

Samoa Youth Fono Outcome Statement

22 AUGUST 2024

Introduction

The Samoa Youth Fono is a country-specific contextualization of the Global Summit. It aims to raise awareness and advocate for young Samoans about the issues affecting them and their future. The Samoa Youth Summit aims to contribute to the global effort by negotiating and endorsing an action-oriented outcome document called the Pact for the Future. This pact will outline concrete steps to manage current challenges and prepare for those yet to come, benefiting all of humanity and future generations. Additionally, the Samoa Youth Fono is a pivotal event that brings together young leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders to discuss critical issues affecting our world. Essentially, the Samoa Youth Fono is vital to empowering young Samoans, fostering intergenerational dialogue, and ensuring a better tomorrow for all.

We, the Youth of Samoa, put forward the following recommendations as outcomes of our Samoa Youth Fono.

1. Global Challenges, Climate Change, and Environmental Sustainability Session

1.1 We encourage young people to exercise Tofa (wisdom) and Fa'autautaga (Foresight) in their decisions to ensure sustainable and future-proof actions.

1.2 We advocate for the pursuit of quality and accessible education as the greatest enabler, empowering youth to meet current and future challenges effectively.

1.4 We call for integrating climate change education across all levels, from primary to tertiary, to raise awareness and prepare future leaders.

1.5 We recognize the need for a shift in mindset and behavior to address global challenges and advocate for actionable steps to promote this change.

1.6 We call for Indigenous coping mechanisms and traditional knowledge as essential tools for Samoa's capacity to prepare for and respond to natural disasters, and we must continue to value and utilize this knowledge.

1.7 We urge capacity building among youth to empower them to navigate and resolve climate change issues, and we advocate for the establishment of climate change by-laws to protect young people.

1.7 We emphasize the importance of the Fa'a Samoa (Samoan traditional way of life) in guiding our youth while recognizing the need for adaptation to ensure that cultural values amplify, rather than silence, youth voices; to guide climate action and ensure respectful and sustainable interactions between people and their environment.

2. Youth Empowerment and Civic Participation

2.1 We call for genuine inclusion and engagement, where youth are not just participants but are actively involved in youth-focused events and platforms from the planning stages to execution. It is crucial that youth voices are not just heard but are valued, with their contributions leading to tangible outcomes and changes.

2.2 We stress the importance of including all youth, especially those in rural areas, persons with disabilities, and the marginalized, in decision-making processes at all levels. Frequent and consistent conversations with youth are essential to ensure diverse representation.

2.3 We emphasize the importance of culture to re-evaluate and revitalize the social contract with youth, ensuring that participation and trust in decision-making are expanded and strengthened.

2.4 We support the enhancement of linkages between culture and education to foster respect and appreciation of cultural diversity among youth, preparing future leaders who value diversity and prioritise shared goals around the common good, notably climate action and peaceful coexistence.

2.5 We advocate for culture-specific platforms that amplify the voices of the underrepresented, ensuring that youth from all backgrounds have a say in shaping their futures.

2.6 We acknowledge that cultural and social norms can be barriers to youth participation and call for efforts to overcome these limitations.

2.7 We advocate for youth inclusivity in high-level meetings for civic engagement, involving youth in planning stages to execution, ensuring their representation in legislative and political processes.

2.8 We support the revival and adaptation of traditional platforms for intergenerational conversations to ensure that foundational cultural values are transferred and that youth voices are heard and valued within their communities.

2.9 We advocate for the responsible use of social media and digital platforms to engage youth, promote positive change, and hold those with influence accountable.

3. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

3.1 We call for increased funding to enhance resources, opportunities, and support for individuals with disabilities, ensuring their full participation, equity, and inclusion.

3.2 We emphasize the need for proactive engagement and consultation with the LGBTQIA+ communities to better understand and address their unique challenges.

3.3 We advocate for gender equality and social inclusion approaches that respect and integrate Indigenous cultural contexts, promoting inclusivity that reflects diverse cultural roles and identities within our communities.

4. Digital Transformation and Innovation

4.1 We recognize the potential of technology to drive sustainable development in Samoa, particularly in education and healthcare, and support initiatives that enhance digital literacy and inclusion.

4.2 We advocate for the implementation of e-governance to improve public services and enhance civic engagement, particularly for rural and vulnerable communities.

4.3 We acknowledge the challenges in digital infrastructure and the need for policies to support e-commerce and digital entrepreneurship, and we call for solutions that leverage family and social capital.

4.4 We support the use of social media and digital platforms to amplify youth voices, promote mental health awareness, and drive positive societal change.

This Youth Fono was co-convened and organised by the National University of Samoa and the UN Multi-country Office at Lepapaigalagala Campus, Apia, Samoa