



Media release

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PASAI holds women symposium in Samoa

Apia, Samoa: The Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (PASAI) commenced a three-day Governance and Leadership Women Symposium for current and emerging female leaders across the Pacific Island region from today.

The first day is dedicated to developing the capabilities of 34 female staff who have travelled from government audit offices across Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia, Australia and New Zealand. They will hear from PASAI staff on topics like sustainable audit practices, quality management and gender policies.

On the second and third days, current and emerging female leaders from Pacific Island audit offices will be joined by more than 60 others from the Samoan public sector, businesses, civil society organisations, the media, regional stakeholders and development partners. Top accounting students from selected secondary schools will also attend.

Minister of Finance, Honourable Lautimuia Afoa Uelese Vaai, will officially open the symposium. The full list of local and international speakers who will share their experiences and insights is at pasai.org/symposium.

PASAI Chief Executive, Esther Lameko-Poutoa, in explaining the reason for organising the symposium, said that while slightly more than half of staff who work at government audit offices in the Pacific are women, their representation among those who hold managerial and leadership positions rapidly dwindles with increasing levels of seniority.

“We are committed to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the Pacific region through our programme of work and by establishing strategic partnerships to achieve positive outcomes in this area.

“We also advance productive relationships and encourage closer collaboration between audit institutions, relevant anti-corruption authorities and legislatures to build an accountability ecosystem across integrity agencies.

“It is only by unlocking the full potential of our workforces that we can more quickly achieve our goal of good governance and accountability within the public sector,” she said.

Samoa-based PASAI Programme Director and event coordinator, Susana Laulu, was especially pleased Samoa was chosen to host such an event, being held at the Taumeasina Island Resort.

“Not only was Samoa the first Pacific Island nation to elect a woman as its top leader, but it boasts having many women who have excelled in leadership positions across business, government, academia and CSOs. So it provides an ideal setting to inspire increasing standards of gender equality and inclusiveness,” she said.

PASAI aims for the symposium to allow for peer-to-peer learning from the experience and good practices of other countries and for discussions on how to enhance effective cooperation in the region to promote good governance and integrity in the public sector.

PASAI acknowledges the support of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The arrangements for the symposium were also made possible by a collaboration with the Bank South Pacific (BSP) Samoa and TAUTAI Governance for Economic Growth.

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