TALANOA
YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FOR SDGS

TALANOA SESSION REPORT

Friday August 31 2018
PIDF Secretariat,
58 Domain Road,
Suva, Fiji.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
We offer our sincere thanks to all our Members and Partners who have worked with us on our journey to support an enabling environment for Green-Blue Pacific economies, and affect transformative change for sustainable and inclusive development in the Pacific.

DESIGN
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**ACRONYMS**

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<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>Action for Climate Empowerment</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACSE</td>
<td>Adapting to Climate Change and Sustainable Energy</td>
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<tr>
<td>BPfA</td>
<td>1995 Beijing Platform for Action</td>
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<td>COP23</td>
<td>23rd Conference of Parties</td>
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<td>CSE</td>
<td>Comprehensive Sexual Education</td>
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<td>CYC</td>
<td>Commonwealth Youth Council</td>
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<td>DRR</td>
<td>Disaster risk reduction</td>
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<td>ePOP</td>
<td>eParticipatory Observers Project</td>
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<td>ICPD</td>
<td>International Conference on Population and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGBTQI</td>
<td>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIANGO</td>
<td>The Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organisation</td>
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<td>PIDF</td>
<td>The Pacific Islands Development Forum</td>
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<td>PIPSO</td>
<td>The Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisations</td>
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<td>RPF</td>
<td>Rainbow Pride Foundation</td>
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<td>SDG/SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goal/s</td>
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<td>SOGIESC</td>
<td>Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Expression and Sex Characteristics</td>
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<td>SRHR</td>
<td>Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights</td>
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<td>UNDESA</td>
<td>The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs</td>
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<td>UNFCCC</td>
<td>The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</td>
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<td>UNSCR</td>
<td>The United Nations Security Council Resolutions</td>
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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Youth engagement is fundamental for the successful implementation of the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is especially true as today’s generation of youth is the largest the world has ever known, whose ambitions and abilities can make a substantial contribution to the realization of the prosperous, peaceful and sustainable future we want for all people in our region.

PIDF is an inclusive regional organization for sustainable development and poverty eradication and recognizes the important role of “Youths as critical agents of change,” for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

If the Pacific Region is to succeed in achieving the SDGs, leaving no one behind along the way, we must seek out an active and substantive engagement of youths from diverse backgrounds in decision-making, national-level planning, implementation, and monitoring. The value of collaborating with youth’s as partners establishes clear and explicit pathways for their meaningful participation from the outset, in the achievement of the 17 SDGs and related targets.

Through such Talanoa, PIDF considers the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development and insists on the need to create conditions for youth to be engaged, active and integral part of the solutions we need.

In terms of outcomes, this Talanoa was intended to be an interactive platform for networking, knowledge sharing and initiating discussion on future ways of collaboration between PIDF and twenty-two leaders of youth groups with diverse mandates such as Education, Arts, Social and Economic Development, Gender, Human Rights, Peace and Security, Health, Climate Change and Environment but with the common theme of working collaboratively towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Youth Leaders also shared chronicles with the newly appointed Commonwealth Youth Chair for the Pacific.

A copy of the Concept Note, Agenda, Flyer and Participants’ List are provided as Annex 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively to this report.
SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS

Welcome Address - Mr. François Martel, Secretary General PIDF

“The structure of PIDF is very unique, has a multi stakeholder decision making process, which means that civil society and the private sector can actually become members and PIDF is a space for catalyzing, mobilizing and mainstreaming action for sustainable development. At the moment we have two organisations as members; PIANGO and Pipso.” Secretary General Martel said while welcoming the delegation from various active Youth Organisations and the Commonwealth Youth Chair, Ms. Elizabeth Kite.

Secretary General Martel informed that youth group at local level can also be part of the National Sustainable Development Boards and thus youths could have a chance, if selected, to be represented at the Regional Level through PIDF’s Governance meetings. He also informed youth representatives that PIDF will be presenting a paper at the next PIDF conference on Non-state actors group that includes engagement of youth groups in the work of the Secretariat. He also highlighted some of the youth initiatives PIDF supported over the last few years, such as the ePOP program, the YouthSpeak Forum with AIESEC (which is the largest Global Youth group in the world). We also hosted prior COP23, a youth exchange students group from Germany to raise awareness of the issues faced by Pacific Islands in regards to climate change.

Commonwealth Youth Council Introductions and Brief History by Ms. Elizabeth Kite, Commonwealth Youth Chair – Pacific Representative

“It’s very important that we meet and have these discussion forums and hear what you have to say, as youths are the vehicles to implement the change that we need.” Stated Ms. Kite in thanking and welcoming the youth delegates to the Talanoa. She further informed that the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) was the official voice of the 1.2 billion youths of the Commonwealth, 11 of these 53 countries are in the Pacific. CYC plays an integral role in advancing the youth development agenda and co-ordination of activities and policies of the Commonwealth in the field of youth.

Ms. Kite acknowledged the work that PIDF does and informed that it was in line with the work of the Commonwealth in the area of Climate Change and Blue Economy. She further stated that the work of the CYC was quite broad and more information on this was available on their website http://commonwealthyouthcouncil.com/

In response to what support can the CYC provide to the Youths in Fiji, Ms. Kite responded that the CYC has hundreds of networks available. The Health network was one example where you can access funding and attend forums where training is available and CYC can link the local (country) networks to regional ones to further the efforts of the area of interest of a particular Youth group. The Pacific Representative of the CYC also elaborated on the Commonwealth Blue Charter which was launched in April 2018; the 53 countries of the Commonwealth adopted the Commonwealth Blue Charter, creating a bright blue beacon to guide cooperative action on ocean issues.
Session 1

Topic: Education and Art

_Presented by Elisha Bano, Founder, ACTit Fiji Network_

Organisation Background

Elisha presented on the current work undertaken in respect of developing youth networks and organizations in the area of Education and Arts and elaborated on ACTit Network’s activities on Thoughts Aloud and Advocacy Workshops with youths, giving them the opportunity to share any spoken work of art including (but not limited to) poetry, skits, monologues, storytelling and even songs. While Youth Advocacy Workshop engages youths in an outcomes-based setting, empowering youths with information and opportunities but also ensuring they contribute and give back implementable outcomes. ACTit Network founded Youth Fest in 2017 and has now conducted two of these events in 2017 and 2018, with weeklong activities engaging youths beginning with the Hiroshima Peace Memorial and concluding on International Youth Day.

Highlights of key points and challenges that young people are facing in Education and Arts

The workshops conducted by ACTit Network, highlighted the following challenges and issues related to Education and Arts:

- The dying cultural practices was a real concern for young people
- Not enough recognition for careers in the arts.
- Not enough encouragement to explore careers in the arts.
- Lack of education opportunities in the arts.

Recommendations

- ACTit Fiji Network recommended that current educational curricula in schools need to be reviewed, and must include Pacific authors in literature classes.
Session 2

Topic: Health

Presented by Tamani Rarama, International Youth Alliance for Family Planning - Fiji

Organisation Background
Tamani stated that “International Youth Alliance for Family Planning - Fiji through online advocacy is mobilizing youth to engage and participate in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Related discussions and proposed activities.”

Highlights of key points and challenges that young people are facing in Health

- National governments must ensure adequate budgetary allocation to Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services and education for young people and invest in research, Monitoring and Evaluation to create evidence-based SRHR programmes.
- The need for a robust and comprehensive sexual education (CSE) included in the school curricula in Fiji and the Pacific.
- There is indeed a need for access to education for LGBTQI community members, including a comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), and education systems must be rights-based and meet needs of the LGBTQI group as well. Moreover, CSE or SRHR education must also include material on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC). SDG 4 on Quality Education must address this even as the development of SDG indicators unfolds in the region. With the cliché that everything starts from home, it would be ideal if every child and individual is encouraged to be taught from home.

Recommendations to CYC and PIDF in their capacities as regional organizations/network

- Act It Network invites partnership from CYC and PIDF and any other interested partners towards Youth Fest and the proposed Youth Art Expo, intended to create and build opportunities for regional collaboration.
- The International Conference on Population and Development ICPD was a major vortex in the population and development debate, shifting the focus of policymakers, researchers, and advocates to respect for human rights and the promotion of equality and health, particularly, SRHR. These commitments were further strengthened a year later by the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) that enshrined women’s rights and gender equality in global development. Governments must commit to these international guiding principles and conventions, and ensure the meaningful presence and participation of young people in the processes to realize the plans of action. The Yogyakarta Principles must also apply in the Pacific context.
- To partner with CSOs and youth organisations; in convening a SRH focused meeting and discussion to push and follow up with Government leaders and stakeholders on the central points of the Moana Declaration that they are all signatories of and also ensuring that no one is left behind including the marginalized groups of the community (disabled, LGBTIQ, single mothers, etc.)
Session 3

Topic: Social and Economic Development

Presented by Meani Levu – Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA)

Organisation background

Meani presented that the Young Women’s Christian Association works in line with National governments to see the implementation of robust and pragmatic policies that would create self-reliance, self-employed entrepreneurship opportunities for young people.

The YWCA also assists toward building capacities of young people through paid or unpaid volunteerism or work [whilst still in high school or Universities] that later offer them leverage in job opportunities, while seeking to address social issues.

Organizations such as the Alliance for Future Generations – Fiji, WWF Pacific Volunteer Program, ACTIt Network, host workshops and trainings in collaboration with Government and Development Partners to enhance the skills and build the capacities of young people.

YWCA also equips youth with bicycles, thus promoting cycling for transportation, recreation and sports.

Highlights of key points and challenges that young people are facing in relation to Social and Economic Development

- Lack of resources or resources unevenly distributed (programs, opportunities, etc.)
- Economic challenges of going to school, “working” may take precedence over going to school for some youth
- Youth unemployment rate is still high, and prevalent in some societies in the Pacific, including those in rural and remote areas.
- Many lack the skills required to hold a steady job or the incentive and academic preparation to attend Universities or training programs. Youth who do obtain employment may find only jobs with lower paying wages, which makes them vulnerable to poverty, and the inability to establish complete independence.

Recommendations to CYC and PIDF in their capacities as regional organizations/network

- Ensure job trainings for young people at the local levels by promoting its importance at the regional and international levels through existing mechanisms.
Session 4
Topic: Accountability and Transparency
Presented by Josaia Tokoni, 350 Fiji

Organisation Background
Youths for Integrity Fiji conducts awareness raising in various forms, from workshops, a camp to activism contest and have a volunteer network with dedicated individuals spreading the Gospel of anticorruption, which is the Pacific Youth against Corruption Network. Youth for Integrity actively supported the 2016 ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, emphasizing the Awareness of Rights of Persons living with Disabilities, stating “this needs to permeate all levels of society, including Access to National Exercises” e.g. Live Parliamentary debates which were not available at that time to the hearing impaired members of society, have since included sign language.

Highlights of key points and challenges that young people are facing in relation to Accountability and Transparency.
- Lack of understanding of what corruption really is in our local context.
- Lack of understanding of our duty perceived by the UN Convention against Corruption

Recommendations to CYC and PIDF in their capacities as regional organizations/network.
- Technical support in terms of resourcing its work locally and regionally
Session 5

Topic: Peace and Security

*Presented by Elvis Kumar, Pacific Peace Initiative Foundation*

**Organisation Background**

Youths for Integrity Fiji conducts awareness raising in various forms, from workshops, a camp to activism contest and have a volunteer network with dedicated individuals spreading the Gospel of anticorruption, which is the Pacific Youth against Corruption Network. An example of youths within the anti-corruption space making interventions at various levels, the Pacific Youth Forum Against-Corruption (PYFAC) serves as a platform for knowledge exchange, awareness raising and advocacy against corruption. It is a network of youth members from 15 Pacific island countries established under the Pacific Youth Council.

**Highlights of key points and challenges that young people are facing in relation to Accountability and Transparency.**

- Lack of understanding of what corruption really is in our local context.
- Lack of understanding of our duty perceived by the UN Convention against Corruption

**Recommendations to CYC and PIDF in their capacities as regional organizations/network.**

- Technical support in terms of resourcing its work locally and regionally
Session 6
Topic: Climate Change and Environment
Presented by Lavetanalagi Seru, Alliance for Future Generations – Fiji

Organisation background
The Alliance for Future Generations is involved in all elements of the Action for Climate Empowerment [ACE], which are reflected in the Article 6 of the Convention [UNFCCC] and Article 12 of the Paris Agreement. These elements are education, training, awareness-raising, public participation and public access to information. AFG-Fiji works to mobilize, engage, educate and empower young people into taking action to address climate change and promote sustainable development, through capacity building trainings, workshops and undertaking key programmes and projects. Working alongside other youth networks and organizations, NGOs, Government Ministries [Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Youths and Sports, Climate Change Division etc.], development partners and agencies to realize it’s goals to build a sustainable future for all, through the meaningful engagement and participation of all young people, in all their diversities. Young people driving actions on the ground, through projects and programmes that engage young people, tree and mangrove tree planting, coral restoration projects, coastal cleanup activities, and to some extent work on climate adaptation projects. Young people are actively engaged also in policy and advocacy, bringing youth perspectives, alongside their idealism, innovation and creativity to create urgent, safe and just solutions.

Key points and challenges that young people are facing in relation to the given thematic.
- Climate change exacerbates existing issues of water and food security, where young people will be adversely affected in the future, with loss of land [culture and heritage sites], due to sea level rise that will also result in internal displacement and rural-urban drift.

- There will be health implications due to adverse weather conditions, droughts, flooding and increased frequency and intensities of natural disasters such as Tropical Cyclones in the region. Vector borne and water borne diseases will be on the rise, resulting in pressure on our health systems. Job losses because of internal displacement, and economic resources being threatened and affected by the adverse changes in climatic conditions and natural disasters [such as Tropical Cyclones], that can substantially damage the economic and agricultural sector.

- The crises of climate change and gender justice are rooted in a social, economic and ecological model that is damaging young people of all diversities and the planet as a whole. Increasing pressure on individuals and communities, who are struggling for sustainable livelihoods and access to resources.

- There is no time to exclude any community, including people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression - our islands are sinking and we are literally drowning. Species of all kinds, including humans of all diversities, are affected by climate change and gender injustice. This is particularly catastrophic for us here in the SIDS.
350 Fiji on Climate Change and Environment
Presented by Drue Slatter, 350 Fiji

Organisation background
350 Fiji is a network that works with communities to bring to life their realities through the sharing of stories. 350 Fiji have harnessed traditional storytelling as one of their main and most effective tools used in their line of work. “Sharing stories and putting the “Human Face” to the realities of these climate crises is something that needs to be told often in order to address this issue. The discussion on climate change and its impacts always has a money value added to it.” “But if we pull back and realize that it’s about people and communities then and only then can we see real change. And the story of keeping our tradition alive is a big part of our advocacy.” “Some of our storytelling campaigns have stopped the expansion of coal mines and even shut down one of the biggest coal ports in the world for a day which wrecked-havoc on investors. While our actions have stopped the export of fossil fuel for a day and the expansion of coal mines, we continue to tell our truth in who we are, that we are a people born of this land and we belong to it as much as it belongs to us and we will continue to fight for it through our stories.”

Challenges and key points highlighted by 350 org in Climate Change and Environment
Drue Slatter also stated that as young people at the frontline of the realities of climate change, there are definitely issues that affect them and us especially during these trying times.

“The story of the Young person from the village of Vunisavisavi comes to mind. The traditional order of the village is such that the occupants of the village are there to look after it. This is the traditional birthplace of the Tui Cakau, the paramount chief of Cakaudrove. The elders of the villagers’ ancestors were asked to go back and look after the village by the Tui Cakau. The new site for the village is Somosomo on the island of Taveuni. While there is an emotional and traditional tie to the land and sea, this village is heavily impacted by sea level rise and the long dry spells have dried up drinking pools inland. I do not think most of our urban dwellers would last a week there. There is an issue of relocation where the elders do not want to relocate but the young people are already moving inland away from the Delei Ni Yavu of the Tui Cakau towards safety. Well that is most of the young people and while there is a sense of urgency to move because of safety, you still have a few of the young people still on the village site. Not wanting to move because of the traditional and emotional ties, they have with the land. They carry on with daily chores (planting yaqona, fishing, tending to traditional obligations) as if the next wave will not flood the village or the dried pools be a health risk. These young people have learned to adapt and overcome these challenges and become stronger as people of the Vanua. So yes, while it may be an issue, the true resilient spirit and power of being a young indigenous person will strike a chord in your true obligations regardless of the circumstances. There is power and truth in who we are as young people in the face of this climate reality”.

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Rainbow Pride Foundation (RPF) has been part of climate change and humanitarian policy review to ensure that the policy has strong Human Rights based approach and is more gender inclusive of diverse young people.

*RPF has done a research on DRR specifically for LGBTQI people post TC Winston using a talanoa methodology to share real lived experience and narratives of what people of diverse SOGIESC go through post disasters.*

**Recommendations to CYC and PIDF in their capacities as regional organizations**

- Ensure that affected communities play a key role in environmental policy decisions and implementation of such decisions, and enhance legal liability for contributors to climate harming activities, amplify the concept of ecological debt and ensure regional and international support for displaced communities.
- Human Rights based approach for all must be realized and respected at the international, regional and national negotiations. Through the SAMOA Pathway there is a deeper understanding and consideration for the realities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the need to build capacity for young people to use existing mechanism
- Sexual and gender minorities should be included in DRR and humanitarian research, assessments and evaluations. It is essential that DRR and humanitarian actors have a greater awareness of the strengths, vulnerabilities, and needs of sexual and gender minorities, and has reliable data and evidence to support assessments, evaluations, cluster policy and practice deliberations, and organizational policy, planning, and action.

350 Fiji’s recommended that “Our call has always been one of holding the big polluters accountable for their actions. Keep fossil fuel in the ground and transition towards a fast and fair 100% renewable energy. You can help by signing a petition which will be delivered to Faith Based Organizations, Regional Organizations, Government, Non-Government Organizations, Universities, and Provincial Officers.”
Session 7
Topic: Gender and Human Rights
Presented by Amasai Jeke, Rainbow Pride Foundation

Organisation background
Rainbow Pride Foundation (RPF) does community outreach to sensitize the community on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) with a human rights based approach.

Key points and challenges that young people are facing in relation to Gender and Human Rights.

- Some regional human rights bodies now go beyond just including youth in a list of ‘vulnerable’ groups, and have begun to incorporate youth experiences and perspectives into recommendations for structural changes needed to bring about full enjoyment of human rights by young people of all diversity.

- In addition, recent years have seen the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) people being taken up beyond the first human rights bodies that addressed them, and developments have taken place in standard-setting.

- Despite this progress, many challenges remain. Violence against young women and girls and LGBTQI people continues at a staggering rate.

- Gender-based discrimination persists in the workplace, education, disaster relief, health care, and countless other areas. Access to justice continues to be hindered by a range of obstacles. Religion, tradition, and culture continue to be used as a shield for violating human rights.

Recommendations to CYC and PIDF in their capacities as regional organizations/network

- Review national policies to have human rights language and to be more gender non-binary.

- Ensure that there is a national action plan on human rights education, include it in primary school level curricula, in all public institutions, implement trainings for young people, and create toolkits for young people to understand the importance of Human rights.

Health

- The need for multi-sectorial push and lobbying on the implementation of the Moana Declaration and in particular the need for comprehensive sex education in our school curriculum. This will greatly impact young people's lives and build their knowledge around issues regarding their bodily integrity and autonomy. “Moreover we need PIDF to push with Government Leaders on this issue. So far, none of the Pacific Island signatories of the Moana Declaration has implemented this urgent issue. We also need technical assistance and expert(s) to work with Young People on a political position paper that can be used as a policy lobbying tool on young people's stance on the issue.”

- There is a lack of or no access to youth-centralized and focused sexual and reproductive health services particularly in remote and maritime zones.
Proposed next steps

- Human Rights based approach for all must be realized and respected at the international, regional and national negotiations. PIDF is in the process of presenting a brief, developed in partnership with the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), into the guidelines and training package of the specific training on the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the countries on the SDGs which is scheduled to start in the week beginning September 24th undertaken by ESCAP through UNDESA, in the training of the officials from the different Pacific Island countries.

- The need for multi-sectoral push and lobbying on the implementation of the Moana Declaration, in particular the need for comprehensive sex education in our school curricula. The need for technical assistance and experts to work with young people on a political position paper that can be used as a policy lobbying tool on young people’s stance on the issue.

- The need to implement UNSCR 2250 into existing mechanisms in National and Regional SDG Task Forces that have been set up in the Pacific. They must be able to demonstrate an understanding that inclusivity is not just a word on paper, but a principle practiced by all actors at the table.

- A youth workshop with Fiji Human Rights Commission and UNOHCR on what corruption really is in a local context.

- Need for assistance and technical support to resource Youth’s work locally and regionally.

- Assist and contribute towards job training for young people at the local level by promoting its importance at the regional and international level through existing mechanisms such as the National Sustainable Development Boards and PIDF’s proposed internship program.

PIDF has always supported innovative means of youth development and engagement with our partners such as USP, FNU and UniFiji on issues related to renewable energy, climate change, oceans and green/blue economies.
We have in the past supported another youth driven initiative known as the e-Participatory Observers Project (e-POP), co-organized with RFI Planète Radio / France Media Monde, on Climate and Environment Young Observers, a citizen information network for understanding climate and environmental changes in island countries by documenting interactive videos using smart mobile phones. In 2018 AIESEC and PIDF signed a collaborative partnership agreement to co-organise the YouthSpeak Forum as an innovative way to actively engage, inspire and enable the youth of Fiji and the Pacific to act on issues related to SDG13 (Climate Change) and SDG 14 (Life Below Water). The PIDF Secretariat has also been visited by a number of overseas universities, to gain more insight to the regional Pacific architecture, more recently, the University of Osnabrück (Germany), the University of Oregon (USA), Long Island University (USA) and the Australian National University (Australia).

The Secretariat has taken in a number of interns from overseas based universities over the past two years providing a diverse cross-sector and multigenerational space for inspiring conversations and actions around pressing issues in the Pacific and allowing young people to understand the importance of conversing inspiration and collaboration into actions.

The generation with most to gain or lose, depending on the extent to which the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are achieved, youth need to be given the opportunity to take on key leadership roles. Our engagement with youth is crucial in helping then to shape, understand, promote and support their efforts to help the world achieve the 17 SDGs. One key role that youth can play in supporting the SDGs is helping to make sure others are aware of the 2030 Agenda and its importance.

Fully embracing youths in all its diversity, PIDF through its emphasis on an inclusive partnership, aligned with SDG 17, which seeks to strengthen global partnerships to support and achieve the ambitious targets of the 2030 Agenda, is uniquely placed as a regional and international platform, through which the needs of youth can be addressed, their voice can be amplified, and their engagement can be advanced. Connected to each other like never before, young people want to and already contribute to the resilience of their communities, proposing innovative solutions, driving social progress and being agents of change towards the achievement of the SDGs. They are also agents of change, mobilizing to advance the SDGs to improve the lives of people and the health of the planet.

Provided with the necessary skills and opportunities needed to reach their potential, young people can be a driving force for supporting development and contributing towards the attainment of the 17 SDGs. Youth-led organizations need to be encouraged and empowered to participate in translating the 2030 Agenda into local, national and regional policy. They play a significant role in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Agenda as well as in holding governments accountable.

PIDF reinforces its commitment towards working with Youth and Youth-led organisations to ensure that youth have the potential and adequate resources to make the most effective transformation of the world into a better place for all, through the attainment of the 17 SDGs.
Talanoa on “Youth engagement for SDGs - A dialogue between PIDF, Youth Coalition and the Commonwealth Youth Chair – Pacific

31st August 2018, 10am to 12pm.
Pacific Island Development Secretariat, 56 Domain Road, Nasese, Suva. Fiji

In Partnership with Alliance for Future Generations – Fiji

Highlights

According to the 2017 census, in Fiji, every third person is between the ages of 15 and 35, the commonly agreed definition for youth in Fiji. The Median Age of the Population is 27.5 years, which means that half of Fiji’s population is below that age.

This concept note outlines the background, rationale and objectives for a Talanoa on “Youth engagement for SDGs - A dialogue between PIDF, Youth Coalition and the Commonwealth Youth Chair – Pacific” proposed to take place in Fiji at the Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Development Forum on 31st August, 2018.

The Talanoa is intended to be a platform for networking, knowledge sharing and initiating discussion on future ways of collaboration between PIDF and close to twenty two youth leaders of youth groups with diverse mandates such as Education and Arts, Economic Opportunities, Gender & Human Rights, Peace & Security, Health and Climate Change & Environment but with the common theme of working collaboratively towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Youth Leaders will also meet and share chronicles with the newly appointed Commonwealth Youth Chair for the Pacific.
Rationale

Youth engagement is fundamental for the successful implementation of the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is especially true as today’s generation of youth is the largest the world has ever known, whose ambitions and abilities can make a substantial contribution to the realization of the prosperous, peaceful and sustainable future we want for all people in our region.

PIDF, is an inclusive regional organization for sustainable development and poverty eradication and recognizes the important role of “Youths as critical agents of change,” for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals’.

If the Pacific Region is to succeed in achieving the SDGs, leaving no one behind along the way, we must seek out an active and substantive engagement of youths from diverse backgrounds in decision-making, national-level planning, implementation, and monitoring. The overall success of the SDGs depends on youth engagement because youth are:

1. **Critical thinkers**: Part of being a youth involves making sense of personal experiences and asking questions about the world around you. Youth have the capacity to identify and challenge existing power structures and barriers to change, and to expose contradictions and biases.

2. **Change-makers**: Young people also have the power to act and mobilise others. Youth activism is on the rise the world over, bolstered by broader connectivity and access to social media.

3. **Innovators**: In addition to bringing fresh perspectives, young people often have direct knowledge of and insights into issues that are not accessible to adults. Youth best understand the problems they face and can offer new ideas and alternative solutions.

4. **Communicators**: Outside the international development sector, too few people are aware that world leaders have come to a historic, far-reaching agreement to combat climate change, eradicate poverty by 2030. Young people can be partners in communicating the agenda to their peers and communities at the local and traditional level, as well as across countries in the Pacific region.

**Leaders**: When young people are empowered with the knowledge of SDGs and supported to develop leadership skills, they can drive change in their communities and countries. Youth-led organisations and networks in particular should be supported and strengthened, because they contribute to the development of civic and leadership skills among young people, especially marginalised youth.

The value of collaborating with youth as partners, establish clear and explicit pathways for their meaningful participation from the outset, which will be much better positioned to achieve the 17 SDGs and related targets.

Through such Talanoa, PIDF considers the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development and stresses the need to create conditions for youth to be engaged, active and integral parts of the solutions we need.
Objectives

1. To meet with the newly appointed Chair of the Commonwealth Youth for the Pacific and share chronicles and discuss ways of collaboration between Youths of the Pacific, Youths of Commonwealth and PIDF.

2. To bring together youth leaders and present, share understanding and discuss key challenges and issues in the Pacific with diverse thematic areas of Education and Arts, Economic Opportunities, Gender & Human Rights, Peace & Security, Health and Climate Change & Environment but with the common theme of working collaboratively towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Program outline

The program will involve a Welcome Address by Mr. François Martel, Secretary General, Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) followed by Introduction and brief history by Ms. Elizabeth Kite, Pacific Representative of the Commonwealth Youth Council


There will be six, 8 minutes sessions with speakers (Leaders of various Youth Organisations) on the following topics:

Education and Arts, Economic Opportunities, Gender & Human Rights, Peace & Security, Health, Climate Change & Environment

The Talanoa will conclude with closing remarks by Mr. François Martel, Secretary General, Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) and Ms. Elizabeth Kite, Pacific Representative of the Commonwealth Youth Council followed by lunch, hosted by the Secretariat for the youth delegation.

For Further Information/Contact:

Ms. Afsrin Ali
Coordinator Program Management
Pacific Islands Development Forum | 56 Domain Road, Nasese, P.O.Box 2050, Govt. Bldg., Suva, REPUBLIC OF FIJI.
Ph: (679) 331 1518 | Mobile: (679) 9028102
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</table>
| 10.00am - 10.15am | **Introductions & MC**  
Mr. Lavetanalagi Seru  
Coordinator  
Alliance for Future Generations – Fiji |
| 10.15am - 10.35am | **Welcome Address & Brief History of PIDF**  
Mr. François Martel  
Secretary General, Pacific Islands Development Forum(PIDF) |
| 10.35am – 10.55am | **Commonwealth Youth Council Introduction and Brief History**  
Ms. Elizabeth Kite  
Commonwealth Youth Chair – Pacific Representative |
| 10.55am – 11.45am | **Youth Discussion**  
Thematic Areas  
- Education / Arts  
- Economic Opportunities  
- Gender & Human Rights  
- Peace & Security  
- Health  
- Climate Change & Environment  
- Pacific Youth Council  

(8 minutes session per theme by Youth Leaders) |
| 11.45am – 12pm | **Concluding Remarks**  
- Ms. Elizabeth Kite  
Commonwealth Youth Chair – Pacific Representative  
- Mr. François Martel  
Secretary General, Pacific Islands Development Forum(PIDF) |
| 12pm          | **Event concludes with Lunch** |

**TALANOA**  
"Youth Engagement for SDGs"  
A dialogue between PIDF, Youth Coalition & Commonwealth Youth Chair-Pacific  
10am – 12pm, Friday 31st August, 2018  
PIDF Secretariat, 56 Domain Road, Nasese
Today’s generation of youth is the largest the world has ever known. One in every three people alive today is under the age of thirty, and around ninety per cent of young people are living in developing countries.

The Pacific Islands Development Forum in conjunction with the Alliance for Future Generations Fiji will hold a Talanoa session on Youth Engagement for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with close to 20 Youth Leaders, working in different thematic areas of Education and Arts, Youth Social and Economic Development, Accountability & Transparency, Peace & Security, Gender & Equality, Climate Change, Environment and Sustainable Development.

The Talanoa will also provide an opportunity to the Youth Leaders to meet the newly appointed Commonwealth Youth Chair-Pacific over a networking lunch hosted by PIDF.

We recognise the importance and actively support involving youth in the implementation of the SDGs by enhancing their leadership aspirations and building capacities of young people, in order to influence domestic, regional and international development policies, which addresses the needs and interests of young people and those of future generations.

Date: Friday August 31 2018  Venue: PIDF Secretariat, 56 Domain Road, Suva  Time: 10am-12pm

For further information please contact:

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Supported by:

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[ACT IT Network logo]

[350 Fij logo]
## Annex 4: Attendance List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Elizabeth Kite</td>
<td>Commonwealth Youth Chair - Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdul Mufeez Shaheed</td>
<td>FSMedSA Student President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amasai Jeke</td>
<td>Rainbow Pride Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joeli Kauksimoala</td>
<td>Street Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vani Matanasiga</td>
<td>Fiji Council of Social Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josaia Tokoni</td>
<td>Rise Pasifika/ Project 350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilda Vukimoala</td>
<td>Pacific Youth Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meani Levu</td>
<td>YWCA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruth Rosas</td>
<td>Peace Corp/Rotary Fiji</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Paris</td>
<td>Rotract President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biutiganedra Okinawa</td>
<td>Lifeline Fiji</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shivnesh Kumar Ram</td>
<td>Fiji Model United Nations Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arteshni Devi</td>
<td>Pacific Peace Building Fiji</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kaajal Kumar</td>
<td>Executive Director – Aspire Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elisha Bano Ali</td>
<td>Founder - ACT Fiji Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elvis Kumar</td>
<td>Pacific Peace Initiatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lite Merekula</td>
<td>OLAFOU Fiji</td>
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<tr>
<td>Herleen Emily</td>
<td>Founder - Nadi Youth Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ra’eed Ali</td>
<td>Co-Founder - Precious Plastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lavetanalagi Seru</td>
<td>Alliance for Future Generations - Fiji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josevasta Rotidara</td>
<td>Commonwealth Youth Awardee 2018</td>
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