



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM



Pacific
Disability
Forum

Seventh Pacific Regional Conference on Disability

“Nothing Without us: Deepening partnerships for an inclusive and equitable Blue Pacific Continent for persons with disabilities.”

OUTCOME DOCUMENT

Youth with Disabilities

We, Youth from Organizations for Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) from Fiji, Kiribati, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and New Zealand gathered in Nadi, Fiji on 28 February 2023 for the Pre-Conference Youth Summit at the 7th Pacific Regional Conference on Disability,

Re-calling the collective vision of our Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, for a Pacific Region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity, that ensures all Pacific peoples especially our children and youth lead free, safe, healthy and productive lives,

Reinforcing the Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016-2025) which sets the strategic direction and practical focus on the central role of persons with disabilities through their representative organisations, remaining true to the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities being **‘Nothing about us without us’**; and further recognizing the promotion of a human rights approach to disability which enshrines the social model of disability,

Hereby call on our Pacific Island leaders and our national, regional and international partners to support us your children and youth with disabilities in ensuring and further strengthening a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, at national and regional levels to advance the agenda for children and youth with disabilities.

We, the Youth OPD Representatives hereby commit to:

- 1) Ensure that children and youth with disabilities are provided with opportunities, resources and platforms for empowerment, engagement and participation irrespective of gender, abilities and other status
- 2) Strengthen capacity building for children and youth with diverse disabilities including leadership, education and training, skills building, socio-economic and civil and political rights.
- 3) Facilitate opportunities for inclusion and participation of underrepresented youth with disabilities
- 4) Commit to the mobilization of resources to address barriers to access to essential services by youth with disabilities. Such include but not limited to economic empowerment, SRHR, DIDRR, GBV, Social protection considering the barriers of youth with cognitive disabilities when discussing eligibility criteria’s
- 5) Work with youth with disabilities through their representative organizations to Develop, mobilize resources, implement, strengthen and monitor laws and policies impacting the rights of children and youth with disabilities.

- 6) Commit to the mobilizations of resources to Enhanced awareness on disabilities at all levels from national decision making to community and family levels.

Recognizing the need for a unified regional approach and urgent national actions, call on our Pacific Leaders and Development Partners to:

- 1) Ensure that children and youth with disabilities are provided opportunities and platforms for empowerment, engagement and participation including through the strengthening of mechanisms such as regional and national networks, frameworks and financial support for inclusion and meaningful engagement irrespective of gender, abilities and other status within all policy making, planning, monitoring and reporting processes at international, regional, national and sub-national level.
- 2) Strengthen capacity building for children and youth with diverse disabilities including leadership, education and training, skills building, socio-economic and civil and political rights.
- 3) Address barriers to all services utilizing tools like disability audits and supporting legal, learning, health, protection, decent employment, financial literacy and reasonable access and accommodation and the use of sign language and other responsive measures and tools.
- 4) Develop and strengthen robust disability laws and policies with explicit provisions recognizing the rights of children and youth with disabilities, with clear costed action plan and monitoring and evaluation framework that are supported by well-resourced and functioning multi-sectoral coordinating mechanisms; also ensure that sector specific policies, strategies and plans are aligned to national development priorities for children and youth with disabilities.
- 5) Support and enhance multi-sectoral platform to coordinate financing and investment through national public financial management systems that are evidence based and make best possible use of budgets, ensuring efficacy, build synergies for programmes for children and youth with disabilities including sports, disability centers and services at all levels.
- 6) Ensure coherent and coordinated multi-sectoral approach to planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation which is accessible and informed by relevant, reliable and comparable data disaggregated by age, sex, disability, residence, ethnicity and wealth.
- 7) Provide critical comprehensive and quality support to children and youth with disabilities, parents, caregivers and communities; to nurture a barrier-free, safe and caring environment grounded in lived experiences; and providing support systems for the most vulnerable and marginalized including early interventions for children with disabilities.
- 8) Enhanced awareness on disabilities at all levels from national decision making to community and family levels.
- 9) Support partnerships that take a holistic approach involving space for children and youth with disabilities.

Conclusion

We, Youth from Organizations for Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) from Fiji, Kiribati, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and New Zealand, reiterate our commitment to working with our Pacific leaders and development partners towards strengthening our regional and collaborative approach that ensures that No Child or Youth with disability is Left Behind.

We reiterate the call to all governments to accelerate implementation of the Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by undertaking measures that ensure the full implementation of global, regional and national commitments realizing the rights of children and youth with disabilities.