



4th Pacific Ministers for Youth Meeting: *Balata Vou Tale Na Lawa - Cast the Net Anew* Wailoaloa, Fiji, 4–5 September 2024

Outcomes Statement

Introduction

1. The Pacific Ministers for Youth Meeting (PMYM) hosted and chaired by the Government of Fiji and co-chaired by the Pacific Youth Council (PYC), is the fourth convening of Ministers for Youth since the PYC's establishment in 1994 and first convening of Ministers for Youth in 1998.
2. The PMYM was attended by 21 Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs),¹ who were represented by ten Honourable Ministers of Youth;² one Special Presidential Envoy to Youth, Women and Children;³ and senior representatives of National Youth Machineries (NYMs). There were 19 national youth representatives,⁴ including from National Youth Council (NYCs), as well as from the PYC Board; Pacific Youth Engagement, Empowerment and Economic Pathways; Pacific Girl Reference Group; and Pacific Women Lead Board. Representatives of the United Nations (UN) and Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) agencies as well as various development and donor partners were also in attendance.
3. The fourth convening of Pacific Ministers for Youth followed the Senior Youth Officials Meeting (SOM) on 13–15 August 2024 and the PYC Convening on 29 April–3 May 2024. It was centred on the theme '*Balata Vou Tale Na Lawa – Cast the Net Anew – Recommitting to Youth Development in the Pacific*' and called for renewed commitment to youth development across the Pacific region. It also reaffirmed the importance of collaboration and partnership across all stakeholders as well as strong sustained leadership that could ensure resources were committed at local, national and regional levels to support the youth development sector.
4. This outcomes and recommendations document represents a summary of the issues discussed and actions agreed.

Opening

5. The Pacific Ministers for Youth **acknowledged** and thanked the Government of Fiji and the National Youth Band for the warm traditional and cultural welcome, which included the *Qaloqalovi, Vakamamaca, Sevusevu, Yaqona Vakaturaga, Wase Ni Yaqona Vakaturaga, Vosa Vakaturaga, Ulivi*

¹ American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.

² Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (virtual), Fiji, French Polynesia, New Caledonia (virtual), Niue, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.

³ Republic of Marshall Islands.

⁴ American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.



Ni Vosa, Meke and the *I Vakatale*. These cultural protocols were accorded in recognition of the importance of this keystone event in bringing the Pacific Islands together to chart the course for youth development in the region.

State of Play, PYDF, 2050 Strategy and the Review of the Regional Architecture

6. Ministers **welcomed** the Co-Chairs' update from the SOM. Ministers **noted** that this was the first convening of Youth Ministers since 2013 and highlighted its importance to supporting the region's vision beyond the UN's 2030 plans with a view towards 2050 and beyond. They also emphasised that Pacific-led approaches were fundamental to achieving prosperity in the region and that youth inclusion was an important component of this approach.
7. Ministers **recalled** the vision and commitment made by Pacific Leaders through the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent (2050 Strategy). They also **noted** the ongoing Review of the Regional Architecture (RRA), which aimed to improve the effectiveness of regional governance mechanisms in support of the 2050 Strategy and its implementation plan. Inclusion of youth voices and aligning the 2050 thematic pathways to their needs would be critical. Ministers also **emphasised** the need for national-level youth policies and that the next ten-year Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF) to be aligned with the 2050 Strategy.
8. Ministers **acknowledged** the specific challenges facing youth, which were increasingly complex and multifaceted in the face of challenges like climate change, unemployment and mental health. These issues threatened the future wellbeing and long-term prospects of Pacific youth and Ministers **emphasised** the need to have youth voices play a part in all national and regional governance mechanisms and processes.
9. The Ministers **noted** the need for national and regional youth initiatives to be inclusive and equitable of all persons' participation, with special consideration for gender, ability, indigeneity, and young women and young men in all their diversity. Ministers also **emphasised** the need for education and employment strategies to encompass both mainstream and vocational education and training options.
10. Ministers **noted** the need for accessible and sustainable financing for youth initiatives. Ministers also **noted** a need to consider children's voices in youth development processes. They **acknowledged** that children's early participation was essential to ensuring that their unique needs were addressed and that a generation of informed, engaged citizens was created.
11. The Ministers **welcomed** the update from SPC on emerging youth issues and **recognised** the progress made under the previous PYDF. However, they **noted** the mid-term review findings that concluded a lack of awareness among PICTs regarding the PYDF. Ministers also **noted** the recommendations from the PYDF mid-term review for consideration, including the need for a governance mechanism to accompany the next PYDF. Finally, Ministers **noted** the need to improve coordination between PICTs, development partners and Youth Councils.



12. Ministers **recognised** and **reaffirmed** all national, regional and international commitments by PICTs to youth empowerment and development, including the National Youth Policies and the 2050 Strategy and its implementation plan. Ministers also highlighted the need to streamline youth issues across existing regional mechanisms to ensure better integration of youth issues [in national government priorities along with bilateral funding commitments] to support the delivery of the next PYDF.

The Intergenerational Dialogue

13. Ministers **recognised** the value of inter-generational dialogue and *talanoa* as approaches to better understand the issues affecting youth and that could also provide a safe space for youth express their views on matters and solutions that would shape their future.
14. Ministers **noted** the request from youth for dedicated funding for youth initiatives from their respective governments.
15. Ministers **emphasised** the need for youth voices to be meaningfully included as part of the regional thematic governance mechanisms and for youth-led initiatives to be sustainable and inclusive.

Thematic Priorities

16. Ministers **recognised** that specific discussions had emerged from the six proposed thematic priority areas and these are noted below. These were highlighted for inclusion in the next PYDF, and it was emphasised that the PYDF should be a 'living document' that was updated regularly to better fulfill its purpose of serving Pacific youth.
17. Ministers further **emphasised** the importance of Pacific identities and heritage as well as the need for better access to Pacific histories captured by institutions outside our islands and **committed** to ensuring that youth were welcomed into decision making spaces to better support youth-responsive development commitments.
18. Ministers **noted** the holistic connections between physical, mental, social and spiritual health and wellbeing. Ministers also noted the drivers and impacts of youth challenges at the intersection of society and health, such as pervasive drug trafficking and abuse as well as mental health in the region, which would require collaborative and preventative response measures.
19. Ministers **recognised** the link between youth and creative arts within education, employment and economic pathways and encouraged support for the creative arts was a way to build skills in problem solving, curiosity and critical thinking. Ministers also **noted** the connection between creative arts and Pacific identities and heritage and highlighted the cross-cutting nature of youth social, economic and environmental challenges and opportunities.
20. Ministers of Youth **noted** the impact of climate change as a human rights issue and its impact on youth as well as the need to prioritise the meaningful inclusion of youth in decision-making spaces,



on critical matters in the Pacific such as the legacies of nuclear testing, the dumping of nuclear waste, deep sea mining, disaster risk reduction and climate change-induced relocation.

21. Ministers **noted** and **supported** all activities that address non-communicable diseases and emphasised the important role of physical activity and sport to the overall wellbeing of youth.
22. Ministers **recognised** the need for improvements to be made in formal and informal education and training and in the professionalisation of youth work. This was with consideration given to mainstream schooling, vocational training, entrepreneurship and livelihood programmes to assist youth access diverse and alternative pathways to livelihood security.
23. Ministers **acknowledged** the difficult circumstances that were being faced by the Kanaky people, in particular Kanak youth, in New Caledonia.
24. Ministers **acknowledged and supported** youth participation in the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion.
25. Ministers **emphasised** the need to ensure meaningful youth engagement in all national, regional and international decision-making spaces and forums. Ministers also noted the need to mainstream youth needs and inclusion in decision-making across all sectors of government.
26. Ministers **welcomed** the announcement of the formation of the Polynesian Youth Alliance.

The Pacific Youth Governance Mechanism

27. The Ministers for Youth **considered** the proposed governance mechanism and recommendations for its implementation of the next PYDF and:
 - i. **Endorsed** SPC and PYC as co-custodians of the next PYDF;
 - ii. **Endorsed** SPC and PYC as co-leads for the development of the next PYDF, in their role as co-custodians;
 - iii. **Endorsed** the seven (7) identified priority themes for continued exploration for the next PYDF:
 - a. Education, Employment and Economic Pathways
 - b. Health and Wellbeing
 - c. Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction and Biodiversity
 - d. Pacific Identities and Heritages
 - e. Human Rights, Peace and Security
 - f. Integrated Connectivity, Information and Privacy
 - g. Leadership and Governance
 - iv. **Endorsed** the next PYDF to be accompanied by a Governance Mechanism, an Implementation Plan and a Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Knowledge Management



Framework (MELKMC), including a Communications Strategy and Resource Mobilisation Plan;

- v. **Endorsed** that the next PYDF and accompanying governance mechanism be finalised for consideration for endorsement by Ministers for Youth before the 54th Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders Meeting;
- vi. **Endorsed** a Regional Youth Governance Mechanism comprised of the Pacific Ministers for Youth Meeting, the Senior Youth Officials Meeting, the Thematic Working Group and the Task Force Committee;
- vii. **Endorsed** Pacific Youth, represented by the Pacific Youth Council, as co-chair of each of the four components of the governance mechanism;
- viii. **Tasked** SPC to work with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to ensure the governance mechanism for the PYDF, together with a business case and terms of reference for the governance mechanism, and the outcomes of the Pacific Ministers for Youth Meeting 2024, are tabled the 54th PIF Leaders for their consideration and endorsement towards biennial meetings of Pacific Ministers for Youth; and
- ix. **Tasked** SPC and PYC to mobilise adequate financial and human resources to support the Council in delivering on its mandate.

OUTCOMES ENDORSED BY

American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.