



OUTCOME STATEMENT

FROM THE

HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE

(Alofi, Niue, 5 November 2015)

GROWING A RESILIENT PACIFIC COMMUNITY THROUGH YOUTH-FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT

Preamble

1. The High-Level Dialogue on Growing a Resilient Pacific Community through Youth-Focused Development was held in Alofi, Niue, on 4 November 2015 during the Ninth Conference of the Pacific Community. It was chaired by Dr Colin Tukuitonga, Pacific Community Director-General, who said 5 million of the Pacific's 10 million people are under 25 years of age, representing a tremendous source of vitality and renewal.
2. Twenty-one member countries and territories were represented at the Conference.
3. Recognising the global challenges facing youth, which transcend the boundaries between all regions of the world, and noting the call for regional and national action made by the 1st Pacific Region Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting in September 2015, members of the Pacific Community expressed appreciation for the opportunity to address the concerning situation of youth in the Pacific region and to explore global and regional policy responses and best practices at the national level.
4. Members discussed and agreed on the following recommendations:

Young people in global, regional and national development agendas

5. The Conference welcomed the keynote address by the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Mr Ahmad Alhendawi, noting in particular:
 - a. that public policies for youth are in urgent need of a new approach and renewed commitment across development sectors to improve implementation of plans and adequately respond to young people's needs, aspirations and demands;
 - b. the need to promote synergies between youth policies and broader development policies, most pertinently, the new 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities Of Action [S.A.M.O.A.] Pathway;
 - c. the importance of aligning the Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF) 2014–2023 with the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and supporting engagement of young people from the region in action relating to the Sustainable Development Goals and regional development priorities through the Global Youth Partnership for Sustainable Development Goals ('Youth Gateway');

- d. the increasing prominence of young people's role in addressing climate change worldwide, and therefore the importance of engaging young Pacific people in the region's responses to climate change;
 - e. the importance of supporting the finalisation of the Pacific Youth Employment Strategies (PacificYES) and mobilising political, financial and institutional support for country-level implementation of PacificYES to reduce the alarming youth unemployment rate in the Pacific (currently 23%, and up to 50% in some countries) by 2024. The requirements include greater access for young people to youth-friendly employment services and high-quality, demand-driven education and capacity-building opportunities, encouragement for entrepreneurship, and start-up support for sustainable youth businesses, including reducing legal and business barriers, particularly for vulnerable and disenfranchised young people;
 - f. the need to move away from the 'blame game', listen to young people themselves, invest in their future, and acknowledge their eagerness to contribute to society, and their ability to act as agents of change, especially in addressing the impacts of climate change on their islands.
6. Conference applauded the inspiring response to the keynote address made on behalf of Pacific youth by the Pacific Youth Council. Members acknowledged the mobilisation and leadership of young people in climate change mitigation and adaptation in the region including in developing resilient agricultural systems; in advancing regional and national commitments to addressing youth unemployment; and in accelerating progress towards achieving gender equality and young women's empowerment.
7. Conference also welcomed the statements by the Hon. Tolofuaivalelei Falemoe Leiaua, Samoa's Minister of Women, Community and Social Development, and the Hon. Steven Ciobo, Australia's Minister for International Development and the Pacific, in support of empowering youth in development and on the broader challenges and priorities for strengthening resilience through collaboration and cooperation, including through economic development based on trade and investment and greater empowerment of women. Members welcomed information on the Youth@Work programme developed and implemented in the Solomon Islands as an example of concrete action with and for youth.
8. Members recognised that a strong education sector in the Pacific, including vocational training, scholarships and exchange visits, is key to opening doors for young people and part of the solution to ensuring youth are ready for future opportunities. Opportunities offered for young people through ICT should be explored, noting the challenge of ensuring cyber-safety and the current lack of appropriate legislative frameworks. Conference also noted the connection between training and employment opportunities in youth development.
9. Members agreed to respond to the call from young people to promote meaningful engagement of youth as development partners who can contribute to guiding and implementing regional and national development agendas, participate in inter-generational dialogue, and benefit from opportunities for partnership and the transfer of leadership and experience.
10. Members noted with concern that despite positive changes in some areas, young people are lagging behind in several areas of development, due to limited investment in youth-related issues. Members acknowledged the need to respond to the situation for youth in the region with urgency and innovation, and to go beyond conventional measures, as demonstrated by private sector partnerships to support youth enterprise in Samoa and Niue, the Youth@Work programme in Solomon Islands, and sports programmes in various member countries.

11. Members discussed ways of increasing the prominence and effectiveness of youth ministries, and the promotion of inter-ministerial collaboration in implementing youth policies. Identifying gaps in service delivery to key populations of youth, and improving national surveillance to accurately determine the status of youth are important precursors to determining priority actions.
12. Members welcomed the call for meaningful engagement of young people in the Pacific in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the Youth Gateway.

Increasing the focus on youth in growing resilient communities in the Pacific

13. Members noted that, in line with the Conference theme – ‘turning the tide’ towards achieving national and regional development goals – there is a need to address the vulnerability of youth by prioritising them in development, so as to foster their capabilities and contributions to growing resilient Pacific communities.
14. Members urged the international community to commit resources to youth development at national and regional levels, in line with the direction of national youth policies and strategies.
15. Members noted the Pacific Youth Development Framework 2014–2023 (PYDF) as the regional approach to youth-centred development in the Pacific, and acknowledged the PYDF’s focus on reaching key populations of youth, including young women, rural youth, youth with disabilities, out-of-school and unemployed youth, and youth with diverse sexual orientation and gender identities, and agreed that progress on the implementation and review of the PYDF will be reported to CRGA 46.
16. Conference stressed the importance of engagement with and commitment to the PYDF on behalf of members, development partners, national youth councils and other youth stakeholders, in order to operationalise the framework and improve the coordination and effectiveness of development assistance for and with youth.
17. Recognising the need for a high-level forum to monitor the situation of youth, drive progress and ensure commitment to relevant issues, Conference agreed that a focus on youth would become a standing agenda item at Pacific Community governing council meetings, and accordingly CRGA and Conference, and the secretariat, through its Social Development Division, are tasked with monitoring progress in youth development and deciding on an appropriate way to support youth issues and the PYDF.
18. Members recognised the important role of representative youth structures in reaching key populations of youth, and called on the Pacific Community to continue its support for and nurturing of the role of the Pacific Youth Council Secretariat, particularly with regard to its shared partnership on regional coordination of the PYDF.
19. In view of the critical levels of youth unemployment and underemployment in the region, Conference agreed to support the development of opportunities to help build skills for youth, in the form of regional awards for youth enterprise, youth internships in SPC and the adaptation of good practices through South-South cooperation. These initiatives will not only help to build capacity for youth development but will further inspire young people’s innovation and creativity.
20. Conference endorsed the integration of youth issues across SPC’s programmes, particularly in the areas of climate change, food security and non-communicable diseases.

21. In recognition of the role of development partners as important stakeholders in the implementation of the PYDF, Conference called on development partners to contribute to and participate in PYDF activities, and to commit to stronger partnerships, in order to improve the effectiveness of investment in youth.
