Pacific Youth Forum on Sustainable Tourism

"Midway to 2030: Realigning, Reaffirming and Recommitting to Sustainable Tourism"

Puataukanave Hotel, Vava'u: Kingdom of Tonga, 18th – 20th October 2025

Outcomes Statement:

The Pacific Youth Forum on Sustainable Tourism convened twelve empowered youth leaders from across the Blue Pacific, representing the Regional Working Group (RWG) mandated to co-design the Forum in partnership with the Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO). Joining them were youth representatives from Vava'u, the Pacific Girl Reference Group at the Pacific Community, Miss Heilala, and Miss Pacific Islands—each bringing unique perspectives and lived experiences to the table.

This second Youth Forum, following the inaugural 2023 gathering, marks a historic milestone: the first in-person youth-led forum hosted in Vava'u, Tonga, in direct response to the 2024 Ministerial directive from the Annual Tourism Ministers Meeting.

At the heart of this Forum lies a bold and unified commitment: to develop the plan in Tourism Action Plan (PYTAP 2025–2030). It is a living document grounded in the realities, aspirations, and leadership of Pacific youth. It draws strength from dynamic consultations, storytelling, and collaboration, including insights from 150 youth across the region who responded to the October 2025 online survey.

The PYTAP is aligned with the Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF), which recognizes youth as active agents of change and prioritizes their participation in decision-making, economic empowerment, and cultural preservation. By embedding PYDF principles into tourism governance, the Forum reinforces a regional commitment to youth-led development and intergenerational equity.

We, the youth and adolescents of the Blue Pacific, are not waiting to lead—we are already leading. We are restoring ecosystems, revitalizing culture, and building inclusive tourism economies in our villages, outer islands, and remote communities. Through the Pacific Youth in Sustainable Tourism Initiative and the PYFST 2025 consultation, we have voiced our challenges, shared our innovations, and offered solutions rooted in cultural integrity and environmental stewardship.

We call on our Ministers and development partners to institutionalize youth leadership in tourism governance. Invest in our capacity. Fund our ideas. Embed our voices in the frameworks that will guide our region to 2030 and beyond.

We ask not for permission—but for partnership. For policy that reflects our reality. For practice that honours our contributions. We ask that you protect our cultures and environments not just for us, but with us.

Together, let us co-create a tourism future that is inclusive, resilient, and unapologetically Pacific. Let the Pacific Tourism Policy Framework 2030 be more than a roadmap—it must be a legacy of youth-led transformation, rooted in people, purpose, and place.

As the region looks to realign, reaffirm and recommit to sustainable tourism through the Pacific Tourism Framework 2030, the youth herein outline for the attention of Pacific Council of Tourism Ministers, key outcomes and strategic recommendations for consideration.

1.0 Youth Leadership in Sustainable Tourism

1.1 Young people are increasingly at the forefront of community-based tourism initiatives, climate resilience programs, and cultural heritage preservation. Through their active engagement, they are not only driving sustainable development but also ensuring the intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge to younger cohorts.

1.2 They are actively shaping the tourism sector and must be recognized as equal stakeholders in policy and governance.

2.0 Cultural Stewardship and Identity

2.1 Pasifika values, cultural identity, and intergenerational knowledge are central to youth empowerment and sustainable tourism.

2.2 Culture is both a foundation and a future for Pacific tourism.

3.0 Environmental Resilience and Climate Action

3.1 Youth are implementing nature-based solutions and advocating for climate-smart tourism.

3.2 They are living through the impacts of climate change and demand stronger environmental integration in tourism policy.

4.0 Inclusive Economic Participation

4.1 Youth-led enterprises are revitalizing local economies, especially in outer islands.

4.2 There is a need for formal pathways, training, and financial support to scale youth entrepreneurship.

5.0 Regional Collaboration and Policy Alignment

5.1 Youth priorities align with the Pacific Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework and the Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF).

5.2 SPTO's efforts to include youth in Ministerial processes mark progress toward institutionalizing youth engagement.

Strategic Recommendations

Youth delegates also recommend to Ministers the following strategic recommendations:

6.0 Institutionalize Youth Representation

6.1 Establish youth advisory roles within National Tourism Boards and Ministries.

6.2 Form a regional Youth Tourism Steering Committee with subregional and gender balance.

7.0 Invest in Capacity Building and Training

7.1 Develop structured programs in leadership, digital tourism, business management, and climate resilience.

7.2 Expand access to vocational training and regional exchange programs.

8.0 Strengthen Funding and Entrepreneurship Support

8.1 Launch a Pacific Youth Tourism Grant or Innovation Fund.

8.2 Improve access to government and NGO funding, especially in remote areas.

9.0 Safeguard Culture and Environment

9.1 Embed environmental and cultural safeguards in all youth-led tourism initiatives.

9.2 Promote storytelling and traditional knowledge as core tourism assets.

10.0 Enhance Community-Based Tourism

10.1 Support youth-led initiatives that empower local voices and foster pride.

10.2 Resource activities such as night markets, culinary tourism, and cultural artifact production.

11.0 Promote Digital Connectivity and Storytelling

11.1 Create a regional digital hub for youth collaboration, advocacy, and resource sharing.

11.2 Leverage social media to amplify youth voices and showcase innovations.

12.0 Integrate Youth-Led Monitoring and Evaluation

12.1 Develop M&E systems designed by youth to track participation, funding access, and environmental impact.

12.2 Ensure youth-generated data informs high-level policy decisions.

13.0 Align with Regional Frameworks

13.1 Embed youth priorities in the Pacific Tourism Framework 2030, the Pacific Youth Development Framework and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

14.0 Coordinate with CROP agencies and tertiary institutions for technical and policy support.

Thematic Priorities

Youth delegates also recommend the following thematic priorities to be considered by Ministers:

15.0 Pasifika Values & Youth Empowerment

15.1 Emphasize cultural identity, knowledge transmission, and the role of women in tourism.

15.2 Recognize the vanua and its spiritual and ecological significance.

15.3 Promote eco-tourism grounded in traditional environmental stewardship.

16.0 Youth Aspirations

16.1 Youth seek meaningful, inclusive engagement in tourism governance.

16.2 They advocate for resilience, interdependence, and systems integration.

16.3 Storytelling must be elevated in policy spaces to connect grassroots realities.

17.0 Prosperous Economies

17.1 Youth-led ventures are creating jobs and cultural products in remote areas.

17.2 Case studies from Temotu Province in the Solomon Islands highlight the transition from informal to formal business.

17.3 Youth entrepreneurship councils and partnerships with Chambers of Commerce are emerging support mechanisms.

18.0 Thriving & Inclusive Communities

18.1 Community-based tourism reflects communal living and cultural resilience.

18.2 Elders guide decisions; youth implement and innovate.

18.3 Decentralized youth empowerment and support for women's economic participation are essential.

19.0 Visible & Valued Cultures

19.1 Cultural preservation and transmission of traditional knowledge are vital.

19.2 Youth-led tourism must showcase and protect Pacific heritage.

20.0 Healthy Islands & Oceans

20.1 Youth are engaged in coral and mangrove restoration, sustainable gastronomy, and energy reduction

20.2 Climate change adaptation and environmental literacy are critical for tourism resilience.

20.3 Youth must understand and operate within national environmental legislation.

21.0 Partnerships

21.1 Collaborate with religious and traditional leaders to strengthen community trust.

21.2 Regional organizations must provide technical and financial support.

21.3 Tertiary institutions should offer tourism-focused pathways for youth.

Action Plan Highlights

Youth delegates also recommend that Ministers take note of the following Action Plan Highlights.

Regional Progress

22.1 The Pacific Youth Development Framework provides a foundation for aligning youth priorities with tourism policy.

22.2 In 2023, Ministers called for a Youth Regional Working Group, leading to SPTO's engagement of youth in Ministerial convenings.

22.3 Continued collaboration is needed to embed youth voices in the Pacific Tourism Framework 2030.

Statement of Endorsement

The outcomes and recommendations presented in this report reflect the collective insights, priorities, and aspirations of the Regional Working Group for the Pacific Youth Forum on Sustainable Tourism 2025. The report presents a reaffirmed and shared commitment to advancing a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient tourism future for our region, with youth at the forefront.

We, the Regional Working Group, endorse these findings as a foundation for continued collaboration, ensuring that tourism remains a driver of prosperous economies, thriving communities, visible culture, and healthy environments throughout the Pacific.