

# TUVALU GENDER OUTLOOK 2025

*Comparing Tuvalu  
and the Pacific*

Gender Affairs Department  
Office of the Prime Minister

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## Introduction

This Tuvalu Gender Outlook summarises findings from the Pacific Gender Outlook 2025, jointly produced by the Pacific Community (SPC) and UN Women. It highlights how women and men in Tuvalu are progressing toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how gender inequalities shape that progress. Each section compares Tuvalu's performance with the Pacific average, drawing on data from the 2022 Tuvalu Population and Housing Census, the 2019-2020 Tuvalu MICS, and the UN SDG database.

This outlook reveals that Tuvalu has made notable progress in education, health, and women's participation in community leadership. However, gender gaps persist in economic empowerment, unpaid care work, gender-based violence, and political representation.

### *Note on Data Availability*

The Pacific Gender Outlook 2025 provides comparable, sex-disaggregated data for most SDGs. Tuvalu has complete or partial data for 15 SDGs. Only SDGs 14 (Life below water) and 15 (Life on land) lack Tuvalu-specific data.

## SDG 1 — End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Poverty affects women and men differently. Women are more likely to experience time poverty, unpaid work burdens, and lack of access to productive assets. Measuring poverty through a gender lens helps reveal invisible economic inequalities and inform inclusive social-protection policies.

In Tuvalu, poverty is defined by the Basic Needs Poverty Line (BNPL)—the cost of essential food and non-food requirements—set in 2022 at about AUD 3,440 per person per year. Around 23 percent of people live below the BNPL, with higher rates on outer islands ( $\approx$  24 percent) than in Funafuti ( $\approx$  18 percent). Although poverty is measured at the household level and not by sex, employment data reveal clear gendered patterns: work undertaken by women is less monetised and more precarious than that of men.

*Table 1. Poverty and Economic Vulnerability Indicators*

| Indicator                                               | Pacific Average (%) | Tuvalu (%)         | Key Observation                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Employed population below national poverty line, by sex | Women 22<br>Men 21  | Women 18<br>Men 17 | Slightly above than Pacific average        |
| Rural population below national poverty line            | 27                  | 24                 | Rural women remain economically vulnerable |

Across the Pacific, 22% of employed women live in poverty compared with 21% of men. Tuvalu shows slightly above the Pacific average, but women in the outer islands remain vulnerable to economic shocks.

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### Takeaway

Women in the outer islands of Tuvalu face similar challenges to others in the Pacific—poverty is not only about income, but about access to services, time, and opportunities. When women face hardship through unpaid work, lack of assets, or insecure income, whole families experience greater stress and reduced wellbeing—gender inequality deepens hardship for everyone.

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## SDG 2 — End hunger and improve nutrition

Food security and nutrition are closely tied to women's caregiving roles and control over household resources. Understanding gender differences in food access and dietary quality supports actions that improve women's and children's health and resilience.

Women in the Pacific are more likely to experience anaemia, reflecting nutritional deficiencies linked to food insecurity. Across the region, 29% of women and 23% of men are food insecure. Tuvalu shows a similar rate to the Pacific average, but women's nutrition remains highly sensitive to climate and food prices.

*Table 2. Food Security and Nutrition Indicators*

| Indicator                                             | Pacific Average %    | Tuvalu %             | Key Observation               |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Prevalence of food insecurity, by sex                 | Women 29 /<br>Men 23 | Women 28<br>/ Men 22 | Comparable to Pacific average |
| Prevalence of anaemia among women of reproductive age | 34                   | 33                   | Comparable to Pacific trend   |

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### Takeaway

Tuvalu shows a similar rate of food insecurity and anaemia to the Pacific average, reflecting shared regional challenges in access to affordable, nutritious food. When women struggle to access or control household food resources, family health and resilience decline—making hunger and malnutrition a community issue, not just an individual one.

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## SDG 3 — Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all

Women and men face different health risks due to biological, social, and economic factors. Tracking these gaps—especially in non-communicable diseases and access to care—guides more equitable health planning and service delivery.

Non-communicable diseases are a major concern across the Pacific. In Tuvalu, 27% of women are physically inactive compared with 16% of men, and obesity is among the highest in the region. Women's limited time for self-care compounds these risks.

*Table 3. Health and Non-Communicable Disease Indicators*

| Indicator                                  | Pacific Average %    | Tuvalu %             | Key Observation    |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Prevalence of obesity among adults, by sex | Women 46 /<br>Men 36 | Women 49 /<br>Men 37 | Higher among women |
| Prevalence of physical inactivity, by sex  | Women 25 /<br>Men 17 | Women 27 /<br>Men 16 | Comparable         |

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### Takeaway

Tuvalu shows similar NCD patterns to the Pacific average in NCD incidence among women, but high national NCD rates increase women's unpaid care responsibilities within households. Gender gaps in health and unpaid care increase the burden of illness for households and strain public services—equitable health outcomes benefit entire families and communities.

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## SDG 4 — Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education

Education is a strong driver of gender equality. Equal access and completion empower women and girls to secure decent work and leadership opportunities, breaking intergenerational cycles of disadvantage.

Girls in Tuvalu are more likely than boys to complete upper secondary education, showing slightly higher rates than the Pacific average. However, women are still underrepresented in technical and skilled jobs due to limited career pathways.

*Table 4. Education and Literacy Indicators*

| Indicator                                            | Pacific Average %    | Tuvalu %             | Key Observation              |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Completion rate in upper secondary education, by sex | Women 63 /<br>Men 59 | Women 67 /<br>Men 61 | Above the Pacific average    |
| Adult literacy rate, by sex                          | Women 94 /<br>Men 96 | Women 97 /<br>Men 98 | High literacy for both sexes |

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### Takeaway

Tuvalu shows a slightly higher rate than the Pacific average in education—but this success is not automatically translated into decent work and leadership. When girls' education does not lead to decent work, the country loses skilled labour and leadership capacity—investing equally in women's futures strengthens national productivity.

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## SDG 5 — Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Gender equality is both a standalone goal and a cross-cutting condition for achieving all SDGs. Monitoring women's representation and safety provides evidence for policies that protect rights and enable full participation in society.

Gender-based violence and limited political participation remain major challenges. Tuvalu has no women in Parliament and few in local councils. Gender norms continue to shape attitudes toward violence and women's roles.

*Table 5. Gender Equality and Women's Representation Indicators*

| Indicator                                           | Pacific Average % | Tuvalu % | Key Observation               |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------------------|
| Women ever experiencing physical or sexual violence | 29                | 28       | Comparable to Pacific average |
| Women in national parliament                        | 19                | 0        | Below Pacific average         |
| Women in local government positions                 | 18                | <10      | Low representation            |

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### Takeaway

Tuvalu shows a similarly high rate of violence against women in the Pacific and presents much lower representation of women in parliament and local government than the Pacific average. Violence and exclusion against women weaken families and communities; equality in decision-making builds safer, more just and prosperous societies.

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## SDG 6 — Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation

Access to safe water and sanitation directly affects women's health, dignity, and safety. Gender-responsive WASH planning reduces women's unpaid labour and exposure to health and security risks.

Tuvalu's access levels mirror those of the Pacific average, but rural and outer islands remain underserved.

*Table 6. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Indicators*

| Indicator                           | Pacific Average % | Tuvalu % | Key Observation                |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|--------------------------------|
| Access to basic sanitation services | 34                | 33       | Comparable to Pacific average  |
| Access to safe drinking water       | 55                | 57       | Slightly above Pacific average |

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### Takeaway

Tuvalu shows similar low levels of access to WASH services as the Pacific average. WASH facilities are essential for women's dignity and health. Without safe and accessible water and sanitation, women and girls lose time, safety, and dignity—which in turn affects children's health and the functioning of entire households.

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## SDG 7 — Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy

Energy poverty has gendered impacts: women often spend more time collecting fuel and are more exposed to smoke. Expanding clean energy access improves health, productivity, and safety for women and girls.

Less than 16% of Pacific households use clean cooking fuels. Tuvalu's figure is slightly lower, meaning many women still rely on kerosene or wood, facing smoke exposure and time burdens.

*Table 7. Use of clean cooking fuels*

| Indicator                            | Pacific Average % | Tuvalu % | Key Observation       |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-----------------------|
| Population using clean cooking fuels | 16                | 13       | Below Pacific average |

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### Takeaway

Tuvalu shows a slightly lower rate than the Pacific average in accessing clean cooking fuels, which is low—expanding clean energy access will directly improve women's health and safety. Energy poverty limits women's safety, health, and time for income-earning, reducing household productivity and slowing community development.

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## SDG 8 — Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Employment opportunities, wages, and working conditions differ by gender. Analysing these gaps helps design labour policies that value unpaid care work and promote women's access to decent, secure jobs.

Women remain underrepresented in formal employment and overrepresented in unpaid work. In Tuvalu, unemployment is 6% for women and 5% for men—above the Pacific average.

*Table 8.—Employment and Labour-Market Indicators*

| Indicator                                             | Pacific Average %    | Tuvalu %             | Key Observation           |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Unemployment rate, by sex                             | Women 8 /<br>Men 6   | Women 6 /<br>Men 5   | Above the Pacific average |
| Labour-force participation rate, by sex               | Women 52 /<br>Men 67 | Women 45/<br>Men 65  | Lower for women           |
| Youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) | Women 30 /<br>Men 23 | Women 28 /<br>Men 21 | Above the Pacific average |

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### Takeaway

Tuvalu shows slightly higher unemployment than the Pacific average and significantly lower labour-force participation among women, revealing persistent barriers to decent work. When women's work is undervalued or unpaid, the economy loses talent and resilience—equality in employment fuels national growth.

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## SDG 9 — Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Technology and innovation are powerful enablers of gender equality, but women remain underrepresented in science, engineering, and digital fields. Ensuring women's equal access to STEM careers and digital tools promotes inclusive growth.

Women remain underrepresented in innovation and technology sectors. The Pacific average shows that only 28% of researchers are women. Tuvalu shows similar levels of infrastructure access, but digital gender gaps persist.

*Table 9. Innovation and Digital Infrastructure Indicators*

| Indicator                                                    | Pacific Average % | Tuvalu % | Key Observation               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------------------|
| Share of researchers in science and technology who are women | 28                | No data  | Likely underrepresentation    |
| Mobile network coverage                                      | 94                | 95       | Comparable to Pacific average |

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### Takeaway

When women are excluded from science, technology, and innovation, the country loses half its creative potential and slows progress toward inclusive development.

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## SDG 10 — Reduce inequality within and among countries

Economic and social inequalities intersect with gender, age, and disability. Measuring inequality helps identify who is left behind and supports fair redistribution of opportunities and resources.

Income inequality in the Pacific remains moderate, with a Gini index around 36. Tuvalu's inequality level is similar (34). However, women, youth, and persons with disabilities continue to face barriers to participation in the economy.

*Table 10. Inequality and Social Inclusion Indicators*

| Indicator                          | Pacific Average | Tuvalu | Key Observation     |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|--------|---------------------|
| Gini index                         | 36              | 34     | Moderate inequality |
| Persons with disabilities employed | 31              | 30     | Comparable          |

The Gini Index measures the degree of inequality in income distribution within a country. It ranges from 0 to 100, where 0 represents perfect equality (everyone has the same income) and 100 represents perfect inequality (one person has all the income). A Gini index of 36 indicates a moderate level of income inequality, similar to most Pacific Island countries. Tuvalu's score of 34 suggests slightly more equal income distribution compared with the Pacific average.

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### Takeaway

While Tuvalu's Gini index (34) reflects relatively even income distribution, structural barriers continue to limit equitable participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in economic activities. Equality in numbers does not mean equality in opportunity; women's economic rights remain limited by structural and social barriers that prevent fair participation and weaken social cohesion.

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## SDG 11 — Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Women and men use urban spaces differently. Integrating gender perspectives in housing and urban planning ensures safety, accessibility, and equitable living conditions for all.

Overcrowding and housing insecurity are major challenges across the Pacific. In Tuvalu, 42% of households report overcrowding, similar to the Pacific average.

*Table 11. Housing and Urban Conditions Indicators*

| Indicator                         | Pacific Average% | Tuvalu % | Key Observation    |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|----------|--------------------|
| Urban households in safe housing  | 44               | 42       | Comparable         |
| Households reporting overcrowding | 45               | 42       | Similar challenges |

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### Takeaway

Tuvalu shows similar levels of overcrowding and housing insecurity as the Pacific average, revealing shared challenges in creating safe and resilient living spaces. Urban environments that overlook women’s safety and accessibility needs become less liveable for everyone—gender-responsive planning builds safer and more inclusive communities.

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## SDG 12 — Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Women often manage household consumption and waste, making their engagement key to sustainability. Understanding gendered consumption patterns supports more effective community-based waste and recycling initiatives.

Pacific countries face growing challenges with waste management and low recycling rates. Tuvalu generates about 0.8 kg of solid waste per person per day and has limited recycling capacity.

Table 12. Sustainable Consumption and Energy Production Indicators

| Indicator                                        | Pacific Average % | Tuvalu% | Key Observation       |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| Recycling rate of waste                          | 11                | 8       | Below Pacific average |
| Share of renewable energy in total energy supply | 23                | 23      | Comparable            |

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### Takeaway

Tuvalu shows a slightly lower recycling rate than the Pacific average but a similar share of renewable energy in its total supply, reflecting both progress and remaining challenges in sustainable consumption. Women’s active participation in waste reduction and resource management strengthens community resilience and environmental sustainability for all.

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## SDG 13 — Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Climate change affects livelihoods and care responsibilities differently for women and men. Including gender perspectives in climate policy ensures equitable adaptation and resilience strategies.

Climate change disproportionately affects Pacific women, particularly those dependent on subsistence livelihoods. Tuvalu has adopted climate policies that include gender perspectives.

*Table 13. Climate Action and Renewable-Energy Indicators*

| Indicator                                                               | Pacific Average              | Tuvalu        | Key Observation |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Existence of national climate change policies with gender integration   | Partial in 8 of 14 countries | Yes (partial) | Comparable      |
| Country's total primary energy supply that comes from renewable sources | 23 %                         | 23%           | Comparable      |

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### Takeaway

Tuvalu shows a similar level of progress to the Pacific average in renewable energy use and gender integration within climate policies, highlighting the need to deepen inclusive approaches. When women lack voice in climate decisions, adaptation strategies miss vital knowledge and capacities—equality in climate action builds stronger community resilience.

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## SDG 14 — Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Women and men contribute differently to marine livelihoods. Recognising women's unpaid and informal roles in coastal fisheries helps design inclusive marine-resource management.

According to Tuvalu's HIES 2019-2020, more than one-third of adults engage in subsistence or small-scale fishing, showing higher reliance on marine resources than the Pacific average. Women's contribution to coastal fisheries is often unrecorded across the Pacific. Although no Tuvalu-specific data are available, women play vital roles in nearshore fishing and processing.

*Table 14. Marine and Coastal Resource Management Indicators*

| Indicator                                                                            | Pacific Average % | Tuvalu % | Key Observation                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Share of total employed population engaged in fisheries (including subsistence work) | 12                | ~35*     | Likely higher than Pacific average due to reliance on subsistence fishing             |
| Share of women engaged in coastal and nearshore fisheries (paid and unpaid work)     | 30                | No data  | Likely higher given women's strong participation in gleaning and nearshore harvesting |

*\*Estimated based on Tuvalu HIES 2019-2020 data on household incomes and expenditure.*

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### Takeaway

Fishing and marine resources play a much larger role in Tuvalu than across the Pacific, reflecting strong community reliance on subsistence livelihoods. While men dominate offshore and income-generating fishing, women contribute significantly through coastal and household-based activities that remain undercounted in official statistics. When women's unpaid contribution to coastal fisheries is ignored, marine management loses critical experience and undermines livelihoods for entire households.

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## SDG 15 — Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems

Land ownership and natural-resource management are key sources of economic power. Strengthening women's rights to land and participation in environmental governance promotes equality and sustainable resource use.

Deforestation and land degradation affect food security and resilience across the Pacific. In most Pacific countries, women's land rights are constrained by customary tenure systems and limited participation in land decision-making. No Tuvalu-specific data are available, but women's access to land and decision-making is limited, as in the rest of the region.

*Table 15. Land Ownership and Biodiversity Indicators*

| Indicator                         | Pacific Average % | Tuvalu  | Key Observation                   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Share of landowners who are women | 14                | No data | Likely similar to Pacific average |

Pacific average refers to the proportion of all landowners who are women. Women's land rights remain constrained by customary tenure systems in most Pacific countries.

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### Takeaway

Integrating gender perspectives into land governance is crucial for equitable resilience. When women lack secure land rights and voice in natural-resource decisions, communities lose essential stewards of the environment and climate resilience.

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## SDG 16 — Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development

Inclusive institutions and justice systems are vital for gender equality. Women’s participation in governance strengthens accountability, transparency, and responsiveness to community needs.

Across the Pacific, women occupy 32% of managerial civil service roles but remain underrepresented in justice systems. Tuvalu’s civil service includes 30% women in managerial positions, comparable to the Pacific average.

Table 16. Governance and Leadership

| Indicator                                                           | Pacific Average % | Tuvalu | Key Observation             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------|-----------------------------|
| Share of managerial civil service positions held by women           | 32                | 30     | Comparable                  |
| Share of judiciary positions (judges and magistrates) held by women | 18                | 43*    | Higher than Pacific average |

\* Source: Tuvalu Beijing+30 National Review Report (2024).

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### Takeaway

Tuvalu shows a higher share of women in the judiciary than the Pacific average, while women’s representation in managerial civil service roles is at a similar level. Institutions are stronger and more trusted when women share leadership and justice roles—exclusion erodes fairness and accountability for all citizens.

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## SDG 17 — Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

Reliable gender data and partnerships underpin progress on all SDGs. Building strong gender-statistics frameworks ensures that women's and men's realities are fully reflected in policy decisions.

Regional cooperation and data partnerships are essential for advancing gender equality across the Pacific. Two-thirds of Pacific Island countries have established national gender statistics frameworks to coordinate the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data. Tuvalu's Central Statistics Division and Gender Affairs Department collaborate with SPC and UN Women on gender data initiatives and CEDAW reporting, but a formal national framework has not yet been adopted. Establishing one would help institutionalise the production and use of gender statistics across all sectors, improving the monitoring of gender equality commitments and development outcomes.

*Table 17. Partnerships and Gender Data Indicators*

| Indicator                                                     | Pacific Average    | Tuvalu  | Key Observation                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Pacific countries with a national gender statistics framework | 9 of 14 countries  | Partial | Tuvalu collects gender data but lacks a formal framework |
| Participation in regional gender initiatives                  | 14 of 14 countries | Yes     | Active partner through SPC and UN Women programmes       |

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### Takeaway

Tuvalu is actively engaged in regional gender data initiatives but has yet to establish a formal national gender statistics framework. Developing such a framework would strengthen evidence-based policymaking and align Tuvalu with the nine Pacific countries that already have one in place. Strong gender data and partnerships make progress visible and credible—inclusive cooperation ensures that national development benefits everyone.

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## Conclusion

Tuvalu has made steady progress toward gender equality, with strong achievements in education, health, and women's participation in public service. Girls complete school at similar or higher rates than boys, and women occupy a growing share of senior positions in the civil service and judiciary. However, these gains have not yet translated into full economic empowerment or equal participation in leadership and decision-making.

Health outcomes mirror regional patterns, with women facing higher risks of obesity and non-communicable diseases. Persistent gender-based violence and the absence of women in Parliament remain key concerns.

Tuvalu's geographic dispersion across eight islands and its dependence on sea transport make service delivery, data collection, and coordination difficult. These logistical challenges affect both men and women and can exacerbate inequalities when communication and transport infrastructure are limited.

Despite these constraints, Tuvalu demonstrates strong social cohesion and cultural values of cooperation (*fakatau fesoasoani*) and shared responsibility (*kaitasi*), which are powerful enablers of inclusive development. By continuing to integrate gender perspectives across national planning, strengthening local governance, and investing in gender statistics, Tuvalu can translate its achievements into lasting progress for all.

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