



SOLOMON ISLANDS GOVERNMENT
Ministry of Women, Youth & Children Affairs



NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

2010 -2015

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CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	1
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	2
SOLOMON ISLANDS NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY, 2010-2015	3
Introduction	3
Solomon Islands Youth Profile	4
Principles of Youth Development	5
Policy Goal	5
Priority Policy Outcomes	6
Priority Policy Outcomes–Defined	6
Implementation Mechanisms	9
Performance Measurement	10
STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION 2010-2015	12

Foreword

**Hon. Johnson Koli, MP.
Minister for Women, Youth and Children Affairs**

Solomon Islands is a youthful nation. Since Independence, our youth—people between 14 and 29—have comprised 21 to 32% of our nation. This simple demographic reality demands action. It demands action because:

“[Youth] is a time in life given by Providence to every person and given ... as a responsibility. During that time, [the youth] searches, like the young man in the Gospel, for answers to basic questions; [s/he] searches not just for the meaning of life, but also for a concrete way to go about living this life ... [Every elder] must love this fundamental aspect of youth.”¹

This love cannot be passive: Sometimes, youths will be frustrated with their inability to effectively learn—to achieve what they desire. Unassisted, this frustration can lead youths to focus too intensely on single issues or situations, which in turn can lead to their doing things that are not in their (or the nation’s) best interests.

While each government has addressed this demand as best it could, the CNURA government felt that our youth needed more attention. Thus, the CNURA government increased attention on youth, and supported the start-up of a variety of approaches to engage our youth. Our government has helped *Solomon Idol* start up, made the first national youth awards, encouraged and supported the development of provincial youth policies and action plans, organised the first National Youth Parliament, and pursued this update to the national youth policy.

Our National Youth Policy gives the rationale for youth development efforts, provides background information on the situations of our young people, and lays out a framework for the many stakeholders to act. A key element of that framework is helping youths to help themselves. The policy helps us all to build together for our youth: Its goals give stakeholders a path to maximise the collective results of their individual actions.

Government recognises that enlisting young people as stakeholders in national development will need more than policy mechanisms. We could not have accomplished much entirely on our own. We have built upon the foundations provided to us by previous governments. We have enlisted support from stakeholders throughout the nation. Those resources will help to make this policy, and our nation’s youth, successful: Collectively, such resources will dwarf any that government and donor partners might mobilise.

Government has also requested and received support from our nation’s development partners—especially from the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP), the SPC, the UN System (UNDP, UNICEF, UNIFEM), the World Bank and from bi-lateral donors like Australia and Japan.

Government has shown that it must continue to work to ensure that sufficient resources are available no matter what the source. We urge the nation to encourage and support the continuation of such efforts.

1 Pope John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, quoted in *His Holiness*, by Bernstein and Politi, 1996, Bantam Books.

Acknowledgements

Ms. Ethel Sigimanu
Permanent Secretary for Ministry Women Youth and Children Affairs

As the Minister notes in his Foreword to this policy, demographics—the study of data on people—has been a driving force for our nation’s development. The data on youth in Solomon Islands is not as detailed as we would like it to be, but it is sufficient to tell us in general terms what the future may be like if certain things are done or not done.

“In human affairs—political, social, economic, or business—it is pointless to try to predict the future, let alone attempt to look ahead 75 years. But it is possible—and fruitful—to identify major events that will have predictable effects in the next decade or two. It is possible, in other words, to identify and prepare for the future that has already happened. ¶The dominant factor for business in the next two decades—absent war, pestilence, or collision with a comet—is not going to be economics or technology. It will be demographics.”²

Over the past two years, many youth stakeholders, all around the Solomon Islands, have looked at that demographic data from ‘where they stand’, and shared with this policy’s developers their assessments of what could be and should be done to maximise our youths’ future. This policy is the result of those assessments.

The efforts of many people and organisations contributed to this policy. Some of the more outstanding contributions were made at the provincial level. Provincial-level efforts, many led by the National Youth Congress (NYC) resulted in the development of provincial youth policies and plans of action. The Ministry supported these efforts directly, and indirectly we encouraged development partners to support those efforts.

In addition to supporting the important provincial-level efforts, our staff also organised and supported consultation processes that brought together contributions from across the nation—from provinces, from youth groups, from organisations that support youth development, from other Ministries, etc.

Our key development partners in these efforts have been UNICEF, the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) and UNDP. Additional support came from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and AusAID (CSP).

All of us here in the Ministry are extremely grateful for these contributions—both for the contributions themselves and for the teamwork that they inspired and reinforced. This teamwork will be vital for achieving this policy’s goals. Thank you all, very, very, much—now and into the future!

2 Peter F. Drucker, “The Future That Has Already Happened”, *Harvard Business Review* (75:5, p 20).

SOLOMON ISLANDS NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY, 2010-2015

Introduction

This Solomon Islands National Youth Policy 2010-2015 is the nation's guide for youth development over the next five years. It is not set in concrete, nor should it be. The review of the previous policy considered the needs and wants that were identified in provincial youth policies and action plans. In the decade since the adoption of the first National Youth Policy in 2000, the issues facing today's young men and women still appear complex, but there is commitment amongst all youth stakeholders—government and private—to positively address them.

Who is the policy for? This policy recognises the needs and aspirations of young Solomon Islanders who seek to reach their full potential, and this is reflected in youth development being a priority in the national development agenda. The policy provides a framework for public sector agencies, private sector organisations, communities and young people themselves to use when planning and implementing work for young people.

As a key feature, the policy aims to establish and enhance working relationships between MWYCA and the youth sector of the rural areas where the majority of the young people of Solomon Islands live. This policy provides the basis for a cohesive and coordinated approach to youth development in Solomon Islands. It reaffirms the importance of creating an environment where leaders, parents, stakeholders and young people can discuss and develop initiatives that promote youth development.

The tensions from 1998-2003 and the Honiara riots in 2006 are why much of the proposed outcomes in the 2000 policy were not achieved, despite the subsequent arrival of RAMSI (Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands). Factors that resulted from these situations include:

- a much more restricted capacity within the Ministry to play their lead role in implementation,
- no real sense of ownership of that policy by youths and stakeholders,
- the difficulties of access to the policy document and consequent general lack of understanding the policy,
- insufficient resource allocation for policy implementation (low priority for governments from 2000-2008), and
- the virtual absence of organisational linkages and networks that would have helped implementation.

Importantly, there is satisfaction that some important activities did occur between 2000 and 2010:

- The youth budget allocation has increased;
- CEDAW was ratified in 2002;
- youth officers have been recruited for national and provincial youth offices;
- there has been an overall increase in the number of NGO youth programs;
- the capacity of the Youth Division of the Honiara City Council was increased;
- the Solomon Islands National Youth Award was initiated;
- provincial youth policies and action plans were formulated;
- the GEWD and EAW policies were developed and approved—they complement this policy;
- the inaugural National Youth Parliament was held; and
- the formation of the National Youth Stakeholders Committee have also been significant.

These activities provided a channel for youth development in the country. Complementing these activities was the Youth Division's 2007 merger into the new Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs (MWYCA). After it was organised, MWYCA initiated a review of the 2000 National Youth policy. Alongside this review, work was initiated help youths in provinces to look at and design plans for their development.

The NYC, in partnership with OXFAM, Save the Children (Australia), AusAID (CSP), and the Ministry, carried out comprehensive consultations in the provinces to stimulate the development and

ratification of the first provincial youth policies and action plans throughout Solomon Islands. This process complemented the national youth policy review consultations undertaken by the Ministry in Malaita, Isabel, Guadalcanal and Honiara. Key youth stakeholders in the public and the private sectors were also consulted in a national youth stakeholders' workshop to elicit their views on the policy.

As detailed later in this policy, MWYCA is responsible for coordinating the policy's implementation. The implementation mechanisms for this policy ensure that a collaborative approach is taken. There will be quarterly opportunities to monitor and evaluate progress. The Youth Development Division (YDD) will coordinate various stakeholder meetings in Honiara and in the provinces. The NYC will coordinate youth groups and advocate for youth to government. MWYCA will support the National Youth Stakeholders Committee (NYSC) and reporting on progress.

Solomon Islands Youth Profile

Youth Definition

For policy purposes, the definition of 'youth' in Solomon Islands continues to be 'persons between 14 years of age and 29 years of age', inclusive. Also, as with the previous policy, it is recognised that there is not one nationally arrived at definition of youth. Therefore, the policy may accommodate people aged less than 14 years, or over 29 years, of age depending the individual's needs and on cultural and traditional definitions of youth.

Young people and policy implementation

Today's young men and women are knowledgeable individuals who want to see their needs and aspirations achieved in the foreseeable future, not just for their development but also for the ongoing development of Solomon Islands. Consultations in Guadalcanal, Isabel, Malaita and Honiara City, as well as with youth stakeholders, tell us that young people are frustrated with the scarcity of credible instruments and mechanisms to assist policy implementation.

Youth Population

In 2008, the National Statistics Office (NSO) pointed out that Solomons' population is dominated by Melanesians (90%), with Polynesians (4%), Micronesians (1%) and Chinese, Asians, Europeans, and other Pacific Islanders making up the balance.³ Data submitted by the NSO to the National Electoral Commission indicated that in 2010 the youth proportion of the national population was 28.5%—with young women making up 48% and young men 52%.⁴ Perhaps most important, the youth population is expected to continue its rapid growth until at least 2025.⁵

This policy recognises the needs of rural youth. Around 80% of the nation's population resides in rural areas. However, there continues to be an increase in population movement from rural areas to Honiara and other rural centres.⁶ One example of the rural to urban drift shows that young people make up nearly one-third of the total population of Honiara city.⁷ The increase in youth population in Honiara and other urban areas of the Solomon Islands has a lot to do with young women and (to a slightly greater degree) young men⁸ seeking education, training, work opportunities and bright

3 Solomon Islands Government, 2002. *Report on the 1999 population and housing census*. Honiara: Statistics Office.

4 *Derived from data in National Statistics Office submission to the National Electoral Commission (digital file name: "Projected Provincial Population total – electoral.xls")*.

5 World Bank, *Solomon Islands Youth in Transition*, "Summary Note of Key Findings, Options and Recommendations of the Youth Scoping Mission" December, 2008.

6 Solomon Islands 1999 Census Report, *op. cit.*.

7 NSO submission to the National Electoral Commission, *op. cit.*

8 Analysis of the data provided by NSO to the Electoral Commission (*op. cit.*) indicated that males comprise 55% of the youth population of Honiara, whereas males' 52% share of the nation's youth.

lights.⁹ The high competition for limited education places, training and employment opportunities will continue to challenge the public and private sectors—and our youths—over the policy period and beyond.

The nation's latest HIES report¹⁰ shows the average urban household size to be 6.9 people. However, anecdotal evidence indicates that the average size of poorer urban households rises to 20 persons or more. Such a situation deprives young people and their families of privacy and puts uncommon stress on family relations. Equally important, infectious diseases and other health problems associated with large numbers of people living in cramped conditions can make daily life a real challenge.¹¹

Principles of Youth Development

This Solomon Islands Youth Policy (2010-2015) is underpinned by rights-based approaches and principles of youth development. The principles include:

- *Equity*, the rights of all young women and men to equality of opportunities and equitable distribution of services and resources. This includes non-discrimination and attention to vulnerable groups¹² of which young people are one. It also includes linkages to rights—that everything that one does is connected to a human right.
- *Participation*, the recognition that young women and men are participants in society and as such have a priority role and responsibility in the decisions that affect their lives. Participation includes accountability to all stakeholders.
- *Access*; that young people are able and empowered to attend adequate and appropriate programs and services, and young people are able to benefit from these regardless of gender, religion, geographic location, social, cultural, political or economic circumstances.

Policy Values

The aim of the policy is to guide Solomon Islands' government, youth stakeholders and development partners to advance positive youth development in Solomon Islands. The policy is also a tool for ongoing dialogue between the various stakeholders through the following values:

1. Youth must be central to planning for development; distribution of resources for youth development must be fair;
2. Making aid effective means that development partners to align their planning and prioritising with stated youth policy priorities according to the principles laid out in the Paris and Accra agreements;
3. Youth development must be gender equal;
4. Partnerships between government and NGOs/CSOs—which include churches) at rural and national levels can facilitate youths' holistic development;
5. The enabling environment for youth development, the development frameworks and mechanisms, must be developed.

Policy Goal

The goal of this Policy is to:

Promote the development of Solomon Islands youth to achieve their full potential through a range of programs and activities that offer choices and assist them to

9 Prasad, B. C and Singh, R. 2008. *Country Desk Review on Youth Employment in Five Pacific Countries: Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Samoa*. ILO Suva. Fiji.

10 Solomon Islands Statistics Office, *Household Income And Expenditure Survey 2005/6*, Department of Finance and Treasury, Honiara, September 2006.

11 Jourdan, C. 2008. *Youth and Mental Health in Solomon Islands: A Situational Analysis*. Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International. Suva.

12 *The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment 2007 – 2015*, Commonwealth Secretariat, London.

make informed decisions about their futures and their roles and responsibilities in the political, social and economic development of Solomon Islands.

Priority Policy Outcomes

The six priority policy outcomes over the next five years (2010-2015) are:

1. Improved and equitable access to education, training and employment opportunities for young women and men (*Youth and Career Pathways*).
2. Increased and equal opportunities for young women and men to participate in decision-making and leadership (*Youth and Governance*).
3. Youth and health improved through equitable access to health services for young women and men (*Youth and Wellbeing*).
4. Increased number of young people participating in activities that promote peace building and conflict prevention (*Youth and Peace-building*).
5. Increased number of young people promoting sustainable development¹³ (*Youth and Sustainable Development*).
6. Improved capacity to implement this policy (*Youth Mainstreaming*).

Priority Policy Outcomes–Defined

- 1. Improved and equitable access to education, training and employment for young women and men. (Youth and Career Pathways)**

Youth and Education

Education in Solomon Islands is neither universal nor compulsory. There is no specific literacy target set for young people and this is an area that warrants attention. Females are accessing school at lower rates than males, particularly from junior secondary school onwards. As stated in the Solomon Islands National Policy on Gender Equality and Women’s Development (2009): “While access to education for the general population is a concern generally, girls are accessing schools at a lower rate than boys”.¹⁴ In 2008, the push out rate in junior secondary schools was 26%; more than 5000 young people were effectively pushed out of the school system. In senior secondary schools the rate was 63% with more than 6800 school push outs. Young women and men must have the opportunity to progress to higher education to secure equal opportunities to jobs.

Youth and employment

In 2005, the unemployment rate amongst 15 to 19 year-old youth was 75%. At the same time some 60,000 young people, about 40% of the nation’s youths, were termed youth push-outs.¹⁵ The large number of young people not at school and not employed results in a disempowering situation for the youth of Solomon Islands. This can often lead to antisocial behaviours, as young people seek peer inputs and too often receive negative and/or uninformed advice from their peers. Government, NGOs (especially the churches) and development partners have endeavoured to provide outlets for youth frustrations in the form of sports and recreational activities, music events, special festival and celebratory occasions.

However, inadequate vocational and non-formal education opportunities, which are more limited

13 As yet, the Solomon Islands has not formally described what it means by ‘sustainable development’. For the purposes of this policy, the definition given in the Brundtland Report (*Our Common Future, World Commission on Environment and Development, Oxford, 1987*), is inferred.

14 Government of Solomon Islands, *Solomon Islands National Policy on Gender Equality and Women’s Development*, 2009, Honiara.

15 Prasad and Singh, op. cit. Youth push outs are those young women and men who due to educational standards or social and economic factors are unable to and sustain their educational pathway.

for young women, is the situation young Solomon Islanders face every day.¹⁶ The current system is inadequate to provide youth with the technical skills needed for employment after leaving school¹⁷, such as the high priority areas of sustainable livelihoods and income generation opportunities (projects, markets, skills).¹⁸ The nation's continued high population growth rate] is challenging for planners and policy makers alike. It is important that non-formal education interventions and skills development training be strengthened and expanded to accommodate all young people, including those with disabilities.

2. Increased equal opportunities for young women and men to participate in decision-making and leadership. (Youth and Governance)

The lack of participation of young men and women in decision making adversely affects their ability to voice their issues. Young women face greater challenges compared to young men when it comes to decision-making and leadership because of cultural practices, attitudes, limited opportunities and lack of support for young women to pursue their goals. Young women can often find themselves in a situation that compromises their health and professional development because they are not able to negotiate and make decisions for their overall wellbeing. 'Policy responses will need to advance gender equality, as the empowerment of women is vital for achieving development goals, and for boosting economic growth and sustainable development. There is also a need to take into account social structures, as these can have a crosscutting effect on vulnerability.'¹⁹

3. Youth and health improved through equitable access to health services for young women and men. (Youth and Wellbeing)

Youth and Health

While awareness-raising in itself has the potential to prompt a reduction in disadvantageous results (e.g., unintended pregnancies, mental health issues, negative sexual and reproductive health behaviours, and alcohol and substance abuse), there must also be a change in approach that sees young women and men accessing quality health services. This is true regardless of where young people reside. While there has not been a marked increase in young people living with HIV and AIDS, the last STI-HIV surveillance studies in the country revealed low condom use among sexually active youths. In 2007, teenage pregnancy (pregnancy within the ages of 14-19) totaled a reported 791.²⁰ That figure is probably an understatement, given anecdotal evidence that there are many unreported cases of pregnancies among young women; these go unreported because abortions are not legal and given moral pressures on young women from their families. Mortality and morbidity related to unintended pregnancy and childbirth, including unsafe abortions, remain among the most significant risks to the health of young women. Understandably, abortions are poorly reported.

It is also increasingly evident that tobacco, alcohol, betel nut, kwaso, marijuana and other drugs have a negative impact on young people's health. A priority for young women and men is achieving equitable health outcomes. Young women in particular require improved health information and access to health services given their lower status in society, heavier domestic responsibilities and consequent less time to care for themselves and their vulnerability to pregnancy, domestic violence, STIs and abuse during adolescence.²¹ Young men too require the information that will enable them to make informed decisions with regards to parenthood, to be responsible for their sexual behaviour by

16 World Bank, *Solomon Islands Youth in Transition*, op.cit.

17 Merry Sai Faluaburu, "Review Of The Literature Of Youth Issues In The Solomon Islands", MWYCA working paper, 2009. See also: World Bank, *Pacific Youth Literature Review*, 2009.

18 World Bank, *Solomon Islands Youth in Transition*, op.cit.

19 Vanuatu Outcome Statement of the Pacific Conference on the Human Face of the Global Economic Crisis held in Port Vila, Vanuatu (10 to 12 February 2010)

The conference as an outcome of the earlier 40th Pacific Islands Forum held in Cairns, Australia in 2009 was effectively held to develop effective policy measures and practical responses to support Pacific countries in alleviating the adverse effects of the global economic crisis, with the objective of reducing vulnerability and building sustained resilience.

20 Birth Registration database, MHMS.

21 World Bank scoping report (December, 2008)

respecting their partners and themselves and practising safer sex.

Youth and mental health

FSPI recently recommended a review of the Mental Health Act, and inclusion in the National Youth Policy, the development of capacities to assist the many young people who suffer some form of mental illness.²² That analysis was not as robust as desired, although its findings were consistent with work done by Fran Hezel in Micronesia; future research will need to provide the more and more detailed evidence for planners and decision makers to more fully address youth mental issues. The recent tensions and increasingly competitive environments (high numbers of young people pushed out of schools, not being employed, being unable to meet family and cultural expectations) give rise to real concerns for young people's mental wellbeing.

4. Increased number of young people participating in activities that promote peace building and conflict prevention. (Youth and Peace-building)

Persistently high birth rates combined with low investment and the tensions have resulted in high youth unemployment and limited education opportunities for youths. The inevitable consequences of these situations are that young people become idle and bored, which for some—too many—leads to feelings of low self-esteem and a sense of hopelessness. Such feelings can and often do lead to youth delinquency. Young people are more apt to try and copy what they see or experience and they are susceptible to peer influence good or bad. This was perceived among young people involved in the riots in Honiara in April 2006 and in the Tensions. The practice of resolving conflicts through compensation can complicate matters when inexperienced youths abuse 'Kastom' more for their own gain rather than using it properly, that is, to achieve a balance. Addressing these challenges implies activities that will do more than just skills training and helping youth to do things; it also implies that youth must be involved at all levels in what they are doing.

Gender-based violence (GBV)

Violence against women, especially domestic violence, is a common problem in the country and young women are most vulnerable against all forms of abuse. For instance, nearly two-thirds of the women surveyed in 2008-9²³ reported experiencing physical or sexual abuse from an intimate partner in their lifetime. While most religions and 'Kastom' values say that women must be respected and be able to live life in peace and dignity, many would argue that this has not been the case in Solomon Islands. In response to these situations, government has developed a national policy on Eliminating Violence Against Women.²⁴

Opportunities exist to address GBV: The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (2007-2015) promotes the provision of training for young people in gender sensitisation to support improvement of respectful relations between young people and also older people.²⁵ The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is not well known to many young women and men. Recognising the value of human rights, government has ratified CEDAW, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which covers youths aged 14-17, and other human rights instruments. These will help to build both conformity with those values and norms and bring a sense of propriety regarding women's equal rights and value in society.

5. Increased participation of young people promoting sustainable development. (Youth and

22 FSPI, *Youth and Mental Health in Solomon Islands: A Situational Analysis*, Suva, 2008.

23 MWYCA and NSO (National Statistics Office), *Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study*, SPC, Noumea, 2009; chapter 5; prevalence of intimate partner violence, p61.

24 Hon. Derek Sikua, MP and Prime Minister, in the foreword to the *National Policy On Eliminating Violence Against Women* (2010).

25 Key actions and indicators 'Take action for equality between young women and men, and for youth in special circumstances'; p.33, *The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment*.

Sustainable Development)

Increasing numbers of young women and men are concerned about climate change and the ability to retain and sustain the natural beauty of Solomon Islands for future generations. For example, consultations in Malaita and Isabel revealed young people's concerns regarding rising sea levels and erosion of shores. Land, sea and air environments, and the pristine beauty of many provinces are under threat from logging, mining and fishing—and the continuous burning and dumping of rubbish in large quantities, especially in Honiara and other urban centres.

Young women and men would like to see the development needs of Solomon Islands met without compromising the ability of future generations to enjoy what today's generation enjoys. Youth are creators and innovators in their own right in the values and ideals that matter most to them, whether it is through music, technology, drama or creating a critical mass. Young women and men have the potential to bring their ideals into reality. At the 'Youth Visioning for Island Living' conference in Mauritius (2005), the Solomon Islands committed to "Ensuring youth have a voice in planning and development, and in decision making."²⁶ Young women and men have creative and innovative ways of expressing their thoughts and feelings. In using music, drama/role-play, writing and essay competitions and other mechanisms, young people have a catalytic role in informing each other and their communities about these issues. To maximise the nation's benefit from these valuable traits, it is important that youths have opportunities to plan and lead responses to the nation's development problems.

6. Improved Capacity To Implement the Policy. (Youth Mainstreaming)

While the policy provides a platform for youth programs and activities to be developed, it is equally important that institutions responsible for policy coordination and implementation are equipped to do as they pledge. Having a wish list of youth demands that cannot possibly be met is no longer enough. The National Youth Congress (NYC) is the youth advocacy partner; it shares responsibility with the YDD to coordinate and monitor the implementation of this Policy. An effective awareness campaign similar to that to mainstream gender is required in the youth development field. It is imperative that Solomon Island society is aware of the importance of young women and men, that capacity building to improve policy formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation will enhance meaningful changes in the youth development field and contribute to the wider national development of Solomon Islands.

Implementation Mechanisms

This policy provides the framework for planning and implementing the policy objectives set out above. Implementing this policy requires an integrated and collaborative approach by all stakeholders: government agencies, NGOs/CSOs and others with a desire and commitment to positive youth development in Solomon Islands.

A National Youth Stakeholders workshop will be held once Cabinet has endorsed this policy. That workshop will detail a plan of programs and activities aligned to the attached National Youth Strategic Action Plan 2010-2015 and identify the different agencies and their responsibilities for particular activities. During that workshop, training will be provided to stakeholders in the area of monitoring and evaluation.

Following that workshop, the implementation mechanisms put in place to ensure the implementation of this policy are as follows:

- **Ministry of Women, Youth and Children's Affairs (MWYCA)** is the government agency responsible for coordinating and facilitating the implementation of the policy and its accompanying Plan of Action. MWYCA plays both advocate and catalyst roles and maintains

26 Resolution from UNESCO's Youth Visioning For Island Living Conference, 2005 in <<http://www.unesco.org/csi/smis/siv/yv/Youthdecl-commit.htm>>

regular dialogue across all government departments, CSOs/NGOs (including churches), youth organisations and youth stakeholders throughout Solomon Islands.

- **Youth Development Division (YDD) of MWYCA** has the primary responsibility for translating the policy into action, for coordinating policy implementation and for dialoguing directly with youth development partners to implement programs and activities to meet the priority policy outcomes. YDD will work closely with MWYCA's Research, Planning, Policy and Information Division (RPPID) and will coordinate with MWYCA's Women's and Children's Development Divisions in fulfilling its responsibilities. YDD will also provide information and advice as to any new developments and issues that have policy implications; this will be done through regular liaison with relevant Ministries and youth networks including the National Youth Stakeholders committee.
- **National Youth Congress (NYC)** will, with YDD, monitor the implementation of the policy. The NYC is mandated to advocate to government the views and opinions expressed by young women and men and by youth stakeholders. The NYC is also mandated to help youth groups to organise, and to present youth concerns to CSOs, communities, etc.
- **The National Steering Committee for the National Youth Policy (NSC-NYP)** is the highest decision-making body for implementing this policy. It will meet annually to assess the state of youth development in Solomon Islands. The NSC-NYP will be comprised of the Permanent Secretaries of relevant Ministries—especially the Ministries responsible for Education, Health, Youth and Justice—and chaired by the Permanent Secretary of MWYCA.
- **National Youth Stakeholders Committee (NYSC)** will meet on a quarterly basis to coordinate cross-sector policies, programs and activities related to youth development and to receive updates from government on the implementation of the policy and Strategic National Youth Action Plan. The NYSC will have sub-committees responsible for each of the 6 priority policy outcomes. This will enable a cooperative and cohesive approach for the effective coordination of implementation of this policy and its strategic National Youth Plan Of Action. The NYSC will be supported by the YDD and the NYC, and be comprised of representatives of the public and private sector agencies involved in developing the nation's youth, and chaired by the Undersecretary of MWYCA. The members will provide information, and advice on the progress of youth development programs and activities to the YDD, which will compile that information for the NYSC. The NYSC will report on the Action Plan at least once a year to the NSC-NYP on their coordination, monitoring and evaluation work.

Performance Measurement

Monitoring and evaluation are critical to achieving youth development results and for gathering evidence that the action strategies stated above are indeed supporting the aspirations of young women and men in Solomon Islands. In this regard, annual performance reports will strengthen accountability and help identify areas where youth capacity building is required.

MWYCA, through RPPID, has the key responsibility for identifying relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral youth development indicators for measuring the performance of this policy. MWYCA will liaise with the Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination and the National Statistics Office in the development of relevant performance indicators. MWYCA will host a database on the situations of young women and men in Solomon Islands and conduct or coordinate necessary research to collate information about youth development programs and projects.

MWYCA will also assist other Ministries and agencies to ensure their plans and activities contribute to policy outcomes, and will hold dialogues with stakeholders to ensure inter-organisational linkages

support this policy.

The key performance measures will incorporate:

- The MDG²⁷ and any coalition and MTDP²⁸ targets that relate to each outcome of this policy.
- Tracking that young women and men have been given increased opportunities in training and education for employment.
- Reporting that young women and men have been and are being actively engaged and meaningfully consulted and equally involved in decision making.
- Systematic collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and identification of gender gaps.
- Linking national plans, policies and legislation to international and regional commitments such as the Pacific Youth Strategy (PYS) 2010, the Commonwealth's PAYE, CEDAW and CRC.

Performance Reporting

Through Cabinet reports, its annual report, and other reports or stakeholder forums, MWYCA will inform the nation and national policy- and decision-makers on progress regarding this policy's outcomes. Such reports will highlight progress and achievements on implementing the policy, analysis of gender information and sex-disaggregated data, capacity building needs and impacts on the policy's implementation. YDD will prepare an annual report on Solomon Islands progress in involving and developing the nation's youths: What was planned; what was done; what was achieved; what's left for the future? These reports will contribute, via the NYSC, to planning for the implementation of this policy and, via the NYP-NSC, to national development planning and the coordination of all national policies.

27 MDG = Millennium Development Goals (a planning tool committed to by most members of the UN).

28 Medium-Term Development Strategy or Plan. Sometimes the name varies.

SOLOMON ISLANDS NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION 2010-2015

Policy Goal

The goal of this policy is to:

Promote the development of Solomon Islands' youth to achieve their full potential through a range of programs and activities that offer choices and assist them to make informed decisions about their futures and their roles and responsibilities in the political, social and economic development of Solomon Islands.

Key to Interpreting Strategic Plan of Action

The objectives, strategies and performance outputs provide the rationale and alignment for implementing the identified priority policy outcomes. Please note that implementing organisations may identify existing programs and activities that align with the strategic plan of action. Regardless of whether the existing activities are sustained or scaled up or removed altogether, the idea is that the strategic plan of action remains broad enough for implementing organisations to interpret against their respective plans and strategies.

Priority Policy Outcomes

The six priority policy outcomes sought over the next five years (2010-2015) are:

1. Improved and equitable access to education, training and employment opportunities for young women and men. (*Youth and Career Pathways*)
2. Increased and equal opportunities for young women and men to participate in decision-making and leadership. (*Youth and Governance*)
3. Youth and health improved through equitable access to health services for young women and men. (*Youth and Wellbeing*)
4. Increased number of young people participating in activities that promotes peace building and conflict prevention. (*Youth and Peace-building*)
5. Increased number of young people promoting sustainable development. (*Youth and Sustainable Development*)
6. Improved capacity to implement this policy. (*Youth Mainstreaming*)

1: Improved and equitable access to education, training and employment opportunities for young women and men. (*Youth and Career Pathways*)

Objective 1.1

Actively promote gender equitable access to education, training and employment opportunities.

Objective 1.2

Strengthen skills-oriented training in formal and non-formal environments.

Objective 1.3

Promote initiatives that have a proven track record (i.e., known good practices) for assisting young people to start small business enterprises.

Objective 1.4

Provide special youth entrepreneurship programs for young women and men with disabilities, especially in small-scale income-generating projects.

Objective 1.5

Facilitate the creation of opportunities for young people's participation in businesses—especially in agribusiness, fisheries, tourism, the environment and natural resources.

Performance Indicators 1:

- Ratio of females to males entering and completing secondary school within 5 percentage points of parity.
- Ratio of females to males successfully completing scholarships increased.
- Numbers of young women and men in vocational training increases faster than the population growth rate.
- Increased number of employed young people, whether in micro-enterprises, agriculture, forestry, trading, etc.
- Increased number of young people with disabilities employed, whether in micro-enterprises, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, trading, etc.

2: Increased equal opportunities for young women and men to participate in decision-making and leadership. (*Youth and Governance*)

Objective 2.1

Create an enabling environment for youths to participate in planning, decision-making, implementing, leading, monitoring and evaluating development opportunities.

Objective 2.2

Create and strengthen consultative mechanisms for involving young women and men in planning, leading and implementing programs that contribute to the government's National Development Plan.

Objective 2.3

Encourage and facilitate equal opportunity access for disabled youths to a wide range of health, education, political, leadership training and employment opportunities.

Objective 2.4

Foster and encourage young women' and men's participation in policy and leadership training, including on-the-job training.

Objective 2.5

Facilitate leadership and other opportunities for young people to acquire critical awareness and knowledge of government, business and civil society and their roles in democratic society.

Performance Indicators 2:

- Ratio of females and males receiving tertiary scholarships is within 5 percentage points of parity.
- Increased numbers of young women and men involved in decision making forums, at national, provincial and community levels.
- Increased number of youth organisations and their membership—in all provinces.
- Youth forums (themed or otherwise) at national and provincial level are held on a regular basis, reported on regularly, and the minutes of such forums distributed to participants and key stakeholders.

3: Youth and health improved through equitable access to health services for young women and men. (*Youth and Wellbeing*)

Objective 3.1

Develop positive health education programs, partnerships and activities that promote healthy lifestyles among young people, with a focus on mental health and youth well-being, sexual and reproductive health (including STIs, HIV and AIDS) and addictions.

Objective 3.2

Promote healthy families through effective communication, understanding and interaction between

young individuals and their families and communities in order to create a safe and sanitary environment secure from disease, violence, neglect and discrimination.

Objective 3.3

Foster and encourage healthy lifestyles through sport, creative arts and music, whether organised or informal.

Performance Indicators 3:

- Increased availability of information on key health themes for youth in all provinces.
- Improved access to quality health care for young women and men.
- Increased number of young people participating in programs that help them to develop their physical and mental health, e.g., sports and arts.
- Increased research in the physical and mental health aspects of youth.
- Youth suicide rate decreases.
- Reduced youth STIs, unwanted pregnancies, etc.
- Reduced youth accidental injuries
- Educational and health data for youth (e.g., the MDGs) improve.

4: Increased number of young people participating in activities that promotes peace building and conflict prevention. (*Youth and Peace-building*)

Objective 4.1

Instill critical awareness in young people of the cross-cultural and ethnic considerations that promote understanding, toleration and tolerance.

Objective 4.2

Establish or develop mechanisms at both national and community levels that help prevent conflict and help rehabilitate those young people who have violated the law.

Objective PPO4.3

Complement existing peace and reconciliation, respect and understanding activities by facilitating young people's creative and innovative expression through the various arts.

Performance Indicators 4:

- Increased civics education activities, especially of those that focus on youth.
- Increased activities for youth to use the arts to express themselves.
- The quality of youth rehabilitation programs is improved.
- Programs for strengthening families that have been proven are scaled up to reach more youths in all provinces.
- No new trauma in Solomon Islands
- Reduction in youth crime rates
- Reduced juvenile delinquency?
- Increased opportunities for youth to participate in the construction of the nation—through sports, arts, business, community work, church work, youth groups, etc.
- Increased counseling available to youths, whether due to trauma from the Tensions or from the many pressures that might affect youth.

5: Increased number of young people promoting sustainable development. (*Youth and Sustainable Development*)

Objective 5.1

Promote awareness about the need to protect the natural and cultural environments across the Solomon Islands.

Objective 5.2

Establish youth-led actions in environmental conservation in urban and rural areas.

Objective 5.3

Encourage and support youth in taking responsibility for their environment through their own actions.

Performance Indicators 5:

- Increased training of youths in Sustainable Development.
- New opportunities for national discussions on Sustainable Development provided.
- Number of clinics, classrooms, teachers, etc., increase more rapidly than the nation's population increases.
- Number of people in paid employment increases more rapidly than the nation's population increases.
- Solomon Islands meets or exceeds environmental aspects of MDGs.
- Solomon Islands' birth rate moves towards the sustainable and stable population rate of ~2.1%.
- Fishing & logging are done at sustainable rates—this will generally mean a reduction in logging and in some kinds of fishing.

6: Improved capacity to implement the Policy (*Youth Mainstreaming*)

Objective 6.1

Assess capacities of the MWYCA and its Youth Development Division (YDD) and youth stakeholder groups responsible for implementation of this policy.

Objective 6.2

Based on those assessments, build the capacity of YDD and other stakeholders to become more responsive to the needs and aspirations of young women and men.

Performance Indicators 6:

- MWYCA and YDD are able to and do coordinate NYP implementation
- NYC partners with YDD in coordination of implementation of NYP
- Number of other Ministries' policies, plans and programs that support and/or involve youth increases.
- Regular assessment of private sector youth programs undertaken by the NYSC and perhaps the SI Chamber of Commerce & Industry.
- Resources from all sources (Parliament, NGOs, Business, Development Partners, etc.) that are dedicated to youth development increase greater than inflation.

7: Effective monitoring and evaluation of policy outcomes

Objective 7.1

Devise and implement a monitoring and evaluation scheme for this policy.

Objective 7.2

Establish effective reporting mechanisms at national and provincial levels.

Performance Indicators 7:

- NYSC meets regularly, issues minutes promptly after each meeting.
- NYSC produces annual report to the NSC-NYP and, as needed, special reports, and these feed into national development planning and program implementation.
- Review of this policy conducted not later than the end of the third year.
- Database and MIS on youth established within MWYCA's RPPID.