



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Gender in Health and Climate Security Workshops Foster Global Collaboration for Disaster Preparedness**

*Bali, Indonesia - May 2, 2024* - Pacific Forum's second Gender in Health and Climate Security Workshop, sponsored by the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) Office of Women, Peace & Security and held in partnership with the Coral Triangle Center from April 29 to May 2, 2024, successfully concluded, marking a significant step forward in addressing gender disparities in disaster management.

In a groundbreaking event spanning four days in Bali, Indonesia, civil society practitioners and defense and security stakeholders from Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and Vanuatu gathered in-person and virtually to explore innovative approaches to integrating gender perspectives into disaster preparedness and response efforts.

The workshop provided space for in-depth discussions, interactive exhibits, and collaborative sessions aimed at enhancing gender mainstreaming in health and climate security initiatives. Participants engaged in comprehensive reviews of existing practices, sharing insights and experiences to develop actionable strategies for building more inclusive and resilient responses to climate- and health-related disasters. Dr. Priyatma Singh commented: "This was my first experience at a workshop, where I had an opportunity to interact with defense personnel. It provided a great platform to share knowledge and learn from each other's experiences."

"The design of this type of workshop allows for the inclusion of individuals and groups often excluded from robust preparation for disaster mitigation and response. Through discussions, detailed product development, and cultural understanding, a more nuanced approach to regional crisis and disaster response evolved," commented Dr. Delaina Sawyers of USINDOPACOM. "The desire for these countries to improve the education and awareness of the current challenges of their country's climate security is a step in the right direction," explained Amalia Hilliard, the WPS Security Cooperation Administrator for USINDOPACOM. "Our office of WPS looks forward to continuing our support of their efforts."

Throughout the workshop, attendees had the opportunity to delve into topics such as customary law, national and international legal frameworks, and best practices in civil-military cooperation. AdiVasu Levu from Fiji stressed that "Women's security perspectives must be incorporated into decision-making." Distinguished speakers and experts, including Priyatma Singh from the University of Fiji and Shebana Alqaseer of Bayi Inc. in the Philippines, shared their perspectives and insights, enriching the discussions with diverse viewpoints.



# PACIFIC FORUM

INTERNATIONAL

One of the highlights of the event was the collaborative breakout sessions in which civil society representatives and defense and security personnel worked together to develop approaches to responding to health and disaster crises that take women's needs and security into consideration. As Cathy Alex from Papua New Guinea shared of her own country's experience, "We were able to address a gender lens with our military forces by describing the relationship between women caring for children and soldiers caring for the people of the country."

The outcome will be a Gendered Risk Assessment Tool for Action Planning that can be used to contextualize gender-responsive strategies in any community. Civil society groups and defense personnel developed relationships that will benefit future collaboration in the wake of floods, cyclones or typhoons, mudslides, droughts, and more.

The participants also contributed to the development of a Health Index for all seven partner countries which will be published alongside the Gendered Risk Assessment Tool for Action Planning.

As the world continues to grapple with increasingly complex challenges the impact of climate change on human and national security, events like these serve as vital platforms for fostering innovation, collaboration, and positive change.

Moving forward, Pacific Forum remains committed to driving progress in gender-responsive disaster management strategies, building on the momentum generated by the Gender in Health and Climate Security workshops.

