

Pacific Youth Resource Bureau (PYRB)
Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)

FIRST CONFERENCE OF YOUTH MINISTERS
OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

(Papeete, Tahiti, French Polynesia, 30 June–1 July 1998)

REPORT

Noumea (New Caledonia)
2000

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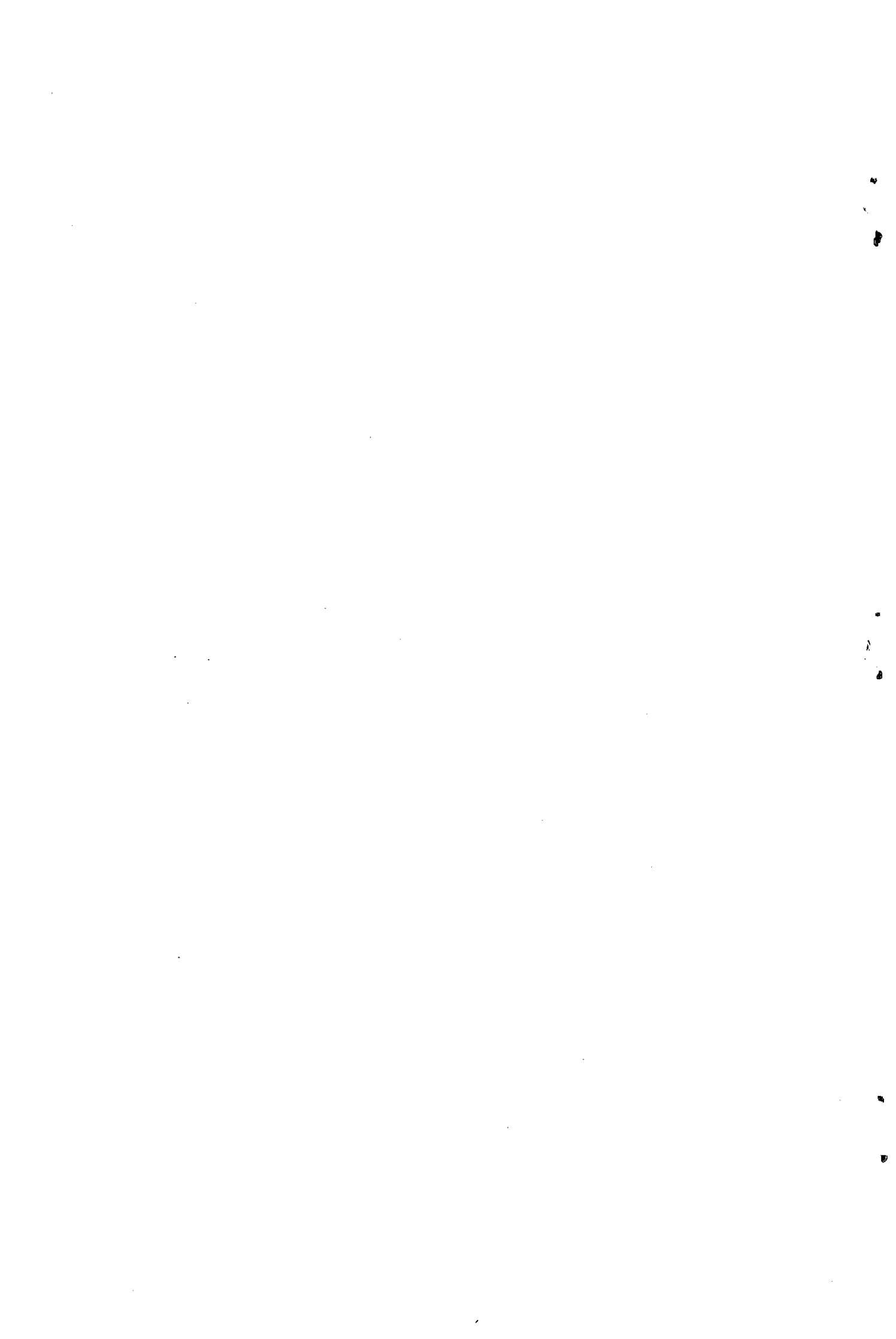
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I. INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The Youth and Adult Education Programme of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community was established in 1965 to facilitate training of out-of-school youth, community workers and young adults, and to promote awareness of the special needs and problems of young people and to strengthen regional and national coordination of youth work. In 1998, the programme was renamed the Pacific Youth Resource Bureau (PYRB) to reflect the changing role of the Youth Programme.

In fulfilling its mandate in regional coordination of youth work, the PYRB organises regional conferences where key stakeholders in youth development can gather to exchange ideas, share their experiences, and discuss emerging issues affecting Pacific Island Youth. This has resulted in a number of regional meetings organised by SPC which included a sub-regional Planning Conference on out-of-school youth held in Suva, Fiji in 1974; the First Regional Conference for Pacific Youth held in Noumea, New Caledonia in February 1986; the Second Regional Conference held in Pago Pago in June 1991; and the Third Regional Conference held in Rarotonga in July 1994.

The Third Regional Conference recommended the Fourth Regional Conference for Pacific Youth be held in 1997, in Tahiti, French Polynesia. Due to a number of factors, the Conference could not be held in 1997 and was eventually convened from 25 June to 1 July in 1998.

The meeting was attended by Ministers responsible for Youth Affairs from 21 of the 22 member countries of the Pacific Community, Secretaries or Directors of Youth, and Representatives of Non-Government Youth Organisations. In addition, a number of observers also attended representing Regional and International Agencies with a mandate in Youth Development and Donor Agencies and Governments.

The theme for the Conference was "Young People - Actors in Development". This theme promoted the important role played by young people in the development of society.

The objectives of the Conference were:

1. To review the current state of youth development in the Pacific region.
2. To develop a Platform of Action for Pacific Youth towards the year 2005 and beyond.
3. To secure Pacific Youth Ministers endorsement of the Plan of Action and their commitment towards the implementation of the Platform of Action at national level.

To achieve these objectives the Conference had three specific meetings held back to back..

1. Fourth Regional Conference for Pacific Youth, 25-27 June 1998

This was a two and a half-day meeting for all Directors and Secretaries responsible for national youth development programmes and NGOs. The meeting addressed the overall national and regional situation of youth. Some of the questions discussed include: What is the role for regional and international organisations: NGOs in Youth Development in the region? How should governments address the important youth issues? What kind of policies should be formulated and implemented? How much resources are required and what level of political will is needed to implement national youth programmes and policies?

These formed the basis for a Regional Strategy for Pacific Youth (the Pacific Youth Strategy 2005) presented to the Ministerial meeting for consideration and endorsement.

2. Meeting of the Pacific Youth Council and NGOs, 27 June

The Pacific Youth Council (PYC) convened a special session of the Council to discuss the status of the Council and identify priority areas for programme intervention.

3. Ministerial meeting on Youth, 30 June - 1 July 1998

This meeting was designed to enable the respective Ministers of all countries and territories to focus on the major issues affecting the youth of the Pacific region as presented by the Fourth Conference of Pacific Youth with the view to endorsing the Pacific Youth Strategy 2005 as the strategy framework for addressing emerging challenges for Pacific Island Youth towards the year 2005 and beyond. The Ministers also agreed for the next Regional Conference for Pacific Youth to be held at SPC Headquarters in Noumea in the year 2001, with consideration being given to a bid by the delegation from Papua New Guinea to host the Conference pending formal endorsement by the Government of Papua New Guinea.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community acknowledges the financial contributions of the United Nations Population Fund; Government of French Polynesia, Government of Australia, and the Government of France to the successful organisation of the Fourth Conference of Pacific Youth.

II. AGENDA

Opening ceremony

Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

Adoption of Agenda

Letter from the Chairperson of the 4th Regional Youth Conference to the Chairperson of the 1st Ministerial Conference

Population implications for Youth Development in the Pacific
(Presentation by Dr Gerald Haberkorn, SPC Demographer)

Reproductive and Sexual Health
(Presentation by Dr Salesi Katoaga of UNFPA)

Plenary session – Reflections on presentations

- Letter from the Chairperson of the 4th Regional Youth Conference
- Resolution of the 4th Regional Youth Conference

Ministers consider the Youth Strategy with reference to their respective country situations

Plenary session – Ministers discuss:

- their country situations
- responses and commitments to the Youth Strategy
- country follow up actions

Deliberation on proposed Ministerial Communiqué on the Youth Strategy based on commitments and actions

Adoption of Conference report

Adoption of Ministerial Communiqué on the Pacific Youth Strategy 2005

Closing ceremony

III. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

OFFICIAL OPENING

1. The opening ceremony of the First Conference of Youth Ministers of the Pacific Community took place on Tuesday morning, 30 June 1998, on the grounds of the Protestant Church of Arue, a historic place where can be found the tomb of King Pomare V.
2. The authorities and participants were officially welcomed by the Minister of Youth, Social Integration of Young People, Sport and Urban Policy of French Polynesia, The Honourable Reynald Temarii, and the Deputy Director-General of the Pacific Community, Dr Jimmie Rodgers.
3. The anthem of French Polynesia *Ia Ora O Tahiti Nui* performed by the Sanito Choir gave an official note to this ceremony. During this official opening, the choir also sung in Tahitian, English and French, a hymn to Pacific youth specially composed for this occasion.
4. The Conference prayer was offered by Reverend Godfrey Marcus, Pastor of the Parish of Arue, of the Evangelical Church of French Polynesia, to bless the Conference and guide the participants in their deliberations.
5. The Mayor of Arue, Mr Boris Léontieff, welcomed all official guests and participants to his commune of Arue. His address is appended as Annex 1 to this report.
6. The President of the Government of French Polynesia, The Honourable Gaston Flosse, welcomed all the Ministers and official representatives of SPC member countries, as well as Conference participants and observers to his land, and officially opened the Conference. The President drew attention to two points in particular: the private sector's contribution and the need to set up a system which makes it possible to adapt programmes without delay. He proposed that a working group consider how governments and international institutions can associate the private sector with their own endeavours in a more structured way. He also appealed to participants to relate to youth in a new way, based on new concepts and assisted by new technologies such as Internet. The full text of his opening address is appended as Annex 2 to this report.
7. On behalf of the Pacific Community, SPC Deputy Director-General Dr Jimmie Rodgers made a statement which is appended as Annex 3 to this report.
8. Guest speaker Eddie Cowan addressed the issues, problems and opportunities for the youth of the region, on the basis of his own experience as a youth in French Polynesia. His statement is appended as Annex 4 to this report.
9. Ambassador Garrigue-Guyonnaud, Representative of France to the Pacific Community, provided the closing remarks of this opening ceremony. His statement is appended as Annex 5 to this report.

ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON, VICE-CHAIRPERSON AND APPOINTMENT OF DRAFTING COMMITTEE

10. The Conference appointed the Minister of Youth, Social Integration of Young People, Sport and Urban Policy of French Polynesia, The Honourable Reynald Temarii, as Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson was the Minister for Employment and Youth of Papua New Guinea, The Honourable Mathias Karani, MP.
11. The Chairperson introduced The Honourable Béatrice Vernaudon, Minister of Solidarity, who would take his place to represent French Polynesia at the table during the Conference. He urged the Conference to adopt concrete measures in favour of youth rather than enter into a philosophical debate and reminded all delegations that youth are not only a source of problem but also a real wealth for all the region.

12. The Conference recorded its appreciation to the members of the Drafting Committee of the Fourth Regional Conference for Pacific Youth for its excellent work and agreed that this same committee should continue in this capacity during the First Conference of Youth Ministers.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

13. The Conference adopted its agenda as amended. The agenda is attached as Annex 7 to this Report.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE FOURTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR PACIFIC YOUTH

14. The Chairperson of the Fourth Regional Conference for Pacific Youth held from 24 to 27 June 1998, Mr Eric Tuahine, Co-ordinator of the Papeete Youth and Sports Office, highlighted the major issues arising from the deliberations of that conference, as contained in his letter presented to the First Conference of Youth Ministers of the Pacific Community. His letter is appended as Annex 7 to this report.

POPULATION IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN THE PACIFIC

15. The SPC Demographer, Dr Gerald Haberkorn, presented a brief overview on population implications for youth development in the Pacific, similar to the presentation made at the Fourth Regional Conference for Pacific Youth. Stressing that one of the key demographic features of Pacific Island countries and territories is the youthfulness of their population, he highlighted some projected population trends and addressed key social and economic development issues affecting Pacific youth, such as education, labour force participation, employment and unemployment. Finally, he concluded his presentation by focusing on future demographic developments in the Pacific and their projected implications for Pacific youth.

REPRODUCTIVE AND SEXUAL HEALTH

16. Dr Salesi Katoanga of the UNFPA/Country Support Team addressed the issue of reproductive and sexual health. His presentation highlighted the major issues raised in his paper submitted to the Fourth Regional Conference for Pacific Youth. Dr Katoanga drew attention to adolescent demographic profiles and reproductive/sexual health issues of concern, possible contributing factors, socio-medical consequences of adolescent pregnancy/childbearing as well as STDs/HIV-AIDS. Alluding to the major challenges of this situation, he mentioned available adolescent reproductive and sexual health programmes and services, and stressed the need for communication and dialogue between generations, for formal and relevant equal-opportunity education for both girls and boys, and for better IEC (information, education and communication) as well as for appropriate and adolescent-friendly reproductive health services. In conclusion, he urged Pacific leaders present at the Conference to formulate and enact concrete, appropriate and gender sensitive adolescent and reproductive health programmes, keeping in mind that sex education should be approached from a holistic rather than a purely bio-medical perspective.

17. The Conference expressed appreciation to the speakers for the quality of their presentations.

REFLECTIONS ON THE LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE FOURTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR PACIFIC YOUTH, INCLUDING THE RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE

18. All the delegations present congratulated the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the First Conference of Youth Ministers on their appointments and expressed appreciation to the Chairperson of the Fourth Regional Conference for Pacific Youth for his presentation and the excellent work carried out.

19. The delegations all thanked the Government and people of French Polynesia for their warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements provided.
20. The representative of Wallis and Futuna noted with pleasure that the letter and resolution were clear and offered practical suggestions, and urged the decision-makers to adopt and implement these solutions in their home countries.
21. The Representatives of the Cook Islands and Fiji echoed these sentiments of support, stressing that youth represent the assets of the region. The representative of Fiji added that there is a need to emphasise information and communication, to keep in touch with the young people, and that it is very important to involve them in the decision-making process in so far as it affects them.
22. SPC Deputy Director-General Jimmie Rodgers, responding to a request for clarification from several delegations, provided some background information on the establishment of the Small Island States Fund, as well as on the eligibility of countries for this fund. He explained that the fund referred to under "Pacifika Empowerment" in the Chairperson's letter had been established by the South Pacific Conference in 1996 for the specific purpose of targeting the needs of Small Island States, the latter being defined as member States with a population below 100,000.
23. Dr Rodgers took particular note of the comments by the representative of Samoa that countries with a small population do not necessarily have the largest problems and that the fund should be open to all countries and territories, priority being given to those members with the most problems. Dr Rodgers stressed however that all SPC members, regardless of whether or not they qualified as Small Island States, could apply for assistance under the other programmes and that their training needs in youth could for instance be met under the programme "Youth-Lead Pacifika".
24. The representative of Palau suggested that eligibility be based on the issues identified in the strategy so that the region can now move towards the goals identified.
25. The representative of Vanuatu thanked Dr Rodgers for his clear explanation.
26. With respect to "Pacifika Empowerment", the Representative of Fiji suggested that the programme should not focus solely on funding but should also consider other options to empower young people, such as providing opportunities for employment and health, full participation of youth in planning and decision-making and implementation of programmes, and the legal framework to enable the full participation of young people in development. The Representative further placed on record Fiji's undertaking to incorporate reproductive health services and training into Fiji's existing youth training programmes, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. He also recommended that the resolution should address the issues of child abuse and the rights of children, and that the word actors be replaced by stakeholders.
27. The representative of Papua New Guinea thanked the Conference for appointing him as Vice-Chairperson and commended the work carried out by the Fourth Regional Conference for Pacific Youth.
28. The representative of Niue thanked Dr Rodgers for his clear presentation and expressed confidence that the fund would be used wisely for the development of the region.
29. The representative of American Samoa thanked the two representatives of her country to the Fourth Regional Conference for Pacific Youth for their valuable input and expressed pleasure that her country had been included in the list of Small Island States.
30. The representative of the Federated States of Micronesia supported the proposed resolution and strategy, including the Small Island States Fund, even though his country was not included in the list of Small Island States. He hoped however that the Federated States of Micronesia might be included at a later stage.
31. Referring to the Small Island States Fund, the representative of Guam trusted that the funds would be spent wisely and that the fund operation would be the subject of careful planning.

32. The representative of Nauru expressed appreciation to all the delegations for their dedicated effort for the welfare of the youth of the Pacific.
33. The representative of New Caledonia highlighted some of the measures for youth development put in place by the Territorial Congress and the three Provinces. He also stressed the past support provided by New Caledonia to the SPC Youth Programme and its commitment to regional youth activities, noting that the current President of PYC was Mr Joe Streeter of New Caledonia. Finally, he provided an overview of the recently signed Noumea Accord which provides a consensual framework for the political evolution of New Caledonia and its youth.
34. The representative of Tonga noted with interest the explanations provided by the Secretariat on the operation of and eligibility for the Small Island States Fund and asked the Conference to note that the latest figures indicated that Tonga's population was of the order of 96,000.
35. The representative of Solomon Islands thanked CYP for the assistance provided in developing the country's National Youth policy.
36. The representative of Tokelau stressed that everyone was once young and that the issue was not so much to learn about the problems of youth as to harness and nurture the dynamic energy of youth. To demonstrate the commitment of his Government in this area, he gave the undertaking that Tokelau would match each dollar invested by the Fund in his country. The representative also formally invited the SPC Youth Development Adviser to accompany the Director General of SPC on his scheduled visit to Tokelau in November this year.
37. The representative of French Polynesia stated that her Government was very happy to host the Conference particularly as it coincided with the internal self-government celebrations and the beginning of the Heiva Festival. The issues discussed at the Conference were very relevant to French Polynesia as it was currently dealing with the economic changes of the post-nuclear testing period, which would necessitate important social and economic adaptation. Alluding to the important issues discussed at the Conference such as collaboration and integration in the delivery of services to youth, she recommended that this process should start within the SPC programmes themselves and that each SPC programme should incorporate youth as a priority area.
38. The representative of Tuvalu conveyed the regrets of Tuvalu's Minister for Women, Health and Community Affairs (under which the Youth desk is located) who had been unable to attend. She stated that she would have to reserve Tuvalu's position on the document until she could contact her authorities but would not stand against the consensus of the Conference.
39. SPC Deputy Director-General Dr Jimmie Rodgers explained that there would be an opportunity to incorporate comments and additions from the delegations into the final document and communiqué.
40. The Conference accepted and endorsed by consensus the letter from the Chairperson of the Fourth Regional Conference for Pacific Youth, including the attached resolution, noting the revised version would incorporate the suggested amendments. **The adopted Youth Communiqué is available as a separate document from the SPC Secretariat.**
41. The Conference expressed sincere appreciation to the governments of Australia and France for their financial contributions to the organisation of this Conference.

REFLECTIONS ON PRESENTATIONS ON "POPULATION IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN THE PACIFIC" AND "REPRODUCTIVE AND SEXUAL HEALTH"

42. SPC Deputy Director-General Dr Jimmie Rodgers apologised to the French-speaking delegations for the non-availability of Dr Katoanga's document in French, the document having been received too late to allow translation into French on time.

43. The representative of Nauru thanked Dr Gerald Haberkorn and Dr Salisi Katoanga for their well-documented presentations and solicited the assistance of Dr Katoanga on behalf of Nauru.

RESPONSES AND COMMITMENTS TO THE YOUTH STRATEGY

44. The Conference agreed that this item had been subsumed in the discussion on the Letter from the Chairperson of the Fourth Regional Youth Conference and the Conference resolution.

COUNTRY FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

45. The Chairperson agreed to ask each delegation in turn to outline the initiatives in favour of youth developed in their countries.

46. The Representative of American Samoa stated that her government was committed to the development of her Territory's youth in all areas. Following on from the recent establishment of a Department of Youth and Women's Affairs, American Samoa would continue to search for additional resources to develop programmes for youth.

47. The Representative of Australia explained that, as a donor, Australia was in a slightly different position at this Conference, but that some of the issues raised were very applicable to his country. He referred to a number of programmes and policies in place to address issues affecting young people in Australia in the following areas: communicating with young people and enhancing their image (national network of Youth Officers; Web site; the Voices of Youth Initiative; the Commonwealth Minister for Youth Affairs Media Award; the Young Australian of the Year Awards); education and training (employment; literacy; civic education; partnerships with the private sector and community involvement; the Work for the Dole Programme; and the Green Corps Programme); young people and health (the National Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy; the National Health Policy for Children and Young People; the National Mental Health Strategy-NMHS; and the National Drug Strategy); at risk and homeless young people (the National Campaign against Violence and Crime-NCAVAC; Job Placement Employment and Training-JPET; the Youth Homeless Pilot Programme; and Young People at Risk of Not Completing Year 12); and international development issues (the Young Ambassadors for Development Programme).

48. The Representative of the Cook Islands indicated that the youth portfolio is a fairly new one and that his government is currently in the process of formulating an appropriate policy. With respect to the outlined commitments by countries around the table, he shared with the other delegates his apprehension that policies and political commitments can be easily changed.

49. The Representative of the Federated States of Micronesia said that his Government is dedicated to building the future of the country together with its young people, even though youth development only started four or five years ago; students for instance are brought to the seat of Government to gain first-hand experience of governing a country and there are now over 100 youth organisations established in the Federation.

50. The Representative of Fiji responded to the statement made by the Representative of the Cook Islands in a positive manner, encouraging countries to foster positive changes for youth by introducing policies for the benefit of young people. Fiji's programmes targeted at the development of youth focus on (a) personal development and (b) providing an enabling environment for youth development. The following three strategies are used: (i) motivational training and improvement of self-esteem, (ii) skills training for employment and self-employment and (iii) policy development. Fiji's Government and Ministry for Youth Employment Opportunities and Sports are committed to developing programmes for youth who represent the country's future, some existing programmes being already in line with the strategy recommended by the Conference.

51. The Representative of France did not want to go into detail about well-known existing measures relating to employment and education/literacy in France, but focused his remarks on the experience of youth

challenges (“Défis jeunes”) based on awards for projects set up by youth between 15 and 28 years old, with 51% funding from the Ministry of Youth and Sports, 30% from the private sector which have to be actively identified by the youth themselves, and the rest from NGOs. Citing a practical example of one such project, he stressed that the youth challenges represented the major success of the last ten years with respect to youth development activities. Insisting on the importance of international solidarity, he expressed support for the Small Islands States Fund which facilitates practical training and indicated that France would contribute again to the Fund this year as it had the previous year.

52. The Representative of Guam said that the Department of Youth Affairs had been set up twenty years ago and that the youth strategy was incorporated into the island-wide Vision 2001 Strategy, involving the private sector, the Government and the youth in partnership. Some of the elements defined in the proposed Conference strategy are already being implemented on Guam, together with numerous new programmes. The current approach used in Guam is for volunteers and youth workers to go to the youth and work with them in their homes and family environment rather than the other way round. The Representative made a commitment to incorporate into Guam’s Vision 2001 Strategy any programmes contained in the Conference strategy and which do not exist on Guam.

53. The Representative of Kiribati indicated that his country was now experiencing problems with its youth and that he would therefore submit the proposed strategy to Cabinet for consideration.

54. The Representative of Nauru stressed the necessity, as leaders and Ministers of Youth, to find concrete solutions to empower the youth of the region for the future prosperity of the Pacific. He informed other delegations that youth development had started in 1994 in Nauru to become a separate Ministry for Health and Youth Affairs in 1997. Most of the activities centred on helping youth who had been unable to obtain scholarships to study. Nauru had recently finalised its National Youth Policy with assistance from Tangata Vainerere and was now in the process of implementing it.

55. The Representative of New Caledonia said that his Territory was now at a historic point for its youth and all its population with the signing of the Nōumea Accord, and that the pragmatic Strategy proposed by the Conference would assist New Caledonia considerably in its youth development efforts.

56. The Representative of Niue stated that the Niue Government was working together with all partners to ensure youth promotion and development on Niue.

57. The Representative of Palau warmly thanked the Australian representative for financial aid to assist Palau’s Youth Office obtain computer equipment and requested further help towards the needs assessment survey aimed at developing a national youth policy. She noted that some of the initiatives proposed in the strategy already exist in Palau and stressed the need to remain open to innovative ideas. She stated that Palau’s purpose was to empower youth groups in rural areas to establish their own organisations. She further made a commitment to work at grassroots level to develop the National Youth Policy. The policy will help identify funding sources and ensure continuity of services to the youths of the Republic of Palau.

58. The Representative of Papua New Guinea stated that his Government had begun the process of mainstreaming youth participation in youth development through legislative framework at all levels of Government and that Papua New Guinea would be happy to share the results of this experience with other countries. The Ministry for Employment and Youth was now finalising a five-year plan for youth and would endeavour to incorporate in it some of the points proposed in the Conference strategy. Papua New Guinea would also seek assistance of agencies and donors to improve its national capacity to mainstream youth development initiatives. The Representative stressed the need for a regional mechanism to co-ordinate information and initiatives related to youth and urged all countries to make a commitment to the Pacific Youth Resource Bureau (PYRB) by paying their pledges annually.

59. The Representative of French Polynesia referred to the initiatives that led to a lowering of the early pregnancy rate in her Territory. Under the Presidency of the Honourable Gaston Flosse, the Government has fostered a global policy for youth, focusing on sport and leisure and, since 1996, on social and professional integration. Practical initiatives for employment of young people, applying to about 4000 young people, have been implemented whereby the Government pays an allowance for 8 months and the private sector

endeavours to do whatever it can to employ these young people. The Government has set up an Interministerial Committee on Youth which focuses mainly on information needs of young people and the development of preventive measures to assist youth in a situation of family and social breakdown. In conclusion, she thanked the Governments of Australia and New Zealand for the scholarships provided each year to allow young people from French Polynesia to continue their studies in these two countries.

60. Speaking as Minister for Youth, Social Integration, Sport and Urban Policy of French Polynesia, and not as the Chairperson of the Conference, the Honourable Reynald Temarii stressed his desire to establish direct relations between himself and other Youth Ministers of the region, to foster regional co-operation and exchanges of ideas and experience.

61. The Representative of Samoa expressed his strong belief that all Governments of the region should have a national youth policy and that Governments, the community and the young people should co-operate actively in the implementation of youth development activities.

62. The Representative of Solomon Islands emphasised the need for Governments, the private sector and communities to work together on youth issues and indicated that the Solomon Islands Ministry of Youth and Women works closely with other ministries to assist young people. He stated that a youth policy has been drafted and is ready to be endorsed by Cabinet.

63. The Representative of Tokelau said that the Titular Head of Tokelau would report back to the Council of Elders and youth groups immediately on arrival, in order to brief them with a view to developing local policies, including a national youth policy. From these discussions, a remit will be submitted to the National Assembly to seek a commitment of resources for the development of such resources and their implementation thereof. The impending visit of the SPC Director-General and the SPC Youth Development Adviser in November of this year will provide the impetus and real focus on youth issues. The isolation of Tokelau youth was particularly mentioned and a request was made to the donor community to consider funding exchange programmes, study tours and attachments in regional youth ministries and organisations. The translation of material pertaining to general youth problems and issues for youth themselves, parents, teachers and leaders is a further crucial need.

64. The Representative of Tonga reported that youth was a division under the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture in Tonga and that the Government has committed part of the budget to the Tonga National Youth Congress. Youth activities in Tonga focus on the areas of development of a national policy, youth empowerment and human development.

65. The Representative of Tuvalu remarked that Tuvalu has a Youth Office and that the National Strategic Development Plan for 1995-1998 includes the formulation of a youth development policy that Tuvalu hopes to achieve with the assistance of agencies such as SPC. Tuvalu has also ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Ministry of Health, Women and Community Affairs addresses the national level whereas the island communities operate at the local and community level where traditional structures are strong and families intact. The Tuvalu National Youth Council is the national NGO that covers all the youth organisations over the islands. Future proposed developments include a Department for Youth and Welfare Affairs within the Ministry of Health, Women and Community Affairs, an increase in personnel, and discussions with overseas donors like ESCAP to strengthen national planning on youth activities; this will be reflected in the next development plan for 1999-2002.

66. The Representative of Vanuatu informed the Conference that the Department of Youth and Sport, formerly under the Ministry of Internal Affairs was recently transferred to the Ministry of Education. The department is currently working on a policy to help youth, covering topics such as sport and primary-level education, and technical vocational training to assist secondary school leavers. Under the current structure, two young people are appointed in each of the six Provinces, one with responsibility for youth and the other for sport. These young people have received Government funding in the past and the Department is now looking for additional expertise and funding. Vanuatu takes the issue of youth development very seriously and will endeavour to attempt to implement the proposed Conference strategy.

67. The Representative of Wallis and Futuna stressed that young people in his Territory avail themselves of the opportunity for free services in primary and secondary education, health care and sport activities. He alluded to the role of the Territorial Committee on Youth. He indicated that Wallis and Futuna has benefited from the assistance of the Small Island States Fund and hoped that it will continue to get the same benefit from the Empowerment Pacifica Programme. To conclude, he thanked SPC and all donors for their commitment to implement the Conference strategy.

68. SPC Deputy Director-General Dr Jimmie Rodgers summarised the presentations by pointing out the general positive feeling of achievement, since a number of countries and territories are already planning and implementing programmes for youth while the others are not very far behind.

PRESENTATION BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRALIA AS A DONOR

69. The Representative of Australia, Mr Graeme Wilson, Consul General in New Caledonia, addressed the Conference on Australia's position as a donor. The full text of his statement is appended as Annex 6 to this report.

OTHER BUSINESS

1999 Pacific Games

70. The Representative of Guam distributed some information and pamphlets relating to the next Pacific Games, to be hosted by Guam in 1999.

Internet site for youth of the Pacific

71. Mr Sitiveni Halapua, Representative of PIDP, provided an overview of what PIDP has done in the field of Internet and alluded to the possibility of developing an Internet home page for youth, in collaboration with SPC. He suggested that the target audience be clearly identified and that the site should be for youth rather than for policy-makers.

72. SPC Deputy Director-General Jimmie Rodgers stated that this collaboration could take place within the context of the inter-agencies collaboration mentioned in the Chairperson's letter as one of the outcomes of the Fourth regional Conference for Pacific Youth.

Feedback by a young person from the Delegation of Fiji

73. The Chairperson invited the youngest member of the Conference, a member of the delegation of Fiji, Mr Aca Gauna Vuli, Assistant Youth Co-ordinator of the Fiji Red Cross Society, to provide some feedback to the Conference on his feelings about the discussions that have taken place.

74. Speaking as a youth, the Representative thanked the Conference for the opportunity to attend the deliberations and address the delegates, stressing that it had been an enlightening experience. Mr Vuli expressed appreciation to regional Ministers for their support in youth development work in the region. He was also appreciative of having been selected to attend this Conference. He explained that, to young people, it often seemed that the main obstacle to their needs was the Government system.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

75. The Conference adopted its report as amended.

CLOSING

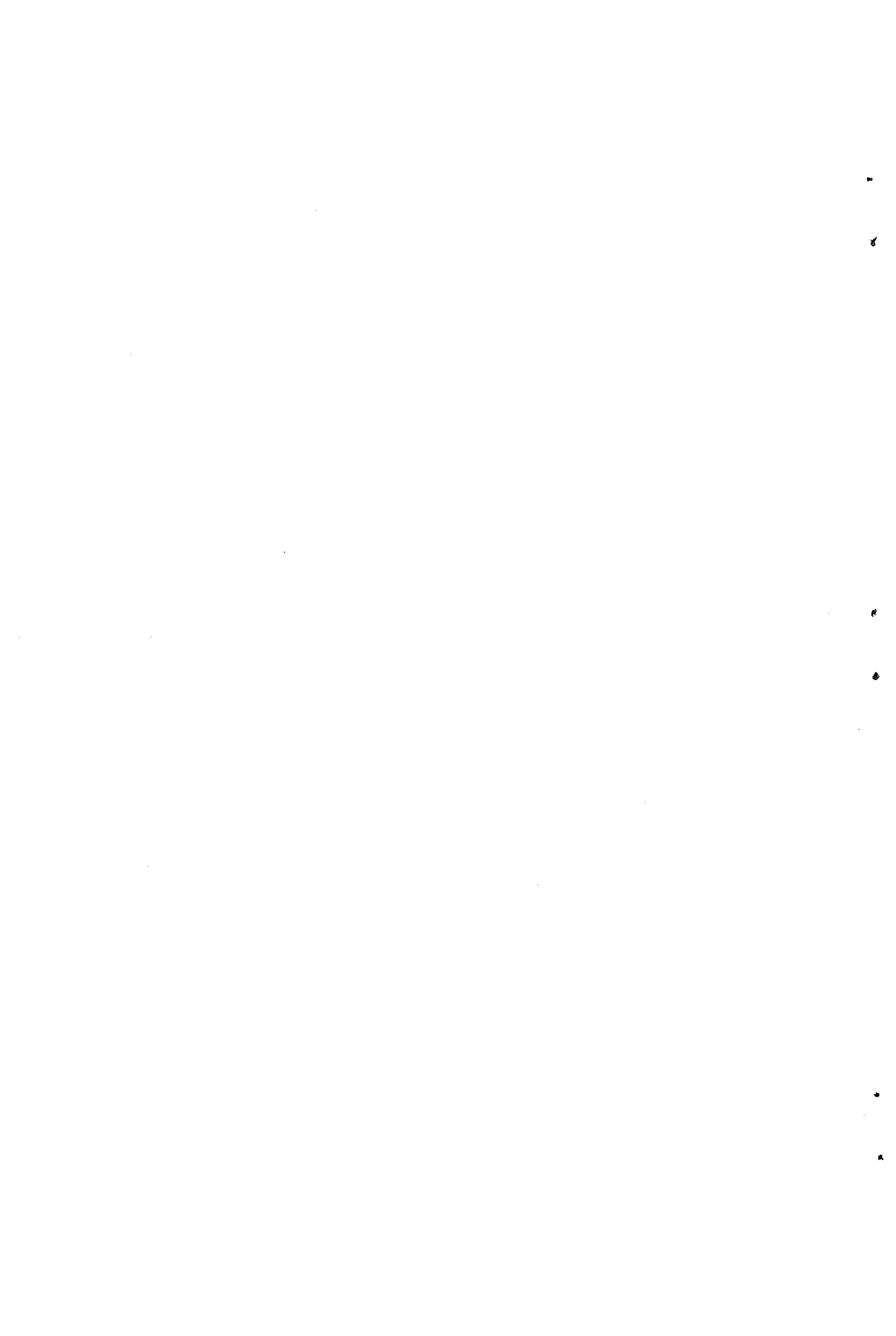
76. On behalf of SPC, Deputy Director-General Jimmie Rodgers conveyed to the President of the Government and the people of French Polynesia sincere appreciation for the warmth of their hospitality. He

also thanked all the delegates and participants, as well as the Conference team, for their dedicated efforts. He emphasised the historical outcome of this Conference in setting a collective direction for the development of youth through the resolution.

77. Speaking on behalf of all the participants, the Representative of Papua New Guinea expressed gratitude and appreciation to the host country and to SPC for ensuring the success of this Conference. He also thanked the NGOs present, as well as the delegates and youth representatives. Finally he stressed that it was now up to the countries to ensure that the resolution became a reality.

78. The Chairperson thanked everyone who had contributed to the success of this Conference, including the donors, the SPC and in particular the staff of the Youth Department of French Polynesia for their hard work. He also expressed appreciation to everyone for their confidence in choosing him as chairperson, and for their support, friendship and solidarity during the proceedings. Finally he stressed that the youth of the region would judge the outcome of this Conference and its future by the action taken to implement the decisions taken. He wished everyone a safe journey home.

79. The Representative of Wallis and Futuna delivered the closing prayer. He also joined the previous speakers in thanking warmly everyone involved in the Conference.



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WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE MAYOR OF ARUE, MR BORIS LEONTIEFF

Once again, Arue has the opportunity of hosting an important international meeting dealing with the future of young people in the Pacific.

And once again, as Mayor of this municipality where young people are given the place of honour, it gives me great pleasure to be able to welcome all those who made the effort to come to meet here to discuss the needs of future generations and what we must do today to ensure that those who are taking their first steps in life will be happy tomorrow.

Please allow me to share a small anecdote which is rich in meaning. Last week, just after taking part in the opening ceremonies for the Fourth International Pacific Youth Conference, our Minister of Youth and Sports, Mr Reynald Temarii, and I had the privilege of participating in what is one of the high points of the year for young people in French Polynesia: the launching of the famous "Saga" organised by the directors of the Arue Sailing School. This project, which is not only generous but also remarkably intelligent and productive on the educational level, allows hundreds of children to spend a few unforgettable weeks learning about sailing during the school holidays.

On that occasion, the initiator and principle organiser of the "Saga", Mr. Henri Cornette de Saint Cyr – to whom I am happy to pay the public homage which he deserves – said one short phrase which I feel summarises everything that our activities for youth must be; I quote: " For these children, the Saga is a small flame which is being lit and which will never go out again."

This is the goal of our work with young people. This is what we should have in mind every day as elected officials at the local level or at other levels of the government, youth ministers, heads of youth organisations, instructors, educators... and even just parents. We must be driven by the desire to light in the eyes and the minds of our children that "little flame which will never go out again".

We must help them discover from among all the bright stars which have, from time immemorial, helped the inhabitants of the Pacific find their way across the great ocean, that new star which will be theirs alone and will give them the courage to set out on voyages beyond the horizon, confident in their own success.

For some, that bright star could be sports, for others, music or dance or some other art form... For yet others, it will be one of the numerous physical and intellectual activities which open the way to personal fulfilment and development for young people.

Our duty as their elders is to allow each of them to discover his or her own star; to open the maximum number of possible paths to them so that while they are learning about life, they all have the possibility of escaping the failure which comes from a life without purpose, without faith, without accomplishments.

Because we must not forget that all is not rosy on the shores of the Pacific. Even in Tahiti, an island blessed by the gods which modern mythology sometimes presents as paradise on earth, thousands of young people are living in difficult conditions which promote failure.

On this rocky terrain, we are all equal. No one needs to tell anyone else what to do. We must simply work together to find solutions, share both the happy and unhappy experiences, analyse them together and draw conclusions from them...along with concrete actions. What must not happen, as one young man who had participated in the Rarotonga Conference complained to our local press, is for the recommendations formulated here to remain hollow words. Our children's future is at stake, so we do not have the right to be pretentious, egotistical or negligent.

Nor should we forget that it is not enough to help each one of our children to find his or her own path. We must also follow them step by step, guide them, counsel them, give them physical, intellectual and moral strength, and still be at their sides when insurmountable obstacles rise up before them. Our role as public figures, who have taken on the responsibility of being of service to others not for the

glory but for the feeling of having accomplished something in the social realm, is to allow our fellow citizens, particularly young people, to further their personal development. Let's not forget that politics is the art of making things possible. Our role is to allow our youth to realise their dreams.

Ladies and gentlemen, Ministers of Youth Affairs and youth leaders who assist them in accomplishing this difficult mission, please allow me to express the hope that this meeting, which is focused on ensuring the well-being of all the young people in our countries, will be particularly fruitful.

May the exchange of your experiences and the fruits of your collective imagination assist each young person to find, with the help of God, his or her "little flame which will never go out again".

Thank you.

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF FRENCH POLYNESIA,
MR GASTON FLOSSE**

To all our close or distant neighbours who accepted our invitation, *Ia orana 'e manava*. I wish you welcome.

Our country is celebrating, as it does every year at this time. Our Internal self-government day is also the occasion each year for contests of all kinds, dances, singing, music, sport and especially, that most Pacific event, outrigger canoe racing (*Va'a*), which, as you all know, symbolises our glorious oceanic journeys of antiquity, which for that very reason is the central motif in our flag.

My welcome to you is made even warmer by the fact that this gathering of Youth Ministers is the first since the inception of our organisation. It was about time for such an event to take place. Apart from the Pacific Community's programmes as a whole, it is worth remembering that these activities can only be significant if they are properly tailored to our younger generations' concerns. And those activities which are our responsibility today are not the least of our obligations.

For this reason, I wish on your behalf to thank the Governments of Australia and France who agreed to provide funding for this meeting. May I also on your behalf thank the Mayor of the Commune of Arue, which is our host. Our gratitude is also due to the Evangelical Church of French Polynesia which has so graciously made this beautiful faré available to us and which has shown such generous hospitality, in keeping with our tradition. I could not omit Air New Zealand, who rewarded the winner of our poster competition. Lastly, I would like to thank all the volunteers who helped with the arrangements for this event.

I salute the important work done by the delegates who have taken stock of and analysed the facts, broached possible remedies, compared their experience in the field with others, and, in particular, prepared the recommendations which our own two-day session will in its turn be considering in order to produce final resolutions.

Allow me to draw your attention to two points in particular: the private sector's contribution and the need to set up a system which makes it possible to adapt programmes without delay.

Before addressing the first point, I would convey to you the apologies of Mr Little, the founding President of the International Youth Foundation. A meeting of this organisation's governing body prevents him from being with us today, as I had hoped in the circular letter I sent you.

As you are aware, the main feature of the International Youth Foundation is the large-scale involvement of the private sector. The Foundation has analysed the business of various private companies throughout the world.

The results are an eye-opener. In 1992, governments and international institutions injected approximately 50 billion US dollars into developing countries, with the private sector adding 25 billion US dollars in the form of investment.

In 1998, public development assistance remained at a constant level, while private investment rose to ten times that figure, or 250 billion US dollars. Which means that companies such as Coca-Cola, Kellogs and Nestlé now have a major impact on the people in the countries where they operate, and thus in particular on youth in the 5-18 years age group. And that impact has not escaped the attention of the World Bank for example, which now associates private enterprise with all its programmes.

What lessons can we learn from this new deal?

Firstly, that governments cannot alone fully fund youth programmes. Also, that Churches, charities and non-government organisations, despite their praiseworthy and sometimes pioneering work, will not overcome the problem. Lastly, that as world public development support is dwindling, it is to be feared that the present thinning act of funding and action will become quite inadequate for the size of the task at hand.

What can be done to remedy this? I would venture to propose that a working group consider the following question: how can we associate the private sector with our own endeavours in a more structured way?

The second point I would invite our Conference to reflect upon relates to improving the way we could revisit youth programmes. As the Minister of Youth pointed out in his address on 24th June, youth moves faster than we can think. That is an undeniable fact. And it gives us a difficult job. Our dialogue with youth must be prompt, open and mindful of the rapid changes in its own questions. Our task is in fact, when all is said and done, to stop thinking of the younger generation just in terms of their misfortunes. The time for a minor mental revolution has come – we now need to strive to release the unexpressed or hesitant potential of our youth. In this regard, I fully subscribe to the relevant remarks made by the Deputy Director-General of the Pacific Community: the days of detecting ills and remedies are over. The time has now come to sound out potential. May my message be clear. It would be culpable shortsightedness if we turned a deaf ear to our turbulent youngsters. But it would be similarly risky to do nothing more than moon, because our young people carry in them the seeds of what tomorrow will be. The Maori writer Alan Duff says and repeats to his fellows: “Let’s stop mooning and get down to work”.

I am tempted to broaden that appeal by inviting all the participants to relate to youth in a new way, based on new concepts and assisted by new technologies.

Those new concepts can be summed up as follows. It is up to the young generations to define their own objectives as only they can. It is our imperative duty to ensure that their quest is catered for in the full range of action we conduct.

New technologies open unprecedented avenues for implementing this two-pronged approach. The impressive church network has already enabled young people to communicate in a single voice, that of Christianity. Now, Internet allows us to communicate through rapid transmission, almost instantaneous visibility and live interactivity. Thus a vast field opens up for youth to talk, exchange, react, clarify their ambitions and dreams for the future and draw the outline of the society in which they will be the stakeholders! A rich harvest of indications can be reaped to let the leaders that we are meet our youth’s aspirations appropriately!

With willingness, then, I suggest that this topic and the practical application flowing from it, be given serious contemplation by your Conference.

After that review of past work and having being converted to the need to innovate, your Conference will be in a position to set decisive new directions for the future. These new options will need to be flexible enough to be adapted at a moment’s notice to change. The truth is that youth only really communicates with youth. Young people are only their true themselves when in their own company. Our duty is to reassure them so that they can be better understood.

In that way, they will feel more at home, in their own cultural environment, in the Ocean that new technologies will help them get to know more fully, at last overcoming that obstacle to understanding that the vast distances between us so long represented.

Distinguished delegates, I declare the First Conference of Youth Ministers of the Pacific Community open.

**ADDRESS BY DR JIMMIE RODGERS,
DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY**

Greetings from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and I welcome you all to this beautiful land of Tahiti.

May I first of all express, on behalf of the Ministers and the delegations from our respective member countries and territories gathered here today, to you Mr. President of the Government of French Polynesia, your Government and your people our most sincere gratitude and appreciation for hosting not only the Fourth Regional Conference of Pacific Youth, but also and more importantly, the first ever Conference of Youth Ministers of the Pacific Community.

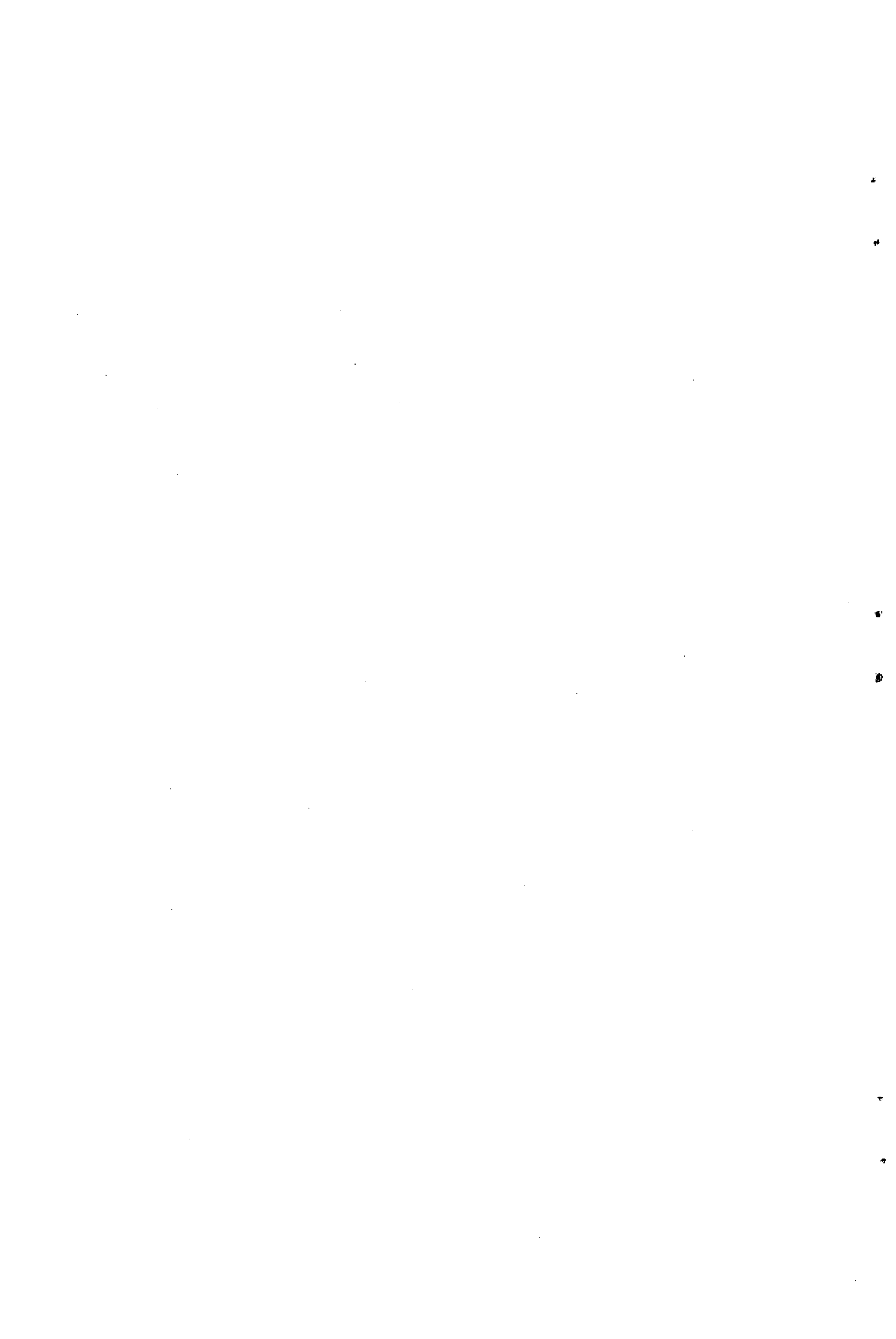
I wish to put on record, Mr. President, that we have been very ably supported by a very dedicated secretariat your Government has graciously given to support the two Conferences, and we have also been overwhelmed and greatly appreciative of the Tahitian hospitality. Thank you very much.

This Conference has created history. It's breaking new ground. Not only it is the first meeting of Youth Ministers; it is also the meeting in which the region is looking for a new direction in responding to the needs of our young people in the Pacific. It is our hope that during the next two days, this honourable Conference will agree on the future direction of youth programmes at both the national and regional levels. It is our hope also that our respective commitments to our young people will be embodied in the outcomes of this Conference.

The Fourth Regional Conference of Pacific Youth had met over the last few days and will be presenting to this Conference important issues for your deliberations.

I ask for God's divine guidance to be with our deliberations at this Conference, as we collectively discuss ways to respond appropriately to the increasing call for attention by our young people in the Pacific.

May God bless you all in your deliberations and I wish the Conference a very success.



STATEMENT BY GUEST SPEAKER EDDIE COWAN

This gathering of Pacific countries to discuss island youth and their future at the dawn of the second millennium is a wonderful opportunity to speak out.

My memories are of a carefree childhood, filled with learning simple family values, austerity, the respect of others and sharing. As I was born in 1960, I grew with French nuclear testing in the Pacific, which began in 1963. As teenagers, we did not talk a lot about it, and we did not realise the economic importance of these experiments for the entire country and the disruption this was going to bring about.

The final years of my schooling, from 1977 to 1980, were spent in Noumea, New Caledonia. They allowed me to form a vision of myself as a person and gave me the opportunity to engage in discussions and exchanges with other cultures which were still quite inaccessible to most people.

After completing my technical training in Civil Engineering, the first 12 years of my work life were spent as a manager in the public service, for the first half of that time in the Papeete Municipal Works Department and then in a rural engineering service, whose scope of action extended to the eastern and southern parts of French Polynesia.

The year 1993 was decisive in more ways than one:

- it was the year that I relinquished the privileges and security of fixed employment;
- that year began a period of unemployment and two years of wandering in the desert. This was a time of digging deep within, questioning myself and then rebuilding.
- An ardent desire emerged to be an actor and not merely a spectator with regards to the profound changes in French Polynesian society – a desire which now exerts its inexorable influence.
- In some ways, it was a state of siege.

That year, protests against French nuclear testing in the Pacific began to make themselves heard with an increasing frequency both within the country and in neighbouring countries. Appeals were made to public opinion world-wide. It was the inevitable awakening to the “after CEP” (Pacific Testing Centre), the end of the glorious thirties. As I had become aware of the drastic changes in store for the entire community, I felt that I had to change my attitude in order to better understand them. This led to a new mind-set.

In 1995, a marvellous opportunity to take up a challenge presented itself. This challenge was to give life to a project of building a children's village in Papara with the assistance of civil society volunteers and many other people. It was a head-on collision with the problems of marginalisation, the disintegration of the family, and children in distress. Today, some 38 children benefit from this care structure, based on the principle of providing substitute mothers to children, generally groups of siblings, whose family situations are very poor, and whose security requires that in their precise situations they be placed in an institution.

This concept, which has spread around the world during some 40 years of experience, includes working with these children until they reach adulthood, by preparing them to become independent individuals and to find their place in society and in the labour force. It is a long-term investment.

My recent experience with children and young people has led to an observation which I would like to share with you. It looks at young people, but this cannot be done without bringing to mind the society to which they belong.

In French Polynesia, as elsewhere, a difference can be seen in young people depending on whether they are city dwellers or they have been protected because they live in the islands, far from the city, or in favourable family settings.

Due to their isolation and the simple living conditions of their families, who are often very modest or without resources, young people in the islands do not receive the best simulation for scholastic achievement.

And even when they acquire training, the possibilities of paid employment are even less frequent in the islands. Luckily, young people there do have contacts with various associations and religious groups.

Another fortunate aspect is that families still function in the traditional manner, and this contributes to preserving a stable framework for young adults. However, the fact remains that contact with the outside world, an important element of personal development, must be extended and strengthened.

The clouds darken when these families, often ill-prepared, move to the city in search of work. This frequently ends in disappointment accompanied by the excesses visible all around us and the serious consequences they have on young people: e.g. crowded and unhealthy living conditions, alcoholism, violence, a loss of the sense of responsibility, idleness, delinquency, educational and emotional deficiencies.

Quite often returning to the family in the islands is not something which can even be considered as everything has been abandoned, and going home would be looked on as a failure, which those involved cannot admit and do not want to have talked about by their entourage.

People prefer the amenities and temptations which the city can offer to the boredom due to a lack of activities which they would find if they went back to the islands. Such is the problem of traditional societies when faced with the phenomena of modern day-consumption and its consequences on a section of the community.

However, must we accept this as unavoidable?

It is up to each person to make his or her own analysis so as to determine his or her choices. But it is also the responsibility of the government, through meetings such as this one today, and public authorities to respond to these expectations, by working with both young people through education and association contacts and adults. The fact is that children mimic their parents and the image of our current sensual society is not the best example for young people in their exploratory phase. This concerns everyone, parents and leaders at all levels. Let's show a bit of restraint, at the risk of seeing young people mimic adult behaviours, while, at the same time, looking with derision on their elders and leaders. The ability to understand and analyse appears at an ever younger age in children and teenagers.

The family - the glue which binds society together - is disintegrating due to a loss of the basic guideposts, leaving the way open to individualism. Young people must live with this culture of "everyone for themselves" whether they like it or not. Big industry has understood that in terms of consumption, young people are their primary targets as they can influence the behaviour of older people. Young French Polynesians have not escaped from this rule.

Parents are confronted with rapid changes in modern society over which they have little or no control. Often young people cannot get any answers at home, as their lives are light years removed from their parents' own experience. Exchange takes place in gangs of young people using membership and recognition systems which they have developed with an insidious challenge to older people to try to decode their meanings.

Young Polynesians, who are not adverse to physical effort, may find that they have no natural abilities for education or professional competition. While in this past, this may have been the part of the lifestyle on isolated islands, such is not the case today.

Fortunately, a large number of examples indicate a change in mentalities. Young people are becoming involved and are taking control of themselves.

However, the fact remains that language is a barrier to knowledge for those young people who do not speak French well. Whether through frustration or resignation, this brings about a feeling of not being part of the established norm.

While a great deal of effort is going into developing *Reo Maohi*, is it really reasonable to imagine that tomorrow mathematics or philosophy will be taught in Tahitian or Marquesian?

Let's preserve our Polynesian culture, preserve the lifestyle which characterises our community, but let's do it in such a way that we do not cut ourselves off from the outside world. Cultural revival is the expression of a search for our roots which we can share with an outside world which is looking for authenticity and spontaneity. It is our most valuable asset for developing tourism.

It is not necessary to highlight the contradictions between the requirements of suitable modern professionalism and the preservation of a French Polynesian lifestyle. However, we live with these contradictions every day in varying degrees. Isn't this precisely what surprises visitors? A balance will be found and compromise won't be necessary.

Are we really obliged to reproduce the effects of strict competitiveness, which leaves no place for anyone other than those at the top? What will become of the large majority? Must we accept, without any struggle, that certain people will have to be excluded?

Tolerance makes it possible for us to live together and keeps us from creating a society in French Polynesia which has two classes, i.e. those who have money and those who don't.

Is it anti-economic to give humble consideration to the difficulties which our communities face with the rapid changes in the world and their need to stand firm to re-gather their forces at the risk of losing their footing? Is there no middle road between totalitarianism and unbridled liberalism which could still be used?

The recently announced elimination of mandatory military service is also regrettable as this was a means of training and education for young people. It gave those youth who did not fit into society the opportunity to excel, in terms of both effort and constraint, , thereby providing long-term development of their personal potentials. Let's hope that the customised military service being tested in the Austral Islands and the Marquesas will be continued.

Over the past few years, the development of oyster pearl farming has created a beehive of activity in the Tuamotu and Gambier Islands. Nor has tourism factor been left behind. With varying degrees of intensity, the government is implementing measures to encourage a return to the islands. A great deal of imagination and perseverance will be needed to maintain the community's interest in the islands.

We could justifiably put a lot of hope into certain other initiatives in the islands. Lagoon and ocean fisheries come to mind in particular, along with home-stay tourism. Family pensions are being set up and expanded. This is a trade which is accessible to young people. It allows them to live in their home environment while at the same time providing them contact with foreigners. Among their other natural assets, French Polynesians have their warm welcome and folklore.

I am very optimistic about our country's development, on the condition that certain precautions are taken in terms of social cohesion, in particular aid to parents in difficulties, both the young and not so young, from over the period of the past three decades.

With globalisation, a page in the history of our planet, and by extension our country, is being written at top speed, with a capital S, as probably has never before been seen in our small Pacific communities.

Frontiers are opening up one after the other, and tomorrow we will all be citizens of the Planet Earth. Countries cannot claim certain prerogatives for themselves even on their own soil, if they are to the detriment of the liberty, security and health of their neighbours.

The challenges globalisation places on the equilibrium of our respective societies can be found in the pace of the changes which will take place and in our capacity to assimilate them.

But do we have to come to a complete halt in order to limit the unwanted effects and preserve, at all costs, our respective cultures and specific characteristics?

Must we wipe the slate clean and base our lifestyle on Europe and the West?

Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going? Eternal questions. Paul Gauguin noted them in his time and since then they have been and will continue to be raised by others.

In a world rocked by the profound changes occurring all around us, I call on young people not to let others take their place. They must find the answers within themselves, through daily striving rewarded by the perspective of learning about life and one's own future which takes form as we each live out our lives.

This is very true, but the difficulty is making the message understandable, so that the expression "author of one's own destiny" is not a hollow concept.

"Let's take control of our lives and accept responsible for our actions, and, with patience and confidence, build our future."

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR GARRIGUE-GUYONNAUD,
REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY**

I would first like to thank Mr Gaston Flosse, President of the Government of French Polynesia, for his hospitality in the great Polynesian tradition during the Fourth Pacific Youth Conference and the First Ministerial Session on this extremely important topic.

The Conference got off to an excellent start yesterday with the celebrations for Internal Self-Government Day held under the auspices of Mr Gaston Flosse, an event in which young people stood at the very heart and centre.

These young people demonstrated their vitality, dynamism and joie de vivre.

The second event which set the tone for this Conference was the magnificent reception given Monday evening by the President of the Government of French Polynesia at his residence to which he had invited the best cultural groups from the diverse domains of dance and singing.

Thus, after the youth, culture was given special recognition with reference to indigenous community traditions, since they represent that identity which all young people require in order to develop in a harmonious manner.

Honourable delegates, the talk given by the President of the Government of French Polynesia will serve as inspiration for us. The themes raised coincide with our own preoccupations. Perhaps my experiences in France could prove useful. While I will come back to this topic in greater detail during our discussions, I would like to recall the three basic principles underlying our activities:

- initiative;
- responsibility;
- solidarity.

Initiative: First, nothing whatsoever can be accomplished or be successful without a sense and understanding of initiative. We must use young people's initiatives and their creativity as a means of support for their projects and a tool for ensuring that they are carried out.

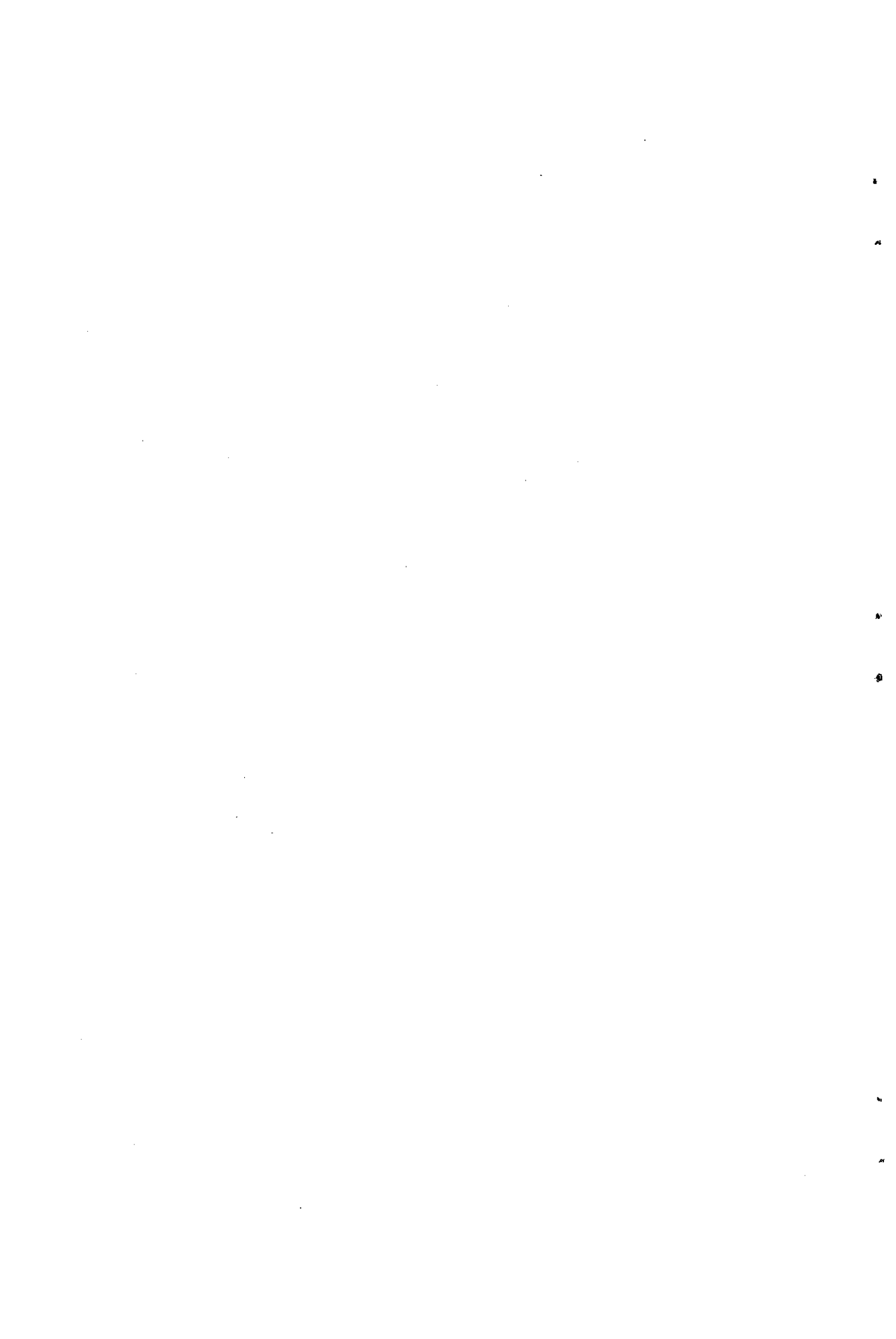
Responsibility: Adults must be fully aware of their responsibilities with regards to young people and carry them out properly so as to provide them with a set of values, motivation, a code of conduct and mutual respect. Young people must also learn about responsibility in their projects by taking themselves in hand and dealing with difficulties in a constructive manner.

And finally **solidarity:**

- the solidarity of young people. We must encourage them to work together in associations to design and then defend their projects.
- solidarity between the private and public sectors. The French government and local governments should begin actions or aids, and the relay should then be taken up by companies which young people have contacted themselves.

In this way, the concept of solidarity between generations, between the national and local governments, and between the public and private sectors will be strengthened. We have vowed to work together for young peoples' personal development. This can only be accomplished with their assistance and their participation.

May this Conference be a resounding success.



**STATEMENT BY AUSTRALIA AS A DONOR, PRESENTED BY MR GRAEME WILSON,
CONSUL-GENERAL OF AUSTRALIA FOR NEW CALEDONIA, FRENCH POLYNESIA AND
WALLIS AND FUTUNA**

On behalf of the Government of Australia and, in particular, Australia's aid agency, AusAID, I would like to take this final opportunity to thank the Government and people of French Polynesia for their generous hospitality in hosting this important Conference and the SPC secretariat for the hard work in ensuring that the Conference has been a success.

Mr Chairman, this Conference will hopefully be a starting point for on-going dialogue between Ministries and youth organisations as well as donor organisations and countries such as Australia. As we all agreed today, it is important that youth participate within national policy frameworks to address some of the issues of most concern to them.

A long-term planning approach to the problems faced by youth throughout the Pacific region will assist donor nations and organisations in planning and tailoring their programmes to better meet the needs of Pacific youth. Recognising the strategic and development importance of this issue, Australia has contributed a\$60,000 towards the costs of running this conference. That contribution, which was matched by France, also represents a concrete demonstration of the growing co-operation between Australia, France and the French territories.

Australia's development assistance activities in the South Pacific:

In recognition of the interrelated nature of youth and social issues, Australian assistance to the Pacific is focused in the sectors of governance, education and training, health and natural resource management. In 1998/99, Australian aid to the Pacific, including regional and multi-country support, will total an estimated a\$356.2 million. The Pacific Island Countries will continue to be a key priority for the Australian aid programme—and while often integrated within broader strategic programmes, Pacific youth is an important beneficiary of a range of Australian development assistance.

I would like to take a few moments to outline some of the things Australia is doing to support Pacific youth.

Governance: sustainable development and effective governance go hand in hand – Australia gives priority to supporting Pacific governments in economic and public sector reform.

Australia also supports a wide range of activities in the Pacific to increase trade, investment and private sector development—all of which aim to have positive impacts on island economies and thereby improve the economic prospects of Pacific youth.

Education and training: is the largest element in Australia's Pacific aid programme and is expected to account for more than one quarter of assistance provided in 1998-99—with youth the main beneficiary. Assistance includes long-term in-Australia and in-region scholarships; projects to strengthen education systems; teacher training in the primary, secondary and vocational fields, and regional efforts in basic education and literacy. We are a significant contributor to the University of the South Pacific which will open a new Australian-funded lecture theatre at USP's Suva campus this year.

Health: Australia's health strategy for the Pacific supports projects in disease prevention and control, women and children's health, development of effective health systems, provision of clinical health services; and health education and promotion. One major initiative of direct relevance to youth is the Pacific Regional Strategy for the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS. As has already been mentioned in today's discussions, the make-up of Pacific youth, combined with limited economic opportunities, risks AIDS becoming a major regional health problem.

Natural resource management: Australian assistance with natural resource management aims to enable economic advancement through the sustainable exploitation of timber and fisheries – for many PICs, two of

the most valuable exploitable resources. Australian assistance in the form of environmental programmes in a number of countries directly and through Australian funding of regional organisations such as the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and of course the Pacific Community (SPC). Australia also provides assistance in disaster preparedness and disaster management in recognition of the region's vulnerability to natural resources. Australia recently contributed A\$15,000 to French Polynesia's efforts to assist those most seriously affected by this year's devastating cyclone season. It was a pleasure and an honour for me earlier this week to present cheques to two local community service organisations who will ensure that the funds are used to provide essential support to the families of cyclone victims, including the basic education needs of their children.

Finally, but not less importantly, Australia's Foreign Minister recently announced Australia would establish a new regional aid initiative involving young Australian volunteers to become young ambassadors for Australia in the Asia Pacific region—the "Youth Ambassadors for Development Programme". The programme will enable 500 young Australians to live and work in the Asia Pacific region; to share their skills with host communities or organisations and help to foster greater understanding between our countries. This is an exciting opportunity for Australia's youth to contribute to the development of our Asia Pacific neighbours.

All these activities aim to help influence the future environment for today's youth in the region and reflect the importance Australia places on the problems and well-being of Pacific youth.

I have also listened with great interest to your comments and ideas on youth issues and problems in the Pacific. I would like to congratulate the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and officials from all participating countries for the quality of the papers produced, including the letter to the Chairperson of the Ministers' Conference, the Conference Resolution and the Pacific Youth Strategy 2005. Those papers showed the benefit of a consultative and open approach, and I would like to commend the international organisations and NGOs for their very positive contributions.

The Pacific Youth Strategy, and the comments which Ministers and Delegates have made today, will help Australia ensure that the needs and priorities of Pacific Island Countries continue to be fully taken into account.

**LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE FOURTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE
FOR PACIFIC YOUTH TO THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE FIRST CONFERENCE
OF MINISTERS OF YOUTH**

Dear Chairperson,

The Fourth Regional Conference for Pacific Youth at its meeting from 24th to 27th June deliberated on a number of important papers relating to Pacific Youth. This letter serves to provide a brief summary of the main issues highlighted in the respective papers.

1. Population implications for youth development in the Pacific

Out of the estimated 7.1 million people in our 22 member countries and territories, 1.4 million [20 percent] are young people between the age of 15 to 24 years. 47 percent [661,300] are teenage girls over 15 and young women under 25.

The youth population ranges from 11.4 percent of the total population in Niue to 21.7 percent in the Marshall Islands.

Over the next 12 years (by 2010), the youth population in the Pacific is expected to grow by a further 300,000 people, thereby putting more pressure on existing services.

2. Reproductive and sexual health; status of adolescents and youth: a regional concern

A worrying trend in sexual behaviour has been observed over the past few years, which is a cause of concern. Health services data from 15 Pacific Island countries covered under the UNFPA programme of assistance showed that:

- 15 percent of all deliveries were to adolescent mothers between 17 to 19 years of age, 60 percent of whom were single mothers. Pregnancies were reported in a girl as young as 11 years of age.
- Sexually transmitted diseases have increased drastically with most cases being found in young people between 15-24 years of age.

Contributing factors are multiple, ranging from erosion of traditional family values and influences of culture and religions to inappropriate adolescent reproductive health programmes.

The need for a broad-based, integrated approach was highlighted which included:

- development and implementation of appropriate reproductive and sexual health policies;
- enforcement or revision of existing laws on legal age of consent and marriage;
- appropriate responses to socio-cultural and religious issues;
- appropriate changes in formal and non-formal education systems;
- provision of adolescent/youth friendly reproductive health services.

3. State of Pacific Youth Report

This report based on a literature research on thirteen Pacific Island countries highlighted the following issues facing our young people today:

- inadequate education opportunities;
- lack of employment opportunities;
- sexual, reproductive and mental health problems;

- suicides;
- crime and juvenile delinquency;
- drug and substance abuse (including alcohol and cigarettes);
- individual, family, cultural and religious conflicts;
- lack of self-esteem;
- changing lifestyle

4. Mainstreaming Youth into the development process

This paper highlights the importance of involving young people in all levels of the development process from planning to decision-making and implementation of decisions.

5. A coordinated regional response to Youth Development in the Pacific: the role of SPC and other regional agencies

This coordinated regional response is the basis of the paper "Pacific Youth Strategy 2005 - future directions for Pacific Youth towards 2005 and beyond".

The Strategy portrays the following six programmes as forming the Platform for youth activities into the next Century.

5.1 PROGRAMME I: PASIFIKA ASPIRATIONS

The **PACIFIKA ASPIRATIONS** programme focuses on promoting the full participation of young people in the economic, social, spiritual, and cultural development of society and recognising their unique contributions to the development of society.

The two key components of **PACIFIKA ASPIRATIONS** are:

- 1) development of **gender-inclusive national youth policies**;
- 2) establishment of the **Pacific Youth Awards for Excellence**, to recognise outstanding contributions young people have made to their respective societies. The awards will be at national and regional levels.

5.2 PROGRAMME II: CHALLENGE PACIFIKA

CHALLENGE PACIFIKA is a call for urgent action in implementing positive and practical responses to emerging issues including:

(i) Education

The Pacific region has made significant progress for several decades in extending basic education and literacy to most sections of societies. However, progress has been slower than anticipated in some island countries

1. Advocate for the introduction into the school curricula, more subjects involving the development of skills needed for economic growth.
2. Promote education for responsible family life as an integral and inalienable part of the formal and informal education programme for young people in order to enable them to learn survival skills in a rapidly changing society and ensure a smooth transition from the dependence of childhood to the independence of adulthood.
3. Promote the use of 'accelerative learning' techniques in schools and through special teacher education.

(ii) Employment

The Suva Declaration calls for the development of youth employment and training programmes that will enable the young people to participate more fully and meaningfully in both the subsistence and cash economies.

Proposed Intervention Strategy

1. Develop more youth employment and training schemes for young people including those without employable skills that will enable them to participate more fully and meaningfully in both the subsistence and cash economies.
2. Involve young people in the development of self-employment initiatives and provide adequate resources to facilitate the implementation of these initiatives teaching them technical, commercial, servicing, and entrepreneurial skills.
3. Create structural solutions to foster enabling conditions to promote the participation of young people in the development of the economy.

(iii) Youth health

There is a major concern with the areas of sexual health (STD's, teenage pregnancies), mental health, physical abuse, suicide, abuse of alcohol/drugs/etc.

Proposed Intervention Strategy

1. Strengthen health education and promotional programmes aimed at addressing the above-mentioned health issues at regional and national levels and involve young people in the planning, development and implementation of these programmes.
2. Conduct peer education training programmes for young people on understanding sexual behaviour in adolescents; strategies for controlling alcohol and cigarette consumption; prevention of drug and physical abuse; and coping with anxiety and depression; which will encourage young people to take responsibility for their own health.

(iv) Environment

There are urgent concerns for the environment and Governments and youth organisations should promote the concept of sustainable development, in particular through extended efforts in environmental education.

Proposed Intervention Strategy

1. Widen environment education initiatives to teach young people the concept of sustainable

development and increase their understanding of environment management so they can make positive contributions to the protection and improvement of their environment.

2. Conduct ongoing practical programmes such as clean-up campaigns, tree planting, recycling projects, etc to provide young people with real opportunities to contribute positively to addressing environment issues and concerns.

(v) **Juvenile delinquency**

Adolescence is a vulnerable time when antisocial behaviours come to the surface and some degree of rebellion and, with it, some events of antisocial behaviour are to be expected, of course, for most adolescents. This applies even in the most integrated and well ordered of families.

Proposed Intervention Strategy

1. Introduce practically based solutions to ensure that the young people have a life that is full of purposeful and achievement-oriented programmes that have a realistic and practical basis.
2. Provide the widest range of civic, cultural, and recreational activities for young people which promote the development of a healthy self-esteem and a sense of community spirit which include training programmes for young people on problem solving and setting goals, effective communication, boosting creativity.
3. Conduct specialist counseling training for youth workers to enable them to provide guidance to at-risk young people and also to facilitate the rehabilitation of young offenders and providing them with the necessary chances for reintegration into society.
4. Conduct more training programmes to assist young people promote and uphold the values of a responsible family life and check the influence of conflicting values which frequently comes with development and modernization.

(vi) **Promotion of peace**

Young people need to be educated in developing and maintaining a culture of peace in the Pacific region. They must serve as peer educators in fostering an atmosphere of compassion, tolerance, and mutual concern and trust.

Proposed Intervention Strategy

1. Organise a regional level Train-the Trainers programme in collaboration with the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau on how to create and maintain conditions for sustainable peace in the family, the community and society at large.
2. Advocate for the inclusion of peace education and conflict resolution skills development and anger management in the curricula of formal and non-formal educational institutions.

5.3 PROGRAMME III: YOUTH-LEAD PACIFIKA

In the Pacific region, there are enormous unmet training needs of youth leaders. Youth Lead Pacifika focuses on capacity-building and skills development to ensure youth leaders and youth organizations can contribute positively toward national development.

Proposed Intervention Strategy

Design and conduct in-country training programmes for youth leaders in areas such as leadership; management and administration; policy development; organizational behaviour and development; team work, project planning, management and evaluation; self-motivation; personal development and efficiency programmes; managing change; problem solving; effective communication; negotiation; interpersonal skills; etc.

1. **Design and conduct periodical specialist Train-the-Trainers courses in the above topic areas in order to build up a cadre of trainers in the region.**
2. **Promote the concept of exchange programmes or study tours/attachments within the region and beyond to provide youth leaders and young people with the opportunity to exchange experiences and learn from each other.**
3. **Introduce a regional educational pilot project along the lines of a 'Citizenship Development Programme' for young people with a focus on promoting the spirit of nationalism (national pride), and patriotism (sense of identity). The programme can be in two areas: 1) introducing the concept into the school system (social studies) and 2) conducting special programmes through NGO's for young people. It is also necessary to include the concept in the 'teacher training' courses in member countries.**

5.4 PROGRAMME IV: PACIFIKA ADVOCACY

PACIFIKA ADVOCACY recognises the important and positive contributions to the development of society made by the private sector, non-governmental organizations which are active within the countries and territories of the region.

This programme will focus on strengthening relationships and promote collaborative activities with the private sector and youth organizations including the Pacific Youth Council; and non-government organizations.

5.5 PROGRAMME V: INFOSHARE PACIFIKA

The **PACIFIC YOUTH RESOURCE BUREAU (PYRB)** came into being on 1 June 1998 and through **INFOSHARE PACIFICA**, the Bureau can foster a more coordinated approach to the collection and dissemination of information on youth development in the region and globally. This includes the ongoing promotion of the **PACIFIC YOUTH STRATEGY 2005** at international, regional and national levels.

5.6 PROGRAMME VI: PACIFIKA EMPOWERMENT

The 'Small Island States Fund'

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community has established the Small Island States Fund which is managed by the Youth Development Adviser. The Fund provides technical assistance, training and other services as required by the SPC's small island members. The Fund became operational in 1998 and Island members, traditional and non-traditional donors are invited to contribute to the corpus of the Fund on a continuing basis to ensure its sustainability.

Eligible Member States

The 12 member states and territories to be given access to the Fund include:

Pitcairn Island, Tokelau, Niue, Tuvalu, Wallis and Futuna, Cook Islands, Nauru, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Priority Areas to be funded by SISF

An area of priority expressed by small island members is with skills training of young people. In this context, "skills" are envisaged in a very broad way - fishing, boats, gardening, sports, arts/crafts, trades, small business, bookkeeping and so on. This is training designed to give underemployed young people a place in the community.

This will guarantee that the Small Island States Fund is being focused on an area of need for young people.

6. Implementation arrangement for Pacific Youth Strategy 2005 (PYS2005)

The Pacific Youth Resource Bureau of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community will serve as the focal point for the coordination, implementation, monitoring and review of the PYS2005 and will maintain strong collaboration with all other regional and international agencies that have interest in youth during the course of the implementation.

7. Inter-Agency collaboration

Agreement was reached between all regional, international non-government and donor agencies represented at the Conference that they will collaborate more closely with each other and work together to assist youth development in the region. The organizations represented were Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), UNFPA, UNESCO, UNICEF, Sasakawa Pacific Islands Nations Fund (SPINF), Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP), ESCAP, World Assembly of Youth (WAY) and Peace Corps.

8. Conference Resolution

The Conference adopted a Resolution on youth which is appended to this letter.

Honourable Chairperson, I now have the greatest honour to present to you this letter, and the Conference Resolution for deliberation at the first ever Conference of Youth Ministers of the Pacific.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Eric Tunhine
 Chairperson
 Fourth Regional Conference for Pacific Youth

**RESOLUTION ON PACIFIC YOUTH
ADOPTED BY THE FOURTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR PACIFIC YOUTH**

The Fourth Regional Conference for Pacific Youth convened in Papeete from 24th to 27th June 1998:

Recognising that young people are a *valuable* resource within our respective countries and territories,

Taking into account the *challenges* facing the young people of the Pacific today,

Being aware of the *limitations* of current approaches and existing programmes and opportunities available for the development of youth in the Pacific region,

Noting especially the *escalating* problems faced by young people of our respective countries and territories in the areas of:

- education
- employment
- sexual and reproductive health
- mental health
- crime, suicide and juvenile delinquency
- drug and substance abuse (including alcohol and cigarettes)
- individual, family, cultural and religious conflicts

Being mindful of efforts made by individual countries and territories, non-government organizations, churches, and regional, international and donor agencies,

Recognising that different countries and territories may require *different approaches* to respond to youth challenges;

And having considered working papers provided to the Conference addressing youth concerns in the region into the twenty first century:

Accepted the need for *concerted collective action* amongst youth organizations, churches, non-government organizations, governments, administrations, regional and international organizations, and donors to work together to more holistically address the problems and challenges affecting youth in the Pacific,

Have a vision of a *dynamic* and *vibrant* region that involves young people within overall national development,

Agreed to realise this vision, through:

- country specific activities
- regional initiatives
- political commitment
- donor support

Further agreed that maximum benefits for Pacific Island countries and territories can only be achieved through:

- continuous political commitment toward adequate allocation of resources for planning and implementing activities at all levels,
- collaboration by all actors with an interest in youth at national and regional levels,
- effective partnership between development agencies and national and regional authorities.

And further agreed that programmes focus on:

- involving young people in decision making, planning and implementation of activities,

- developing and implementing youth policies and strategies,
- improving leadership, management and organizational capacities,
- developing and strengthening networks and information systems,
- encouraging youth and community development activities,
- fostering a positive mental attitude approach.

Hereby endorse the attached strategic framework for youth development and *commend* the arrangements outlined in the Pacific Youth Strategy 2005 to the First Ministerial Conference for Pacific Youth, and,

Urge Ministers to deliberate on this strategy, and endorse it as a framework for addressing youth development challenges in their respective countries and territories, and to advocate for this framework through their respective national decision mechanisms to accord the necessary priority and resources to implement the Youth Strategy.
