



Clinton, Pacific Leaders agree on Gender Equality

By Online Editor

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U.S Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has joined Pacific leaders in a call for full gender equality - equal treatment of men and women in all parts of social, economic and political life.

Clinton and other leaders attending the 16-member Pacific Islands Forum signed a joint statement in the Cook Islands Saturday, noting that overall progress toward gender equality has been slow in the Pacific region.

They pledged to address issues including violence against women, limited economic opportunities and the representation of women in Pacific legislatures - which the statement says “remains the lowest in the world.”

Clinton was in the Cook Islands at the beginning of a six-nation tour that includes China, Brunei, East Timor and Russia. Her next stop is Indonesia.

The State Department says Clinton and senior officials in Jakarta will discuss the U.S.-Indonesia Comprehensive Partnership, a plan that calls for enhanced bilateral relations in areas including security, economy and technology.

On Friday, Clinton announced \$32 million in new U.S. programs for the Pacific region on sustainable development, climate change and marine protection.

She played down what some see as a growing U.S.-China rivalry in the region, saying the South Pacific is “big enough” for both the U.S. and China.

Clinton, however, urged China to distribute its growing number of assistance programs fairly throughout the Pacific region.

Analysts have said China sometimes uses its overseas investments in ways that exploit smaller nations' resources to the detriment of local populations.

SOURCE: VOICE OF AMERICA/PACNEWS