

Media release

UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth to attend High-level Dialogue on Pacific youth

29 October 2015

Suva, Fiji – A High-Level Dialogue on youth will be part of the upcoming biennial Conference of the Pacific Community in Niue next week.

More than half of the Pacific region's 10 million people are aged under 25 and yet there is a lack of targeted investment to respond to the significance of youth issues and meet the needs of all young people in the Pacific.

The United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy for Youth, Ahmad Alhendawi, of Jordan, will give the keynote address on overcoming barriers to implementing global policy on engaging youth in sustainable development.

With the theme "Nurturing a Resilient Generation and Future Pacific Leaders", the High-level Dialogue will provide an opportunity for ministers from among the 26 members of the Pacific Community, youth representatives and development partners, to collectively discuss strategies for increasing investment towards a range of issues affecting Pacific youth.

These include non-communicable diseases, climate change, sexual reproductive health and rights, and the employment and empowerment of girls and young women.

Mr Alhendawi will present a global perspective on youth-centred development to see where opportunities for regional or national alignment would be beneficial for Pacific countries.

"With the recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the upcoming historic climate change meeting in Paris, a matter of great priority to the Pacific region, it is crystal clear that we will need to partner with youth every step of the way to realize the 2030 Agenda," said Mr. Alhendawi.

"Young people in the Pacific have the opportunity to lead the way in this movement," he said.

The dialogue will also feature a Pacific Youth Statement, delivered by representatives of the Pacific Youth Council, and presentations by Samoa's Minister for Women, Community and Social Development, the Hon Tolofuaivalelei Falemoe Leiataua and the Acting Permanent Secretary of Solomon Islands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Joseph Maahanua.

The Pacific Community Director-General, Dr Colin Tukuitonga, said the presence of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth will bring an important international perspective to options for building resilient future generations in the Pacific.

"We look forward to welcoming Mr Alhendawi to this important dialogue which comes at a turning point for the development agenda internationally and here in the Pacific, with the

initiation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the prospect of a global agreement on climate change,” Dr Tukuitonga said.

SPC works in partnership with the Pacific Youth Council to coordinate the work of the Pacific Youth Development Framework 2014–2023. This partnership ensures that young people have a central role in shaping development agendas for youth.

The High-level Dialogue will consider the work led by ministries of youth, guided by national youth policies, and will learn from common challenges and best practices. Recommendations will be made as to how whole-of-government approaches can be facilitated to increase investments in youth and bring a greater youth focus to other sectors of development.

This announcement follows the inaugural meeting on 22 October in Suva, Fiji, of a newly-established Pacific Youth Think Tank, comprising representatives of 25 organisations. The Youth Think Tank convened to plan the first steps in implementing the Pacific Youth Development Framework – a regional mapping of service delivery for youth and the establishment of a youth small grants scheme.

The Pacific Community’s ninth Conference and associated officials meeting will be hosted in Alofi, Niue, from 31 October to 5 November 2015.

The High-level Dialogue will take place on the final day (5 November Niue time, 6 November for other side of international dateline).

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Useful link:

The Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF) 2014–2023 can be downloaded from <http://www.spc.int/images/publications/en/Corporate/Pacific-Youth-Development-Framework.pdf>