

GENDER ANALYSIS (SUMMARY)¹

1. **Gender issues.** Papua New Guinea (PNG) is among the poorest performers in the Pacific in both the human development index (142 out of 182 countries in 2007) and the gender-related development index (124 out of 157 countries) of the United Nations Development Programme. A combination of poor infrastructure, low levels of human resource capacity, and prevalent gender-based violence constrain women's opportunities to realize their productive and economic potential. Maternal mortality is the highest in the Pacific (733 per 100,000 live births) and limited access to reproductive care, especially in rural areas, is of great concern. A large gender gap exists in gross primary enrollment rates (70% for females and 78% for males in grades 1–6),² and secondary enrollment rates are very low for both females (23%) and males (29%). The adult literacy rate is significantly lower for women (53%) than for men (62%).³

2. Women and men are mostly engaged in subsistence farming, earning small amounts of cash from selling surplus produce in markets. Women's market access is significantly constrained by poor road networks and transport services. Lack of access to banking services and credit also restricts women's opportunities for saving and income-generating activities, combined with their poor financial literacy and basic business skills.

3. **Policy and institutional framework.** Political commitment to address gender issues is growing slowly, as indicated by the National Policy for Women and Gender Equality (drafted in 2009); the National Gender Policy and Plan on HIV/AIDS; the National Health Plan, 2011–2020; and initiatives to provide a stronger response to family and sexual violence. Yet, the institutional and technical capacity to implement gender responsive policies remains very weak. The Office for the Development of Women, which was originally intended to be independent, is still within the Department for Community Development, along with the Gender and Development Unit. They are underfunded and lack a coherent approach to addressing gender issues across sectors. Poor representation of women in politics (there is only one woman in the national parliament) is also a great impediment to promoting gender equality. Draft legislation to reserve 22 seats for women in parliament still awaits passage in the national parliament.

4. **Areas for Asian Development Bank (ADB) assistance.** Given the low levels of human resource capacity in PNG, ADB assistance needs to focus on improving women's access to education, health, and basic infrastructure, as well as on reducing constraints to their economic participation. ADB assistance for infrastructure (roads and energy) needs to incorporate gender concerns into project planning and design, since poor infrastructure is a major constraint on women's access to essential social services and income-generating activities.

5. ADB support for microfinance services in rural areas can help to ensure these services are targeted at women and other disadvantaged populations. Capacity building for clients as well as providers can improve women's poor financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills, leading to better use of microfinance services. Assistance for the private sector also needs to focus on removing gender-related barriers in the formal and informal sectors. ADB assistance to the health sector emphasizes facilitating access to quality primary health care, especially reproductive health care, in rural areas. Given the government's focus on improving maternal

¹ This summary is an update of the ADB. 2006. *Country Gender Assessment and Strategy*. Manila. Appendix 5 of the ADB Country Strategy and Program, Papua New Guinea 2006-2010.

² National Executive Council, 2009. *Papua New Guinea: Education*. Port Moresby.

³ UNDP. 2007. *Human Development Report, 2007/2008*. New York.

and child mortality in its new national health plan, ADB support for rural health services will incorporate women's empowerment strategies and health promotion at the community level.