



Pacific Island Chiefs of Police Womens Advisory Network COMMUNIQUE

Monday 16 June 2010

The 7th Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP) Womens Advisory Network (WAN) Conference has concluded in the Samoa.

The two day conference brought together more than 50 police women from 21 Pacific countries and was hosted by the Samoa WAN group made up of local police women.

In his opening address, Commissioner Lilomaiava F. Taiolo from the Samoa Police acknowledged the challenges Pacific Island police women faced, including historical resistance from some quarters to have women Police Officers at all. However over time many have realised the importance of having Women not only in Policing but also in other Government Ministries. He urged the women present to take up the challenge of leadership in order to further advance the role of women in Policing.

The outgoing chair of WAN, Sergeant Siripa Uelese from the Samoa police, handed over the role to new chair, Chief Inspector Joanne Clarkson from the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary.

WAN is a support network for Pacific police women which has initiated several ground breaking projects including an exchange programme, sister city project and help with policies such as maternity leave.

The exchange programme, which was established at the 2006 WAN conference in the Solomon Islands, will see a further six exchanges this year. Each exchange lasts three weeks and enables participants to experience policing in other parts of the Pacific.

Again, two representatives from the Royal Fiji Police attended the WAN conference as observers. Fiji was instrumental in establishing WAN in 2003 in Fiji.

The longest serving police woman at the conference had 32 years experience and many others had served in the force for longer than 20 years.

The theme of this year's conference was Ethics and Integrity in the Pacific. Keynote presenters included the Samoa Attorney General Ming C Leung Wai. He spoke of the importance of integrity especially for Police Officers who are leaders in the community by virtue of their office and must show moral fortitude at all times. He further spoke about power and corruption and that Women have to show their male counterparts that they are capable and are people of integrity.

The second keynote speaker to address the conference was the Chief Executive Officer of the Samoa Public Service, Beth Onesemo - Tuilaepa. She spoke of four lessons that she had learnt from life experiences which included; being organised, structured and professional in your approach to advancing gender equity; take the leadership and ownership of advancing the status of women; walking the talk and it won't happen overnight but it will happen, you have to keep the goal in mind.

Colonel Sarah Garcia of the United States Airforce also gave a presentation on her experiences in getting promoted into a leadership role within her organisation. The presentation was very inspiring and motivating for all the delegates.

WAN delegates will make recommendations in their country reports which will go to the annual Chiefs of Police conference in Brisbane in August where Chief Inspector Clarkson will present.

The next WAN meeting will be in Papua New Guinea in 2011.