



# Pacific Youth Charter



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Original text : English

Secretariat of the Pacific Community Cataloguing-in-publication data

Pacific Youth Charter: Pacific Youth Festival, Tahiti 2006

(1st : 17–22 July 2006 : Tahiti)

1. Youth – Oceania

I. Title II. Secretariat of the Pacific Community

305.23595

AACR2

ISBN 978-982-00-0183-1

Design and layout: Muriel Borderie

Cover photographs: SPC staff and David Becker

Printed by Stredder Print Limited – Auckland, New Zealand

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## **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 1st 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;

**Emphasising** 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 recognise 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 recognising and enforcing them.

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### *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 that recognise 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.*

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### *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.*

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*c. Youth assemblies/parliaments*

We recognise 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.

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*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.*

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*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 present diverse situations, some to be celebrated, but also needs and challenges that should be addressed.

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***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 into 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.*

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***b. Equal opportunities to education and training (informal and vocational): Flexible integration into jobs after school and practical teaching instead of textbook-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 emphasise both practical and theoretical learning. Technical and vocational training and instruction should be accessible and affordable for all.

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

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***c. Prevention***

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

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

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***d. Pacific cooperation for credentials and education exchange programmes***

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

**Resolution 11:** *Improve cooperation between regional education systems.*

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

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***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.*

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***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 coordination and collaboration of all youth stakeholders.*

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***g. Sustainable development as core curriculum***

We believe that poor management and destructive practices threaten the unique biodiversity and way of life of 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 must be 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 and formal skills, and are enthusiastic to assume increased responsibility in society.

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***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 into our education systems.*

**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 programmes need to be created for students to gain qualifications and skills that facilitate entry into the workforce.*

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***b. Work conditions***

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

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

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

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

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***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 to and opportunities for employable skills.*

**Resolution 25:** *Establish a regional youth volunteer policy and volunteer exchange programmes.*

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

**Resolution 27:** *Provide and strengthen non-formal education to develop skills for the purpose of gaining employment.*

**Resolution 28:** *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.

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### *a. Environmental sustainability*

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

**Resolution 29:** *Preserve 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 30:** *Resources need to be invested in research involving the use of renewable energy and reusable materials.*

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

**Resolution 32:** *Encourage 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 33:** *Sustainable lifestyles should be affordable and accessible, and both the private sector and governments 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.

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### ***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 is having a real impact on the preservation and maintenance of tradition and culture.

**Resolution 34:** *Legislate for the protection and preservation of traditional knowledge and customs.*

**Resolution 35:** *Establish and strengthen programmes to educate and generate youth's interest in reviving and fostering culture and tradition.*

**Resolution 36:** *Include and make compulsory subjects on culture and tradition in formal school curricula at all levels.*

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

**Resolution 38:** *Strengthen the importance of traditional family values and the role families play in the lives of young people.*

**Resolution 39:** *Ensure government assistance to fund and support youth initiatives in the area of culture and tradition.*

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***c. Cultural exchanges for youth***

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

**Resolution 40:** *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 41:** *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.

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### *a. Prevention*

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

**Resolution 42:** *All sectors of society need to take a preventive approach when creating policies and programmes to address youth health. This way, we can prevent problems such as unplanned pregnancies, non-communicable diseases, STDs, HIV and AIDS, suicide and substance abuse.*

**Resolution 43:** *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 44:** *More awareness and practice by young people of healthy lifestyles is needed, recognising that healthy living plays an important role in preventing non-communicable diseases.*

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### *b. Access*

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

**Resolution 45:** *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.

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### *a. Human rights*

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

**Resolution 46:** *Form a regional Human Rights Commission that will promote the adoption and implementation of international and national human rights conventions.*

**Resolution 47:** *Governments and civil society need to ensure that universal human rights are upheld regardless of culture.*

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### *b. Inclusive society and equal opportunities for all*

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

**Resolution 48:** *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 49:** *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, and 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.

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### *a. Education on peace*

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

**Resolution 50:** *Peace promotion curricula and outreach programmes must be developed, provided and implemented for young people and the broader community.*

**Resolution 51:** *Resources and active support need to be provided to young people who are involved in the promotion of peace so that other youth can be empowered to consider and apply principles of peace.*

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

**Resolution 53:** *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.*

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***c. Self-determination***

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

**Resolution 54:** *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, recognise 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.