.

Recommendations

Post-2030 accountability must move beyond state-led reporting and token consultation by recognizing women's rights organizations and feminist movements as structural partners, funding them long term and flexibly, valuing community evidence and connecting local action to national, regional and global accountability spaces.

Three shifts are essential:

- (i) Co-architect accountability with feminist movements and communities, shifting them from policy subjects to designers of a just future.
- (ii) Prioritize feminist financing by redirecting resources toward flexible, long-term, community-led peacebuilding and climate justice.
- (iii) Institutionalize shared power by creating funded pathways from local women peacebuilders to SDG reporting, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, WPS reviews, climate-security planning, ocean governance and regional security forums.

Reweaving the mat is not only a metaphor; it is a method.

It asks us to bring together strands that have been separated: human rights, gender equality, demilitarization, nuclear justice, climate justice, ocean protection, Indigenous knowledge and intergenerational leadership. It asks us to replace siloed, state-centric and militarized approaches with relationships of trust, reciprocity and shared responsibility. If the post-2030 agenda is to be meaningful for the Pacific, it must be people-centred, ocean-centred and peace-centred, recognizing women peacebuilders not as beneficiaries of accountability, but as architects of it.