



**FORTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE  
COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**  
(18–20 June 2019, Noumea, New Caledonia)

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**AGENDA ITEM No. 4.2: Update on Youth High-Level Dialogue Outcomes:  
Pacific Youth Development Framework**

(Paper presented by the Secretariat)

**Summary**

1. This paper presents an update on the implementation of the Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF) 2014–2023.
2. The report describes efforts at regional level to consolidate the direction of youth development overall. This work will help inform the mid-term review of the Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF) scheduled for 2019–2020.
3. Funding and resourcing are ongoing challenges, but the new business plan for the Social Development Programme (SDP) provides a platform for engaging new and potential partners to support the work of SDP and, more specifically, youth development.

**Recommendations**

4. CRGA is invited to:
  - i. note the progress made on implementation of the Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF);
  - ii. call on the Secretariat and partners to consider the findings and recommendations of the *State of Pacific Youth Report* as an important platform for strengthening the statistics required to inform policies and actions for youth;
  - iii. approve the mid-term review of the PYDF to be carried out in 2019–2020;
  - iv. based on the CRGA 48 recommendation for more resources for implementation of the PYDF, consider opportunities for increasing resourcing for youth in SPC.

## **Update on Youth High-Level Dialogue Outcomes: Pacific Youth Development Framework.**

### **Purpose**

5. This paper highlights key issues relating to the status of Pacific youth and the development of strategic priorities for action guided by the outcomes of the High-Level Dialogue on Youth at the Ninth Conference of the Pacific Community in Niue (2015).

### **Background**

6. The High-Level Dialogue on Youth at the Ninth Conference recognised the need for a high-level forum to monitor the situation of youth, drive progress and ensure commitment to identified issues. The Conference agreed that a focus on youth would become a standing agenda item at Pacific Community governing council meetings. The Secretariat's Social Development Programme (SDP) was tasked with monitoring progress in youth development and formulating appropriate ways to support youth issues and the Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF).

### **Monitoring progress in youth development**

7. A regional working group,<sup>1</sup> under the leadership of UNFPA, has completed the final State of Pacific Youth Report, including a conceptual framework of youth indicators for the Pacific region and a regional analysis report. SPC's role in the multi-agency partnership is to ensure alignment of these youth-related initiatives with PYDF priorities and regional indicator frameworks.
8. The State of Pacific Youth Report highlights the following issues (paragraphs 8.1–8.11):
  - 8.1. Additional resources are required across the region to invest in adolescent and youth development so that this critically important population group is better prepared and supported to make the key transitions to adulthood effectively. Current investments are stymied by lack of rigorous attention to monitoring and evaluation of policies, strategies, and programmes. As a result, key statistical data are often unavailable across the region in education, health, and employment, in particular, for the adolescent and youth demographic. Thus, it is often difficult to track progress and trends with confidence. It is hard to find robust evidence for the impact of policies and programming.
  - 8.2. There are long-term health problems, some of which have serious implications for adult well-being. There has been limited progress in improving health outcomes. The increase in non-communicable diseases is one that is particularly alarming and that signals the need for increased financing for youth health services. Investments in health need to focus more on a life course and people-centred approach. This means tailoring interventions to the evidence-based needs of adolescent and youth, including specific health service requirements and health promotion activities that would result in better health throughout the life course.
  - 8.3. Some significant progress has been made in education, particularly in expanding opportunities in basic education (primary and lower secondary education). Adolescents and youth are progressively increasing their levels of attainment. This improvement in regional human capital matters for economic development. However, the quality of education and the acquisition of marketable skills

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<sup>1</sup> The regional working group is chaired by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and comprises United Nations agencies in the Pacific, the Pacific Community, Commonwealth Secretariat, and Pacific Youth Council.

matter more for the economy and for the transition to adulthood. There are long-term concerns about the quality of education at all levels and the preparation it provides for adult life.

- 8.4. Youth unemployment and lack of decent work constitute arguably the most significant problem for young males and even more for young females. PICT economies are simply not generating the quality and quantity of work opportunities for young people leaving education. Young people could be better prepared for job seeking and entering the world of work. While creative solutions are required, it is critically important that youth employment is made central to national development in a holistic approach. The issue is complex, and both demand and supply-side responses need to be developed, informed by national development strategies. Measuring youth unemployment is difficult. The youth unemployment rate alone is inadequate to measure the state of the labour market. In the region, there are significant data issues that undermine understanding of the problem. There is, however, enough data available to recognise youth employment as a serious challenge, and the serious difficulties encountered in the transition from education to work, but not enough data to track progress. Going forward, investments need to be made in developing better quantitative measures of the problem.
- 8.5. Measuring civic and political participation is proving to be a major challenge. Youth themselves have functional structures at the regional and PICT level that provide opportunities for meaningful participation in decision-making in areas that concern their development. More resourcing – financial, human and technical – is required for these organisations to improve the quantity, representativeness, and quality of participation across the region. A good start has been made, but this needs to be better evaluated and documented, and results tracked over time.
- 8.6. There is a need to address protection issues concerning young people in the Pacific region. They need to be protected from abuse and exploitation arising from their use in child labour, including commercial sexual exploitation, child trafficking, the prevalence of child marriage, gender-based violence (GBV), and high rates of homicide and suicide.
- 8.7. Youth development is being taken increasingly seriously at the regional and country levels. Almost all PICTs have national youth policies (NYPs) and a few have action plans for implementation. These set out the various national priorities for youth. The lack of detailed budgets and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks for these policies represents critical gaps in implementation effectiveness. The lack of budgets indicates a critical shortfall in resources to prepare young people adequately with the various and changing capabilities needed for life in the Pacific region in the 21st century and the opportunities to put these into practice, in decent work and participation in the community and in society.
- 8.8. Gender equality is a key issue across the five domains selected. Patterns of gendered disadvantage vary across PICTs, but the commonality is that understanding the nature of key policy issues to be faced in adolescent and youth development cannot be accomplished without sex disaggregated data and gender analysis. Young women face some of the most difficult issues, such as unwanted pregnancies, gender-based violence (GBV), and lack of employment opportunities.
- 8.9. The situation of young people with disabilities in the region seems little changed since the State of Pacific Youth Report 2011. Better statistics on disability, disaggregated by age and sex, are urgently needed across the region to track progress and the impact of interventions.

8.10. Overarching recommendations:

- 1) Improve data collection and analysis of adolescents and youth by:
  - a. adopting a set of core indicators that can be used to monitor, report on, and track the progress of youth development across the Pacific region;
  - b. developing national institutional capacity to obtain disaggregated data and conduct trend analysis;
  - c. evaluating the performance and outcomes of National Youth Policy (NYP) implementation; and
  - d. conducting policy-relevant research, including youth-led research, in priority areas for adolescent and youth development.
  
- 2) Improve the governance of youth by:
  - a. strengthening evidence-based NYP making and related planning, including ensuring that all NYPs have costed and time-bound action plans with robust M&E frameworks;
  - b. strengthening the capacity of National Youth Councils (NYCs) in supporting the creation of opportunities for the inclusive and meaningful participation of youth in policy making and programming; and
  - c. taking concrete steps to strengthen child protection systems and eliminate child labour, child marriage, child trafficking and GBV, as well as addressing emerging issues such as online safety and cyber-bullying.
  
- 3) Mobilise resources for adolescents and youth through:
  - a. ensuring that all NYPs and action plans are clearly backed by adequate dedicated resources and budgets;
  - b. allocating additional resources to priority policy areas for adolescents and youth, such as capacity building, establishing and expanding youth-friendly services (e.g. in health and employment), and creating opportunities for participation at the local and national level; and
  - c. allocating enhanced resources for research and evaluation regarding adolescent and youth priority issues, such as employment in decent work, civic participation, skills development, and well-being.

8.11. The key findings and overarching recommendations highlighted above provide a good basis and guide for the work on youth development, particularly on the implementation of the Pacific Youth Development Framework over the next five years. The report is also timely as the mid-term review of the PYDF, which is due this year, provides an opportunity to look at how the PYDF could be used to identify how we can better respond to the findings of the State of Pacific Youth Report and recommendations.

**Advancing youth development through the PYDF**

9. **Work of the Social Development Programme:** SDP, which houses the work on youth, went through a rigorous strategic development process to consolidate its vision, direction and priorities for the next five years, in line with SPC's strategic plan and in accordance with regional mandates including the PYDF; the Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights, and the Regional Culture Strategy. A new SDP business plan is now in place, providing the direction for youth in the next five years.

10. The SDP Business Plan identifies key thematic areas for advancing youth development, namely through economic empowerment and climate resilience. SDP seeks to build capacity across SPC and at national level to advance youth development through building knowledge and research to inform policies and decision-making, and to integrate youth concerns across sector programming. It also seeks to build the capacity of civil society networks and associations to enable genuine partnerships that allow youth and civil society to engage in, and contribute to, youth development in the region. The direction of SDP's work will contribute to enabling responsive institutions at national and regional level to address issues and concerns for youth and the various target populations in Pacific communities.
11. **Integrated programming in SPC:** Integrating youth and social inclusion through SPC's programmes continues to be a priority, in line with the thematic areas identified in the SDP business plan. As reported in the last two years, SDP works with other SPC divisions and programmes in geoscience, agriculture, forestry and marine resources to strengthen their responsiveness and to build resilience and social, cultural and economic assets for youth. This approach is complemented by capacity building at country level to ensure that central ministries and those responsible for youth are also building integrated approaches into their policy and planning.
12. **National-level initiatives:** The transfer of the Youth@Work Programme to the Government of Solomon Islands is the priority for 2019. Support for the government aims to ensure that the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs is able to take on the programme in line with its national youth development framework and broader government support for youth development.
13. **Challenges:** It is difficult to mobilise resources for youth. While youth is clearly a priority for SPC, this has not automatically translated to resourcing. There is a need to continue to explore sources of funding, as is also the case for the areas of gender equality and culture.

## Conclusion

14. In the last 12 months, progress was made in consolidating the direction of work on the PYDF through SPC's engagement in developing the State of Pacific Youth Report and the formulation of SDP's business plan. The business plan will continue to inform resource mobilisation for youth development and implementation of the PYDF. The mid-term review of the PYDF will provide an opportunity to assess the implementation of the PYDF to date and make any necessary changes..

## Recommendations

15. CRGA is invited to:
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