

REGIONAL YOUNG LEADERS DIALOGUE

NADI DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

We¹, Pacific young² leaders, advocates and practitioners, attending the Regional Young Leaders' Dialogue on Good Governance and Human Rights organised by the Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team and Social Development Programme (SPC RRRT & SDP) at Nadi, Fiji, acknowledge the importance of full youth participation at the national, regional and global levels to ensure informed and effective decision making and the full realisation of good governance and human rights.

We recognise that the full and equitable participation of youth in matters of national development, good governance and human rights will lead to better outcomes as a result of the different perspectives and experiences it will bring to the fore and the ownership of national development activities it will generate among the next generation of leaders.

We celebrate the rich diversity of the Pacific Islands and the arising need to ensure national and regional frameworks, policies and practices are context-specific.

Notwithstanding, we note that there are shared challenges and principles of practice that can be used to inform regional, national and grassroots communities' efforts to increase the participation of youth in matters of good governance and human rights.

Active and Meaningful Participation

1. We recognise that development will not be sustainable without active and meaningful participation of youth and we reject all forms of tokenism in this regard. We acknowledge that the active and meaningful participation of young people in society fosters productivity and civic responsibility.

2. To realise active and meaningful participation, and the principles of 'Do No Harm'³; in order to be heard, strong and institutional relationships and dialogue must be developed, practiced and maintained among youth, government, the private sector and other implementing actors of human rights and good governance.

3. We encourage youth led initiatives to consider how general public priority issues can be incorporated to ensure relevance and to further facilitate the meaningful participation of

young people in national development agenda discussions and implementation/action.

4. We call on our leaders for more youth led initiatives.

5. We are committed to reframing the role of young people from being 'the faces' of social issues to being recognised as leaders who make valuable and positive contributions to society through being involved in decision making at all levels.

6. We call on young people and allies to act in a spirit of solidarity and co-responsibility across issues through support, collaboration and respect for one another's work.

7. We call on our governments for the implementation of national right to information policies or legislation in order to facilitate the meaningful participation of youth, and all groups of society.

Bridging the Intergenerational Divide

8. We recognise the existence of an inter-generational divide between young people, leaders and elders, which needs to be bridged and this relationship needs to be nurtured and harnessed for effective and sustainable engagement. To this end, co-leadership, accompaniment, mentoring, collaboration and succession planning between young people and leaders must be strengthened and encouraged.

9. We recognise engagement is not a one way process and both parties are required to reach out to one another to facilitate meaningful dialogue that creates diverse partnerships and collaboration.

10. We call for Pacific youth to be both proactive in bridging the intergenerational divide and considerate of traditional and religious values and practices.

11. We note that disconnection arises, in part, as a result of traditional hierarchies and therefore we call for elders to ensure cultural practices can be respected while meaningfully including the voices of young people.

Contextualised Engagement

12. As young people and advocates of the Pacific, we identify the need to strike a balance between cultural norms, accountability, and active and meaningful youth participation.

13. We recognize the importance of utilizing values and practices of Pacific societies and individuals to motivate and inform our actions to generate noble causes and address youth issues.

14. We call for the harnessing and respecting of Pacific values in the aforementioned manner, and the adoption of a 'contextualised' approach to youth participation that is built on and strengthens the existing fabrics of our societies.

15. We call on our leaders for the recognition and acceptance of youth in traditional systems and engagement through those platforms.

Empowerment

16. We recognise the need for empowerment and capacity building of young people to enable their full participation in matters of good governance, human rights and national development.

17. It is critical to raise awareness within schools, communities, CSOs, and NGOs of the role, functions and processes of decision-making mechanisms, not limited to political systems, so that youth are aware of how to engage and participate from an early age.

18. We call for a robust approach to the design and utilisation of external donor development funding that ensures the meaningful participation of youth from design, implementation through to monitoring and evaluation. We encourage the use of youth-led methodologies to design initiatives with youth in decision-making roles.

19. We call for the design and implementation of a range of youth empowerment initiatives including, but not limited to, civic education, leadership training, quotas for representation in leadership roles and increasing youth employment through internships, mentoring and support for small businesses, entrepreneurship, and volunteerism.

20. We call for the establishment, strengthening

and adequate sustainable resourcing of National Youth Councils and all other informal and formal bodies led by and for youth in all Pacific Island Countries and Territories

Mentoring & Peer Support

21. We recognise that mentoring, including peer to peer support, is an effective strategy for developing leadership and technical skills within the youth and that it must be widely available and encouraged. We note that mentoring for young people to build their leadership skills is an area that needs attention. To ensure effectiveness and sustainability, national mentoring initiatives grounded on societal, cultural and religious values must be developed and implemented.

22. To ensure effectiveness and sustainability, local and national mentoring initiatives must be strengthened and grounded in Pacific values. These will then support the development of contextualised regional approaches to mentoring. We acknowledge the mentoring and peer support should not be limited to young people and should also cover elders, but not limited to teachers, parents and guardians, to build their capacities to engage constructively with youth. Notwithstanding, any 'positive parenting' initiatives should be progressive and not reinforce traditional gender stereotypes and roles.

23. We call for the development of national mentoring and peer support programmes for young people.

Leaving No-One Behind

24. We reaffirm the principle of 'leaving no-one behind' and acknowledge that the full and meaningful participation of youth is dependent on the ability of other marginalised groups⁴ to participate fully in society. Accordingly, we call for the development of inclusive policies and programmes that address existing inequalities and facilitate equitable and full participation among all groups of society. For example, this must include adopting inclusive policies that mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities into education and all other services.

25. We call for the full and meaningful involvement of marginalised groups of all diversities in the

implementation of human rights and good governance, including through all of the strategies and recommendations contained within this document.

26. We call for improved coordination and communication between elders, other implementing actors, marginalised groups and youth to ensure that no one is left behind.

27. We call for governments to ensure equal and affordable access to user-friendly services and information for all marginalised groups taking into account geographical contexts, for example one-stop shops (where all government services can be accessed under one roof or platform)

Utilising Technology and the Media

28. We recognise the value of technology in encouraging youth participation in the realisation of good governance and human rights and the role of young people in harnessing this potential. Media democracy is one area where good governance and human rights can be promoted through effective, inclusive and ethical civic engagement.

29. We note with concern the competing priorities of media organisations in the region to take youth and youth issues seriously, which is highlighted by the limited number of opportunities for coverage of youth activities.

30. We call for media organisations to act in solidarity with youth by creating the space for youth engagement and reporting and encourage youth to actively participate in these spaces.

31. We call for young people to constructively utilise technology and effectively engage with media as a tool to communicate and share stories and encourage further participation and engagement in entrepreneurship and the wider implementation of human rights and good governance.

gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics, climate impacted communities, rural youth and youth in conflict with the law.

FOOTNOTE:

¹ Young people from Cook Is, Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Is., Nauru, Niue,

Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Is., Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu

² This document refers to Youth as those under the age of 35

³ Ensuring no further harm is caused as a result of our actions

⁴ This includes, but is not limited to, persons with disabilities, persons and communities of diverse sexual orientation and

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Organisations:

Sista (Vanuatu), 350.org Pacific, Fiji Youth Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights Alliance and International Planned Parenthood Federation