

# PACIFIC YOUTH CHARTER

## **Preamble**

We, the 1000 young representatives of 25 countries and territories of the Pacific, came together in Tahiti from 17 to 22 July 2006 for the occasion of the 1<sup>st</sup> Pacific Youth Festival. During an entire week, we had the opportunity to reflect, interact and debate through workshops, conferences and seminars addressing nine themes of crucial importance for the development of our region, the Pacific. The Pacific Youth Charter is the outcome of this gathering:

**Taking into account** that the Charter does not aim to reflect the full diversity of this first Festival but rather begins a dialogue towards a shared vision of all delegations represented;

**Emphasizing** the tremendous value of intercultural exchanges between young people that allow us to better understand our differences and above all our similarities;

**Highlighting** the shared desire of young people to play an integral part in building our future;

**Calling upon** all of society's stakeholders to recognize and support the contributions of young people;

**Expressing** our gratitude to all partners who contributed to the success of this Festival.

## **I. GOOD GOVERNANCE**

The principles of good governance are not always reflected in practice throughout the Pacific region. However, we affirm the importance of upholding principles of good governance and institutionalising means of recognizing and enforcing them.

### **a) Political integrity**

We believe that governments must be free of corruption and inequality. We think that our populations would be best served by governments which recognize respect, integrity, justice, and dignity as the main qualities in the exercise of power.

Resolution 1: Create an integrity commission with the aim of ensuring that the principles of good governance are respected and that appropriate measures are applied if these principles are not upheld.

### **b) Participation of young people in political life**

Young people need to understand what is meant by good governance.

Resolution 2: Create and strengthen existing programmes that enable young people to understand politics and good governance. These programmes should take into account the diversity in the Oceania region.

### **c) Youth Assemblies/ Parliaments**

We recognize a lack of coherence in principles of good governance throughout the region.

Resolution 3: Establish youth assemblies/parliaments in every country in the Pacific. All assemblies/parliaments should elect representatives for the Pacific Youth Parliament. These assemblies/parliaments would provide a forum for young people to express themselves. The recommendations resulting from the Pacific Youth Parliament should be taken into account by leaders in each country and should not be censured.

## **II. ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**

There is a lack of engagement of young people in civic life throughout the region. We believe that this is primarily due to inadequate information for young people and misconceptions about the realities of political processes. However, we are also convinced that young people have the potential to play an important role in civic activities.

### **a. Information and civic participation**

Young people need to be sufficiently informed and engaged in order to fully participate in democratic processes.

→ Resolution 4 : Leaders are called upon to include young people in reflection and decision making processes at the local, national, and regional levels through youth councils, youth parliaments and similar structures.

→ Resolution 5: We are convinced that young people should be involved in awareness raising and advocacy programmes in order to promote dialogue among peers.

### **b. Civic engagement of young people**

Young people are not always engaged in civic processes.

→ Resolution 6: We encourage all youth to better inform themselves and to make well-informed voting decisions.

→ Resolution 7: We encourage young people to engage in awareness raising activities and volunteering.

## **III. EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ALL**

Education and training in the Pacific region presents diverse situations, some to be celebrated, but also needs and challenges that should be addressed.

### **a. Traditional Culture in the Education System: History, Customs, Language, Knowledge, and Expressions of Culture**

We believe that integrating the teaching and preservation of traditional knowledge in the education system is important in order to reflect our cultural identity.

**Resolution 8:** It is necessary to integrate traditional culture into the education system.

### **b. Equal Opportunities to Education and Training (Informal and Vocational): Flexible Integration into Jobs after School and Practical Teaching Instead of Text Book-Based Learning**

We believe that there is a gap in access to education for all. Many training opportunities are not recognised and we need to emphasize both practical learning and theoretical. Technical and vocational training and instruction should be accessible and affordable for all.

**Resolution 9:** Prioritise access to education for all

### **c. Prevention**

We believe that the concept of prevention is not sufficiently applied in educational systems or programs.

**Resolution 10:** Prevention programs and curricula must be implemented and strengthened.

### **d. Pacific Co-operation for Credentials and Education Exchange Programs**

We believe that there is a lack of cohesion in the recognition of qualifications within the Pacific region.

**Resolution 11:** Improve co-operation between regional education systems.

**Resolution 12:** Establish and improve regional student exchange programs.

### **e. Supporting teachers and parents**

We believe many people contribute to the development of young people, such as our parents, and teachers.

**Resolution 13:** Teachers and parents must have access to resources and training to improve and enhance their skills and knowledge so they can better support youth in their development.

### **f. Need to Include Organisations and Associations that Work with Youth**

We believe that there must be recognition of the tremendous contribution of government ministries, non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations and faith-based organisations to the development of young people.

**Resolution 14:** Develop and strengthen youth work accountability systems within the region.

**Resolution 15:** We need to ensure consistent co-ordination and collaboration of all youth stakeholders.

### **g. Sustainable Development as Core Curriculum**

We believe that poor management and destructive practices threaten the unique biodiversity and way of life for the Pacific region.

**Resolution 16:** To achieve a sustainable way of living, education about sustainable development and self-sustaining practice must become core curriculum in our education system and encouraged to be implemented.

## **IV. SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION**

The young people of the Pacific face challenges when seeking employment, and when seeking recognition of their traditional roles. Young people are capable and have both traditional or formal skills, and are enthusiastic to assume increased responsibility in society.

### **a. Increased Employment Opportunities**

We believe it is difficult for many youths in the Pacific to find employment. Many university graduates are bidding for very few jobs and Pacific youths are relocating for jobs.

**Resolution 17:** More resources need to be dedicated to developing entrepreneurial skills among young people, particularly in remote areas, including incorporating relevant curriculum in our education system.

**Resolution 18:** The roles that maintain our cultures need to be recognised as occupations.

**Resolution 19:** Revise policies limiting access to diverse employment across the Pacific region.

**Resolution 20:** More volunteer or internship programs need to be created for students to gain qualifications and skills which facilitate entry into the workforce.

### **b. Work Conditions**

We believe that within the workforce, conditions must be improved.

**Resolution 21:** Fair selection process, equal opportunities, and occupational health and safety measures legislated by government and implemented for all.

**Resolution 22:** Reinforce government commitments and legislation prohibiting exploitative labour and child prostitution.

**Resolution 23:** Access to capacity-building and professional development for young people through their employers.

### **c. Community Service**

We believe that young people have valuable skills, ideas, qualifications and knowledge. We can accomplish sustainable development within our communities.

**Resolution 24:** Government and civil society should establish and promote volunteerism as a means of providing access and opportunities to employable skills.

**Resolution 25:** Establishment of regional youth volunteer policy and volunteer exchange programs.

#### **d. School- to- Work Transition**

More than half of the young people in the Pacific graduate from secondary and tertiary education but struggle to find employment.

**Resolution 27:** There is a need to provide and strengthen practical training and mentoring to assist in transition from school to the workplace.

**Resolution 28:** Provide and strengthen non-formal education to develop skills for the purpose of gaining employment.

**Resolution 29:** Give recognition and accreditation to the valuable contributions that vocational training can provide towards sustainable development.

## **V. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Climate change, poverty and inequality are among the many consequences of unsustainable development. We must improve our environmental, economic, social and political management if we are to achieve sustainable development for current and future generations. The Pacific way of life is in danger.

#### **a. Environmental Sustainability**

We believe that the delicate ecosystem of our environment supports our communities. Young people are, and will continue to be, effected by the exploitation of our environment. We, young people and our communities, must assume responsibility as stewards of the earth.

**Resolution 30:** Preservation of biodiversity through the involvement of young people in the understanding, appreciation and conservation of our natural environment, and the advocacy of good environmental principles and practices.

**Resolution 31:** Resources need to be invested in research involving the use of renewable energy and reusable materials.

#### **b. Governance of Sustainable Development**

We believe that the concept of sustainable development has been gaining prominence in many countries, but it is often not a priority in terms of implementation.

**Resolution 32:** Policies encouraging long-term sustainable development need to be considered by all areas of government.

**Resolution 33:** Community involvement in resource management plans and recognition of indigenous land rights as a way of promoting stewardship of the land and sustainable development.

**Resolution 34:** Sustainable lifestyles should be affordable and accessible, and both the private sector and government must take responsibility to achieve this.

## **VI. CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

The youth of the Pacific have a large role to play in the promotion and propagation of cultural diversity. These youths need encouragement to preserve their cultures, and support in making their concerns and ideas heard. We believe regional cultural exchanges can also contribute to youth development and building a proud and respectful Pacific.

### **a. Preservation of Culture**

We believe that the Pacific region is known for its inherent cultural diversity which plays a vital role in youth development. However, globalisation has a real impact on the preservation and maintenance of tradition and culture.

**Resolution 35:** Legislate for the protection and preservation of traditional knowledge and customs.

**Resolution 37:** Establish and strengthen programs to educate and generate youth's interest in reviving and fostering culture and tradition.

**Resolution 38:** Include and make compulsory subjects on culture and tradition in the formal school curricula at all levels.

### **b. Decision-making processes**

We believe that young people need to be able to voice their opinions in cultural matters, and feel that their ideas are acknowledged and considered by leaders in the community. In reality, there are often hierarchies, and barriers that hinder their involvement in certain cultural decision-making processes.

**Resolution 39:** Encourage youth participation in traditional decision-making processes.

**Resolution 40:** Strengthen the importance of traditional family values and the role families play in the lives of young people.

**Resolution 41:** Ensure government assistance to fund and support youth initiatives in the area of culture and tradition.

### **c. Cultural Exchanges for Youth**

We acknowledge and celebrate the importance of giving the Pacific youth an arena to meet and exchange cultures. We believe it is imperative that not only do youth of the many islands in the Pacific meet and interact, but that they also actively participate to understand and share ideas and cultures.

**Resolution 42:** Countries should encourage and support the full participation of Pacific young people in regional and international youth events such as the Pacific Youth Festival and the World Youth Festival.

**Resolution 43:** Forums where youth can exchange cultural information and network should be hosted in a rotation of the three sub-regions of the Pacific as this is the best way to immerse ourselves in other cultures and respect them.

## **VII. HEALTH**

We believe that the health and well-being of young people is an important area in their holistic development. Pacific young people face increased health-related issues and risks.

### **a. Prevention**

Young people are faced with many health issues and lifestyle decisions.

**Resolution 44:** All sectors of society need to take a preventive approach when creating policies and programs to address youth health. This way, we can prevent problems such as unplanned pregnancies, non-communicable diseases, STDs, HIV/AIDS, suicide and substance abuse.

**Resolution 45:** More training and capacity building opportunities should be made available to counsellors and peer educators so they are able to effectively deal with young people's needs.

**Resolution 46:** More awareness and practice by young people of healthy lifestyles is needed, recognising that healthy living play an important role in preventing NCDs.

### **B. Access**

Young people do not always have consistent access to comprehensive healthcare and information.

**Resolution 47:** Governments and health service providers are urged to provide quality health care that is accessible and affordable for all.

## **VIII. EQUALITY FOR ALL**

Equality for all is necessary for young people to have access to opportunities that will help them to achieve their goals in life. Universal human rights are required to realise equality for all. It is vital to young people that we have an inclusive and caring society free of all forms of discrimination.

### **a. Human Rights**

Not all countries have adopted or implemented international human rights conventions, or established comprehensive national human rights policies.

**Resolution 48:** The formation of a regional Human Rights Commission that will promote the adoption and implementation of international and national human rights conventions.

**Resolution 49:** Governments and civil society need to ensure that universal human rights are upheld regardless of culture.

### **b. Inclusive Society and Equal Opportunities for All**

Young people experience inequality in opportunities in all aspects of life. Young people must feel safe and their rights must be upheld and protected.

**Resolution 51:** All forms of discrimination must be removed to ensure an inclusive society and equal opportunity for all regardless of age, gender, sexuality, ability, race, religion, or affiliations.

**Resolution 53:** Governments, non-governmental organisations and community groups, in partnership with young people, must advocate for and educate about human rights and diversity in the broader community.

## **IX. PEACE PROMOTION**

Many young people in the Pacific are affected by violence and conflict, and this impacts upon our culture, lifestyle, economic and social opportunities. We need to resolve corruption, conflict and competing interests through compromise, negotiation and non-violent measures. To achieve this, peace needs to be promoted through education and networking.

### **a. Education on Peace**

We believe that our youth require knowledge about peace, its promotion and its advocacy. Existing youth efforts and initiatives demonstrate that we have the capability and confidence to be leaders in the promotion of peace.

**Resolution 54:** Peace promotion curricula and outreach programs must be developed, provided and implemented for young people and the broader community.

**Resolution 55:** Resources and active support needs to be provided to young people that are involved in the promotion of peace so that other youth can be empowered to consider and apply principles of peace.

### **b. Networking Exchange on Peace Capacity Building**

Young people are victims of violence and conflict. We are calling for sustainable peace within our societies and our governments.

**Resolution 56:** Everyone has a responsibility in the establishment of an effective and efficient network that addresses and promotes open communication through websites, cultural exchange programs, and other initiatives.

**Resolution 57:** The Youth of the Pacific call upon leaders to prioritise the promotion of peace and tolerance, and for youth leaders to be proactive in promoting peace.

### **c. Self-Determination**

We believe that self-determination is vital to the sustainability of the Pacific identity.

**Resolution 58:** All peoples should be able to pursue self-determination by peaceful means.

## **Conclusion**

We, the 1000 young representatives of 25 countries and territories of the Pacific recognize that this Charter is an important step forward in promoting dialogue and active collaboration between the young people of our region.

We commit to further develop this Charter to meet the specific needs of each country/territory. In order to accomplish this, we call upon all leaders to support us in our combined efforts to build a sustainable and prosperous future.