



# TUVALU

**Statement**

**Delivered by**

**Honourable Pelenike Isaia  
Minister of Home Affairs**

**at**

**The 56th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women**

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**(Check Against Delivery)**

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Madam Chair  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Delegates

It is a great honour for me to address the Fifty -Sixth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. On behalf of the Tuvalu delegation, I wish to congratulate you on your election as Chair and extend my congratulation to the other members of the Bureau.

Madam Chair,

Tuvalu Government remains committed to the advancement of women both in the urban and the rural areas of our outer islands. This commitment is explicitly reflected in its Development Plan, "Te Kakeega II". At the international level, Tuvalu Government continues its commitment to fulfill its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

In Tuvalu, women have always been viewed as, 'te lima malosii' or the strong arm of the family. Since before outside developments found their way into rural areas, rural women have been major catalysts in the overall affairs of their families and homes, their villages, and communities. They have been considered the experts in most critical areas of life in society from rearing children to setting up women committees and teaching spiritual enrichment. They saw things from a wholesome picture. And their contributions have had a major impact on the overall economy of Tuvalu although it has been largely undocumented.

It is in this respect that we must continue to invest in rural women who must daily cope with sustaining the welfare of family members and combatting the major challenges of development. We are convinced that the advancement of rural women in all aspects of life is also the advancement of society.

Madam Chair,

The establishment of the Department of Women Affairs is a clear commitment of the Tuvalu Government in the development of women. In

partnership with the NGO body - National Council of Women - and with development partners, programs of profound importance have been implemented to enable women at rural areas enjoy better livelihood.

The importance of addressing gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women is a priority. Although, there have been issues of cultural conflict, women are gradually learning and asserting their rights.

On economic development, rural women have access to a micro credit scheme to engage in business under the National Council of Women, local government and Development Bank of Tuvalu.

On health issues, the Department of Health continues to have programs such as cervical screening and bringing expectant mothers from rural areas to deliver their first-born child on the main island.

On the issue of environment, projects such as replanting of 'togo' (mangroves) and 'kie' (pandanus) have been encouraged for providing resilience of communities to the impacts of climate change and improving materials for handicrafts.

Madam Chair,

Much has been done at the national level to enable women in rural areas upgrade their livelihood. There have been obstacles in the way. However, Tuvalu Government will continue to support the advancement of rural women as they remain crucial in the overall development of our country.

I thank you.