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**FORTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE
COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**
(26–28 June 2018, Noumea, New Caledonia)

AGENDA ITEM No. 4: Priorities for advancing the status of Pacific youth

(Paper presented by the Secretariat)

Summary

1. This paper presents a summary of SPC's contribution to the implementation of the Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF) 2014–2023. Priority areas of work are: integrated programming; youth indicators; youth employment; youth engagement; and youth policy.
2. SPC core resources are focused on integrating youth, gender and social inclusion – using a programming approach across SPC programmes – and on developing a sustainable approach to programming for youth employment.
3. SPC continues to mobilise resources through strategic partnerships to strengthen engagement of youth in national and regional development, and to advance the work on youth policy, youth indicators and regional monitoring.

Recommendations

4. CRGA is invited to:
 - i. note the progress of members in increasing their focus on the youth sector, and related capacity and investment;
 - ii. consider the readiness of members and development partners to promote opportunities for youth, in particular by addressing youth unemployment;
 - iii. endorse the focus on strengthening national systems for youth statistics, including increasing SPC's capacity to monitor the status of youth through data and analysis.

Priorities for advancing the status of Pacific youth

Purpose

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

Background

6. The High-Level Dialogue on Youth at the Ninth Conference of the Pacific Community in 2015 recognised the need for a high-level forum to monitor the situation of youth, drive progress and ensure commitment to relevant issues. The Conference agreed that a focus on youth would become a standing agenda item at Pacific Community governing council meetings. The Secretariat's Social Development Programme was tasked with monitoring progress in youth development and formulating appropriate ways to support youth issues and the Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF).

Monitoring progress in youth development

7. CRGA 47 noted the shared role of youth stakeholders in implementing PYDF. The regional working group¹ on youth has undertaken a multi-agency effort to complete a conceptual framework of youth indicators for the Pacific region and a regional analysis report. SPC has a lead role in the multi-agency partnership to align this work with the PYDF priorities and regional indicator frameworks. Previously, there has been no core set of youth indicators that could collectively determine the status of youth adequately. The absence of accurate and timely youth data and statistics in the Pacific region impedes equitable and fair national planning and decision-making, and diminishes national development potential.
8. The new conceptual framework of youth indicators has been developed by first defining the key domains for adolescent and youth health and development in the Pacific. Against each domain, key indicators were mapped using indicator frameworks developed for the Sustainable Development Goals relevant to adolescence and youth, the Commonwealth Youth Development Index, and indicators proposed by WHO and UNICEF² for adolescent health and development. The list was further refined by aligning it with regional indicator frameworks and headline indicators for the Pacific region.
9. Identified data and some model data were used to describe the state of Pacific youth in relation to each indicator. It is difficult to evaluate impact conclusively across the region. However, where interventions have been implemented, capabilities and opportunities for some adolescents and youth may be improving over time. For some, there will be little or no change and for many others, the situation will be worsening due to inequities in service delivery, health and employment prospects. The conceptual framework and the report, *State of Pacific Youth 2016*, will be published and distributed on International Youth Day, 12 August 2018.

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

² World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund.

10. The multi-agency effort will continue to establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system for the region so that relevant data on youth can be collected and analysed. There will be more in-depth work in health, education, labour and other sectors, and with SPC's Statistics for Development Division, to support members in institutionalising youth indicators in national surveillance. The results will also inform SPC's strategic approaches across sectors.

Promoting opportunities for young people

11. *Integrating youth and social inclusion through SPC's programmes:* CRGA 46 and CRGA 47 prioritised the mainstreaming of youth in SPC's broader portfolio. The positioning of the Social Development Programme (SDP) in SPC means the programme has access to over 20 sectors and initiatives that affect the livelihoods of women, youth and other populations vulnerable to social exclusion.
12. Through the SPC/USAID ISACC (Institutional Strengthening in Pacific Island countries to adapt to Climate Change) programme, SDP has developed guidance to increase investment and effective programming for gender, youth and social inclusion in countries accessing global climate change finance. Model programming has been developed together with SPC's Public Health Division to strengthen the role of youth in combating non-communicable diseases (NCDs). SDP will continue to work in these areas and with other SPC divisions and programmes in geoscience, agriculture, forestry and marine resources to strengthen their responsiveness and to build resilience and social, cultural and economic assets for youth. This approach is complemented by capacity building at country level to ensure that central ministries and those responsible for youth are also building integrated approaches into their policy and planning.
13. *Strengthening sustainability of youth programmes:* In accordance with the directive of CRGA 46 to explore resourcing mechanisms and capacity at the national level, SPC's Youth@Work programme has made important progress in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Youth@Work, now supported by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Comic Relief, has evolved to become a model programme that enhances pathways to formal employment or small business management for its participants, particularly early school leavers, young women, youth with disabilities and recently incarcerated youth.
14. A high-level Strategic Advisory and Support Group has been established in Solomon Islands to advise on the strategic direction and overall governance of Youth@Work. The Group's members include 12 representatives from relevant ministries, youth employment and training programmes, the private sector, young people and civil society. An exit strategy has been developed to guide a gradual transition to full government ownership and management of Youth@Work by the end of 2019.
15. The project in Vanuatu has taken a sustainable approach from the beginning by assisting the Government of Vanuatu to work with national youth stakeholders to plan and develop the National Economic Empowerment Programme. This national programme integrates the Youth@Work model into government structures and systems, and serves to implement the National Youth Council's Strategic Plan, the Ministry of Youth and Sports Development Pathways Policy Area and the National Sustainable Development

Plan's objective on social inclusion. The national programme is supported by the government and additional contributions from SPC and other development partners.

16. *Supporting a youth-centred participatory approach to development:* The PYDF highlights the lack of structures, policies and resources to encourage and facilitate youth involvement and leadership for enhanced development outcomes. SPC supported the Pacific Youth Council to strengthen its governance and organisational planning for sustainability, and provided administrative and technical support for its regional secretariat. The Pacific Youth Council has now graduated to processing its legal registration as a non-government organisation and is relocating its office to stand independently from SPC. SPC's enabling support has been key to the Youth Council's partnership with the International Labour Organization and DFAT to establish Young Entrepreneurs Councils in four countries, and to its representation in regional and international forums.
17. The programme, 'Addressing pervasive discrimination faced by LGBTI persons in the Pacific', implemented by SPC's Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) and SDP, is supporting the establishment of a youth network that will facilitate the representation of young LGBTI voices in policy dialogues. The Pacific Human Rights Conference (28 May – 1 June 2018) will discuss the platform and communication strategy to guide the work.
18. *Strengthening policies for youth:* Many of the key problems facing youth, such as unemployment or NCDs, are complex and solutions have to be put in place over a long time frame. Long-term policy making and strategy development are essential for sustainable development. Lessons learned from recent policy development processes in the Federated States of Micronesia and Solomon Islands emphasise the need for dedicated national and other development resources to support implementation across government sectors, and for supporting coordination mechanisms, monitoring and evaluation frameworks and capacity, and youth engagement.

Conclusion

19. Progress has been made on nurturing collaborative efforts to strengthen development foundations that will enable members to scale up and accelerate their support for youth programming. Strengthening the evidence base for youth through establishment of regional youth indicators is pioneering on a global level. Strategic approaches can exponentially increase opportunities for young people across SPC programmes and sectors, guide and enable sustainable national government support and capitalise on the potential of youth citizens as partners in development.

Recommendations

20. CRGA is invited to:
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