

**GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN
TONGA
1999 - 2002**

A. Background

1. The status of women in Tongan society is inextricably linked to the highly stratified feudal order that lies at the heart of this constitutional monarchy. Unlike many Pacific countries, women in Tonga have traditionally had a nominal status generally superior to that of men, based on the cultural obligation of men to their sisters. This status has gradually been declining as a result of demographic and social changes and the shift toward market-driven economic development. The Tongan Constitution carries no general affirmative action provision that could be invoked in favour of women, and Tonga has yet to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Ratification is by no means assured in the near future either, as it would require the Tongan Government to guarantee, through legal and other measures, the equality of women in national law and policy. In this regard, discrimination in the area of land law is one of the most politically sensitive issues. Despite their better repayment rates and overall creditworthiness, women face difficulty gaining access to credit, by virtue of their negligible land rights. This is particularly the case for key commercial crops like vanilla, squash or coffee, even though the role of women in these sectors has become increasingly important.

B. Objectives

2. In all its activities in Tonga, the Bank will intensify its efforts to pursue the following gender and development objectives:

- (i) Promote the equal participation of women in economic activities, with particular attention to improving access to credit facilities and related business support services; and
- (ii) Encourage explicit targeting of gender-specific concerns and active involvement of women in decision making processes, including by promoting the inclusion of specific gender and development considerations in the policy frameworks of all sectors, and by strengthening links between Government and civil society.

3. These objectives are not intended to be comprehensive. They provide a practical focus on areas in which the Bank has a comparative advantage to assist.

C. Action Plan

Ongoing and Planned Bank Operations	Gender and Development Action Plan
A. Loans	
1497/1303- TON Infrastructure Development	Ensure women are consulted and involved in all further stages of planning, design and implementation.

Ongoing and Planned Bank Operations		Gender and Development Action Plan
A. Loans (continued)		
1412/1030- TON	Agriculture and Natural Resources	Gender-specific components have been incorporated
(2000)	Economic and Public Sector Reform (including PPTA)	Ensure women are consulted and involved in all stages of planning, design and implementation.
B. Technical Assistance		
2855-TON	Preparation and Implementation of a Strategic Plan for the Tonga Development Bank	Encourage TDB to introduce more flexible security requirements to create an enabling environment for women borrowers. In future activities, redress design flaws that have prevented women's access to credit.
2694/2468/ 2467/2114/ 1367-TON	Institutional Strengthening Activities	Include a gender component in all institutional strengthening activities. Consider providing a gender specialist to Central Planning Office to assist with capacity building in key line ministries.
2113-TON	Cost Recovery and Safety Strategies for the Roads Sector	See loan
(1999)	Agriculture Sector Study	Identify factors constraining effective participation by women in all sub-sectors and make recommendations for improvement, including on issues such as training and other extension services, environmental and health education issues, organic farming methods, and integration of gender analysis in programming. Prepare a Women in Agriculture Plan.