

Presentation by the Pacific Youth Council President at the 37th Pacific Islands Forum Summit in Nadi, Fiji Islands, on 24 October 2006.

The Hon. Chairperson, The Secretary General, the Two Deputy Secretary General, the Hon. Leaders around the table, Officials, Observers and Ladies and Gentleman.

On behalf of the young people of the Pacific, I would like to first extend a hand of thanks to you, our Leaders, the Forum Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community for your vision and commitment to the Pacific Plan.

Of particular interest to us are initiatives 9.1 and 15.4 as they are the Youth Component of the Pacific Plan, of which we are proud partners in their implementation. I am please to report that implementation of these initiatives is progressing as planned.

I must say it has been an exciting past few days in experiencing how forums of this magnitude operate.

We believe that the Pacific Plan maps a challenging road to a positive future, and calls for the closer collaboration amongst all countries involved.

Youth between 15 to 24 years of age make up 20% of the countries' population and in some cases half of the population. We face a number of pressing challenges such as the disintegration of the family unit, the lack of educational and employment opportunities, the tension between culture and globalization, gender inequality, the rise in HIV cases, and some apparent short falls in adherence to good governance principles.

However we are delighted to note that the Pacific Plan addresses areas such as capacity building, education, employment, adolescent health, and the empowerment of young women leading toward sustainable development for all.

In addition, The Plan is strongly complemented by the Pacific Youth Strategy 2010 adopted by the Pacific Youth Ministers in Port Moresby in December 2005.

The PYS 2010 is currently administered by the SPC with the Pacific Youth Council, to provide opportunities for young people to access integrated education, nurture sustainable livelihoods, promote healthy lifestyles, build stronger communities through strengthening institutional capacity, promoting youth identities and conducting targeted research into youth issues.

Within these frameworks, we therefore humbly request leaders to take a lead role in facilitating the development of appropriate initiatives to improve the quality of lives of our young people of the region.

Accordingly we seek increases in budgetary allocations and resources for Youth Ministries, Youth Divisions and NGOs working with young people. We call for regular messages of hope and inspiration through the media for our young people, and not only at special events such as National Youth Days.

Proverbs Chapter 22: 6 reminds us to "teach our children in the way they should go and when they are grown, they shall not depart from it". In other words, as leaders gifted with a special responsibility of leadership may our conduct and speech, our thoughts and actions, leave a positive impression upon the upcoming generation to follow.

We as young people to the best of our abilities pledge to be productive citizens in nation building.

At the most recent gathering of Pacific Youth, the 1st Pacific Youth Festival, in French Polynesia in July this year, almost 1000 young people from over 25 countries developed the Pacific Youth Charter, as an advocacy tool for addressing youth development issues in the region.

Riding on the aspirations of the Charter, we appeal for your commitment, guidance, and faith in us, along with our own belief in ourselves to take the necessary steps in ensuring a secure, prosperous and sustainable future for our region.

Thank you so much for this opportunity to address this important forum.

May God bless you all.

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Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

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Commonwealth Secretariat News

http://www.thecommonwealth.org/news/34580/155592/commonwealth_pacific_governance_programme_to_kick.htm