

EIGHTH MEETING OF THE PACIFIC METEOROLOGICAL COUNCIL

PMC-8

Nuku'alofa, Tonga • 10, 11, 14 September 2026

Eighth Meeting of the Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC-8)

Weather Ready for a Secured and Sustainable Pacific

10, 11, 14 September 2026 | Nuku'alofa, Tonga

Agenda Item 22.1: Updates and Implementation of Gender Equity Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)

Purpose:

1. To present the regional evidence base for GEDSI, which informs the future direction and forms a baseline to measure future progress.
2. To put forward strategic recommendations for PMC-8 to adopt GEDSI as a standing regional standard for NMHS policy, training and operations under the Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy (PIMS) 2027-2036.

Objectives:

1. Present the regional evidence base from the regional GEDSI focal point workshop held in Vanuatu in 2026, national GEDSI roadmap implementation, including in Solomon Islands, and the institutional assessments and draft roadmaps completed across the region.
2. Demonstrate what consistent regional GEDSI practice looks like, including the Fiji Co-Design Pilot and early institutional reform in Kiribati, Tonga and Solomon Islands.
3. Seek PMC-8 to task SPREP and SPC, in partnership with PDF and relevant regional partners, to consolidate and operationalise existing regional GEDSI strategies, tools and evidence into a PMC-endorsed Regional GEDSI Framework and Minimum Standards under PIMS 2027-2036. The Framework should include a GEDSI Training and Competency Standard, an Inclusive Early Warning Accessibility Protocol, a phased implementation and results framework aligned with PIMS MERL, and guidance for country-level road maps adapted to each NMHS context.

Background:

1. Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) is a fundamental enabler of the Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative, ensuring that warning systems, risk information, and response mechanisms are accessible, understandable, and actionable for all members of society, particularly those who are disproportionately affected by hazards and climate impacts. This aligns with the end-to-end Early Warnings for All approach across all four pillars and with UNDRR guidance on inclusive early warning and early action, which calls for gender-responsive and disability-inclusive practice across governance, risk knowledge, detection and forecasting, dissemination and communication, and preparedness. Women, persons with disabilities, older persons, youth, and remote or marginalized communities continue to face barriers in accessing critical information and services. UNDRR guidance highlights persistent gaps in accessible communication, participation and preparedness for persons with disabilities and other groups at risk of exclusion, reinforcing that inclusion is a life-

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safety and service-effectiveness requirement rather than an administrative add-on¹. Integrating GEDSI considerations into meteorological, climate, and ocean services helps ensure that early warning systems are people-centred, inclusive, and responsive to diverse needs. By strengthening participation, representation, and equitable access to information and decision-making, GEDSI contributes directly to the effectiveness, reach, and impact of early warning services, supporting the Pacific's commitment to building resilient communities and achieving the objectives of the Early Warnings for All initiative.

2. At PMC-7, Council recommended that Weather Ready Pacific's implementation integrate all four pillars of Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems with consideration of Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI). This paper provides an update on how that recommendation is being progressed and proposes the next regional steps. Pacific National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHS) have identified Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) as a defining test of whether early warning and climate and ocean information services reach the communities they are meant to serve, the same test Council itself set for MHEWS Pillar 3: that warnings reach everyone who needs them, in a form they can understand and use. Following the Regional GEDSI Workshop for NMHS (Vanuatu, March 2026) and complementary national processes, including in Solomon Islands Fiji, Kiribati and Tonga, NMHS, the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), FemLINK Pacific and COSPPac agreed to bring a joint paper to PMC-8.

Progress, lessons and regional evidence base:

1. In March 2026, thirteen NMHS came together in Port Vila, Vanuatu, for the first Regional GEDSI Workshop for NMHS, working alongside the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), FemLINK Pacific, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) and civil society, and convened with COSPPac. Fifty-six participants took part, 72 per cent women and 6 per cent persons with disability. As PMC Chair Levu Antfalo informed the workshop, a bulletin written in technical language is not a service if it cannot be acted on; the workshop applied this principle through institutional self-assessment, priority setting and country-specific road maps, while identifying shared opportunities for regional action.
2. Across the region, NMHS have used a common institutional self-assessment tool to examine their own governance, workforce, strategy, service accessibility and resourcing. All 13 NMHS at the Vanuatu workshop, and 14 NMHS region-wide, have now completed this self-assessment, producing the region's first shared evidence base on GEDSI readiness. The consistent finding is partial practice: policy and leadership commitment is emerging, but accessible service protocols, formal partnerships with representative organisations, dedicated resourcing, workforce capability and systematic monitoring remain uneven across the region. Twelve NMHS have already designated formal GEDSI focal points, providing an institutional entry point for coordination, follow-up on national road maps and regional peer learning.
3. The assessments point to a shared, region-wide gap rather than isolated national shortfalls. Early warning accessibility protocols are not yet in place in several NMHS, specifically, multi-sensory alerting standards that use complementary text, audio and visual formats and reduce reliance on any single dissemination channel, meaning warnings do not reliably reach persons with disabilities, deaf communities or people with low literacy. No NMHS yet holds a formal partnership agreement with an OPD, and dedicated GEDSI budget lines remain rare. Because these gaps recur across the region, they support a common regional standard that can be contextualised through country-level road maps rather than separate and potentially inconsistent approaches.

¹ UNDRR (2023), Inclusive Early Warning Early Action: Checklist and Implementation Guide.
<https://www.undrr.org/publication/documents-and-publications/inclusive-early-warning-early-action-checklist-and-0>

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Accessibility standards and enabling observation, forecasting and dissemination infrastructure need to progress together. Without clear protocols, defined partnerships and fit-for-purpose delivery systems, NMHSs may remain dependent on ad-hoc downstream dissemination rather than embedding accessibility across the end-to-end warning chain.

4. The region already has a proven model to build from. The Fiji Co-Design Pilot brought the Fiji Meteorological Service and five OPDs together through two co-design workshops, defining accessibility requirements for four national products across format, content and user testing. Its value was proven in the field: during the response to Tropical Cyclone Urmil, in the words of Fiji Meteorological Service, inclusion was active in real-time warnings, not just product design. The pilot demonstrated the feasibility of applying co-design, accessibility requirements and CAP-aligned approaches to operational warning products. These complements related inclusive early warning work progressing through WRP and other national initiatives. These approaches provide practical building blocks for regional standards, with scale-up aligned to national infrastructure readiness and investment plans.
5. NMHS are already initiating institutional reforms to embed GEDSI, providing a strong national foundation for coherent regional action. Kiribati has drafted its Meteorological Regulations that incorporate inclusion clauses and has embedded a GEDSI Roadmap in its national Meteorological Strategic Plan. Tonga has completed GEDSI training for its meteorological service; Fiji has completed disability inclusion training for its staff; and Solomon Islands has translated its GEDSI Roadmap into a national implementation plan. These initiatives are at different stages of implementation and should remain nationally owned and context specific. What the region still lacks is a common PIMS-level framework and minimum standards that connect national initiatives and programme investments into consistent regional practice while preserving national ownership.

Looking forward:

- GEDSI cannot be the responsibility of a single programme or partner. Weather Ready Pacific already has an endorsed GEDSI Strategy 2025-2033, COSPPac also has an endorsed GEDSI strategy 2023-2027, supported regional institutional assessments, GEDSI focal points, country road maps and co-design pilots; other programmes also contribute through their respective mandates. PIMS 2027-2036 provides the appropriate common regional architecture to consolidate and operationalise these existing approaches rather than create another parallel strategy. National implementation should remain country-led, with regional programmes aligning their support to the common PIMS framework and standards. Because NMHS services cascade into disaster management, health, agriculture, fisheries, water, transport and other climate-sensitive sectors, the Framework should also support inclusive co-design and downstream use with sector agencies and representative organisations.
- The Regional GEDSI Framework can build substantially on existing strategies, tools and programme resources, but implementation will require appropriate and, in some contexts, additional resourcing. Work already underway across the region, including consolidating NMHS roadmap commitments, formalising OPD partnership arrangements, and extending the Fiji Co-Design Pilot to further NMHS, already provides the foundation. For example, Solomon Islands' draft GEDSI implementation plan is estimated at SBD 1.81 million over five years and is intended to support national resource mobilisation. Developing the common framework and standards should avoid duplicating existing investments; however, implementation costs may include participation of OPDs and other representative groups, accessible products and channels, workforce development, enabling infrastructure, maintenance and recurrent costs. Council endorsement would provide a basis for coordinated national and partner investment against these priorities.

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- GEDSI in Pacific meteorological services is not solely a technical issue. The regional evidence points to a combined governance, coordination, standards, infrastructure and implementation challenge. PMC-8 is well placed to provide a coherent regional response by endorsing a common Regional GEDSI Framework and Minimum Standards under PIMS, drawing on existing programme strategies and country experience. Accessible end-to-end early warning should be treated as an early implementation priority because of its life-safety implications, while the Framework should also cover institutional capability, workforce, partnerships, digital accessibility, financing and MERL across the full PIMS results chain.
- The knowledge exists and is growing, demonstrated in Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu alike. It is a governance and standards problem: 14 NMHS are solving the same problem in thirteen different ways, across three different regional programmes. PMC-8 is uniquely placed to close that gap, by adopting a common regional GEDSI policy, training standard and early warning protocol that every NMHS can apply, consistent with national circumstances. Emergency warning accessibility be treated as the priority in developing a Regional GEDSI Framework, given it is the most critical, life-safety gap identified across the region;"

Recommendations:

The Meeting is invited to:

- I. Note** the progress, evidence and lessons achieved from recent GEDSI initiatives, including the institutional assessments completed across the region, national GEDSI road map implementation, and lessons from the Fiji disability inclusion co-design pilot.
- II. Encourage** NMHS leadership to institutionalise GEDSI through context-specific road maps or equivalent, aligned with national priorities and integrated into annual workplans by PMC-9.
- III. Encourage** development partners and regional funding facilities to reflect costed GEDSI results, activities and targets in programme budgets and investment plans, aligned with PIMS priorities and the Regional GEDSI Framework and Minimum Standards once endorsed.
- IV. Recognise** the Pacific Disability Forum the regional technical partner for disability inclusion, within a broader GEDSI partnership approach that engages OPDs, women's, youth and other representative organisations.
- V. Request** the PMC Secretariat, in collaboration with SPC, PDF and relevant partners, to develop a PMC-endorsed Regional GEDSI Framework and Minimum Standards under PIMS 2027–2036, drawing on existing GEDSI strategies, tools and evidence, and to support their operationalisation through the PIMS MERL and reporting framework.
- VI. Request** the PMC Secretariat to integrate reporting against the agreed Regional GEDSI Framework and Minimum Standards into the PIMS MERL and biennial reporting cycle, using existing country and programme reporting wherever possible rather than establishing a parallel reporting mechanism.

**Annex: Insights from Fiji Pilot and regional GEDSI institutional self-assessments and roadmaps:
Lessons Learnt Fiji Pilot Roadmaps.docx**