

My name is Sabrina Rose Rasu. I am from the beautiful island country of Vanuatu!

I grew up in a single parent home, with my mother acted as both my mother and my father. Where I live, many live without electricity, running water and proper sanitation facilities.

My journey into understanding these challenges came at an early age. I will never forget the day, when as a 14 year old student volunteer, I administered my first injection to a hypertension patient at the Erakor Bridge Community, under the supervision of a nurse, but in a community mobile clinic whose staff were overworked and often in need of help.

My island home experiences regular catastrophic weather events which are becoming worse. When Cyclone Pam hit our islands in 2015, much of the relief goods that were brought into the island never reached the women as the men in the community took control. **When patriarchy meets climate change, it is always women and girls who feel it the most.** And we have not recovered until now.

These stories however, are not just mine. They are also of women and of many communities across this region.

I know this, because for the last 3 days, as people across the region gathered as the Asia Pacific Regional Civil Society Mechanism. And we learned how we are a region rich of people, language, culture, resources and local knowledge. These are disappearing, as many people in our region continue to be left behind.

In a world where **26** richest persons own as much wealth as **50%** of the world's poorest.

A world where **157** of the richest **200** entities on the planet are **multinational corporations**.

A world where we have only **12** years to prevent **climate catastrophe**.

Does **this** sound like **equal** and **inclusive** world? *pause long!*

But there is hope! The people of Asia Pacific are **fighting back**. People's movement are growing and expanding, and reclaiming our space and voice despite repression and silencing from the governments and corporate interests. While we are here, show your political will to transform our unequal and divided world. We do not want to see the repeat of the same failed economic models that have created this mess. We demand **system change**.

If you want to empower people, then you need to **redistribute** wealth, power and resources.

If you are creating a world for us that is both **equal** and **inclusive** then you cannot have it **without us** and **without a living planet**.

And you cannot have it **without development justice**.