



Pacific Summit and Policy Dialogue on Youth Entrepreneurship

Suva, Fiji

5-7 April 2017

OUTCOME STATEMENT

1. We, the representatives of young entrepreneurs, government officials and private sector organisations from 8 Pacific Countries¹, affirm that youth entrepreneurship is a pragmatic strategy to halt spiralling youth unemployment in the region and enhance young people's social, economic and political well-being;
2. We recognise that unemployment is the most critical challenge confronting young people globally, and particularly in the Pacific region, where the youth unemployment rate stands at an alarming 23% (SPC, 2011), with young people 4.5-6 times less likely to secure decent jobs relative to older people (ILO, 2015), and where jobs in the formal sector are limited and jobs in the informal sector are often not decent jobs²;
3. We recognise youth entrepreneurship as an instrument for creating jobs. We agree that including youth entrepreneurship in economic policy-making and development plans will generate decent work opportunities and lead to robust, inclusive and poverty-reducing growth;
4. We recognise that, public-private partnerships in youth entrepreneurship, including working in partnership, as coalitions, to realise the commitments of the 2011 Forum Leaders Communiqué, SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A) Pathway and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and to contribute to the vision of the Pacific Youth Development Framework (2014–2023) for *“a sustainable Pacific where all young people are safe, respected, empowered and resilient”*. We therefore call on governments to ensure that youth entrepreneurship priorities are reflected and implemented in national and sectoral policies, including national development plans;
5. We recognise the important role of non-state actors, civil society organisations, the private sector, faith-based and community-based organisations, media and academia in advancing youth entrepreneurship, and call for greater collaboration and coordination of all stakeholders to support young entrepreneurs;

¹ Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati and Tuvalu

² work that are productive and deliver a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

6. We appreciate the Policy Guide on Youth Entrepreneurship developed by the United Nations Conference on Trade & Development (UNCTAD) and the Commonwealth Secretariat, which has aided us in highlighting the existing barriers to youth entrepreneurship in our countries, specifically;
 - 6.1. Limitations within the regulatory environment, including lengthy bureaucratic processes, high costs and limited opportunities for growth for young entrepreneurs;
 - 6.2. Poor coordination between national and sector-based policies promoting youth entrepreneurship, leading to lack of coherence, fragmented services for youth and duplication of services by different providers;
 - 6.3. The data gap on youth unemployment and youth entrepreneurship in the Pacific to inform the development of policies promoting youth entrepreneurship;
 - 6.4. Insufficient and ineffective business services for young entrepreneurs, including lack of financial access and services such as e-commerce platforms, and limited incentives and investment opportunities for young entrepreneurs;
 - 6.5. Inadequate Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure and capacity including high costs, low coverage and connectivity, lack of awareness and capacity building on ICT to rural areas, and weak linkages between training providers and the ICT sector;
 - 6.6. Absence of entrepreneurship education and training for young people in formal and non-formal education, including insufficient funds to support this development, lack of awareness of available services and limited accredited trainers;
 - 6.7. Inadequate formal mechanisms to promote policy dialogue and advocacy between young entrepreneurs with government, financial institutions, education and ICT providers and other stakeholders, to nurture the growth of young entrepreneurs.
7. We present the following recommended measures to promote youth entrepreneurship nationally and regionally, mainly through;
 - 7.1. **Optimising the regulatory and policy environment**
 - 7.1.1. Elaborate youth entrepreneurship action plans in current policies and strategies, incorporating clear monitoring and evaluation processes;
 - 7.1.2. Incentivise young entrepreneurs through simplified and flexible business registration and compliance procedures, free or subsidised business registration, and tax concessions to assist the start-up and growth of young entrepreneurs;
 - 7.2. **Enhancing the evidence base on youth employment and youth entrepreneurship**

- 7.2.1. Strengthen gender disaggregated data collection and analysis to inform and expand youth entrepreneurship initiatives through school to work transition surveys, labour force surveys and including modules for youth employment statistics in national surveys;
- 7.2.2. Explore the validity of developing a harmonised regional statistical definition of 'youth' and related terms and concepts.
- 7.3. Improving access to finance and facilitating technology exchange and innovation**
 - 7.3.1. Create and expand existing financial services, including loan and grant schemes, investment schemes and guarantee schemes to benefit young entrepreneurs and promote youth innovation in technology exchange;
 - 7.3.2. Align ICT strategies to facilitate easier and affordable access to ICT for young entrepreneurs, including broader coverage and connectivity in both urban and rural areas, subsidised costs for services, increased investment in improving ICT products/ facilities, and in building the capacity of young entrepreneurs in ICT.
- 7.4. Expanding entrepreneurship education, training and skills development to young people in the formal and non-formal education system**
 - 7.4.1. Promote entrepreneurial thinking from an early age through resourcing and implementing entrepreneurship education and training in formal and non-formal education systems, and establishing a pool of entrepreneurship educators and accredited business trainers in the region;
 - 7.4.2. Deliver programmes that promote the employability of young people such as internships, mentoring services, career guidance and apprenticeships to support young people transitioning from education to work.
- 7.5. Promoting awareness and networking**
 - 7.5.1. Improve coordination, networking and awareness amongst national and regional stakeholders, including establishing regional 'virtual' networks, fostering private and public partnerships and south to south cooperation, and implementing effective media and communication strategies;
 - 7.5.2. Establish mechanisms to enable youth entrepreneurs to engage in policy dialogue, such as national Young Entrepreneurs Councils, and to facilitate resource and knowledge-sharing between governments, young entrepreneurs and stakeholders at national and regional levels;
 - 7.5.3. Create opportunities for raising awareness and supporting young entrepreneurs, such as career and trade expos, youth markets, young entrepreneur's awards, business ideas competitions and other initiatives.



8. We recognise and commend the current work of the Pacific Coalition on Youth Employment through the 2016 Pacific Young Entrepreneurs Forum (PYC, PLP, PIPSO, SPC, ILO) originating from the 2011 Youth Employment Advocacy Initiative and call on the Coalition to support national level activities recommended through this Summit;
9. We commend the establishment of the Young Entrepreneurs Council (YEC) in Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Tonga through the technical assistance of the ILO, PYC and SPC and applaud the national private sector/employer organisations for incorporating YECs into their governance structures, and encourage partners to replicate this model in other requesting Pacific countries;
10. We applaud the initiative taken by the PYC, CYP, SPC and ILO in advocating for youth entrepreneurship at the 2017 Forum Economic Ministers Meeting (FEMM), with some representatives from the Summit participating in the Civil Society Organisations (CSO) and Private Sector Dialogues for the FEMM;
11. We call on the ILO to present this Outcome Statement to their May Pacific Labour Ministers Meeting on the “Future of Work” in the Pacific, and call on their tripartite constituents (Government, Employers & Workers) to support the recommendations of this Summit;
12. We call on the Commonwealth Secretariat to present this outcome statement at the next Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting and to encourage Youth Ministers of the Pacific to support the recommendations of this Summit;
13. In conclusion, we strongly agree that investing in youth entrepreneurship advances the means to realising the SDGs and
14. We reiterate the need for development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, promotes the growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, and substantially increases the number of youth in employment, education and training in the region.

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