

COUNTRY YOUTH

# CALL TO ACTION 2025

APFSD Youth Forum | Feb 19-21, 2025

Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science and evidence based solutions for the 2030 agenda and its SDGs for leaving no young person behind in Asia and the Pacific



FIJI

## Situational Analysis

Fiji, a small island developing State, has an estimated population of 884,887 individuals as of the 2017 Fiji Population and Housing Census. A conglomeration of 332 islands, covering 18,300 km<sup>2</sup> and an Exclusive Economic Zone that extends across 1.3 million km<sup>2</sup>, Fiji is considered to be one of the most developed countries in the Pacific according to the 2023 Fiji VNR report. The theme for the 2025 Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) Youth Forum, “Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no young person behind in Asia and the Pacific,” resonates deeply with Fiji’s commitment to ensuring that “No Fijian Is Left Behind.” While progress has been made through various initiatives, significant challenges remain, and much more effort is needed to fully realize this vision.

Fiji is facing a severe health crisis with rising non-communicable diseases (NCDs), HIV/AIDS infections, drug addiction, weak comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), increasing teenage pregnancies due to early sexual debut and weakening healthcare infrastructure. The 2023 Voluntary National Review (VNR) shows deterioration in numerous health-related SDG 3 targets, with issues like neonatal mortality, lack of access to water, aging and crumbling healthcare facilities, and shortage of specialist physicians worsened by medical professionals emigrating. With the COVID-19 pandemic further exposed systemic weaknesses, straining an already fragile health system.

Many targets under Goal 5 on gender equality remain unassessed, unmeasured, or require urgent action. Fiji continues to grapple with high rates of gender-based violence, alongside persistent gender inequalities. Women

and young women remain underrepresented in leadership, face early marriages, bear the burden of unpaid care work, struggle with limited land ownership and continue to be shadowed by entrenched patriarchal norms.

There are significant challenges in achieving SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), with persistent gaps in labor force participation, high unemployment rates, and the burden of unpaid care work disproportionately affecting women. The formalization of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) remains slow, with women encountering financial and bureaucratic barriers when establishing and registering businesses. Youth employment opportunities are limited, and the absence of adaptive social protection schemes leaves many vulnerable to economic shocks, exacerbated by the rising cost of living and high poverty rates, particularly among the indigenous population. Additionally, ensuring safe and fair working environments remains a challenge, requiring urgent reforms to strengthen sexual harassment policies in the country.

The climate crisis exacerbates gender inequalities, with women and girls facing heightened vulnerabilities. Frequent natural disasters, such as flooding and cyclones, lead to internal displacement, disproportionately affecting women in agriculture, fisheries, and the informal economy. As climate events intensify, women, often the main caregivers, have more unpaid care work, limiting their economic opportunities.

SDG 17 reveals a mixed performance across its targets. Three targets are on track, indicating progress in mobilizing financial resources, enhancing technology

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capacity-building, and increasing support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries. However, five targets require accelerated action, reflecting challenges in areas such as debt sustainability, technology cooperation, and data monitoring. Notably, four targets have regressed, highlighting setbacks in domestic resource mobilization and trade-related aspects while seven targets remain unmeasured due to lack of data.

## Recommendations

Our recommendations to Fiji on selected SDGs to achieve optimum target are as follows-

### SDG 3: Good health and well-being-

- We demand sufficient resourcing and better allocation in the national budgets to the health ministry so that investments are made into disseminating reliable information to women and girls in all their diversities and those living in the rural and remote areas where access to information is a challenge.
- We demand, urgently advance national efforts to resource a health workforce, commodities, treatments, health facilities and community health approaches that provide the full spectrum of SRHR and women's health services including preventative care across the lifespan, family planning and contraception, safe abortion care, preventative and treatment care for cancers, care for all women and girls across the lifespan including older women, maternal, neonatal and newborn health, health care for people of diverse PIDSOGIESC, sex workers, women and girls living with HIV and women and girls with disabilities and others;
- Prioritise age appropriate and contextualized CSE for all ages in and out of school with the explicit involvement of feminist organisations, grassroots networks and civil society organisations to steer, guide, train and inform life-saving information that can save children's lives.

### SDG 5: Gender Equality

- Enhancing women's participation in decision-making and democratization processes including Temporary Special Measures especially as we recognise we are part of a national process of rebuilding political participation including at local government and national parliamentary system.
- Advocate for and prioritise climate financing decision making and implementation spaces at national, regional and global levels that are accessible and responsive to

the needs of all women and girls and their communities; free of red-tape and bureaucracy in order to increase accessibility and equity for women, girls, activists and human rights defenders; and support the closing of gender inequities and discriminatory practice

- We demand, increased representation and decision-making power of women and girls in all their diversity in climate leadership and decision-making forums, including decision-making on displacement protection, internal relocation and relocation beyond national boundaries

### SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth-

- State to introduce a social security scheme to encourage voluntary contributions for women doing unpaid care work with a matching contribution from the government as an incentive. This will need to be tailor made and flexible considering diverse needs of women and girls in all their diversities.
- State to ensure that all women and girls have more opportunities to engage with work toward low emissions and energy democracy, and safe, climate resilient transitions within their Pacific Island countries and that their needs are centred in this transition.

### SDG 14: Life below water

- We demand, improving maritime women and young women's access to transportation, including affordable shipping and air services, and emergency services, to and from maritime areas to be reflective of the realities in these communities. Improve basic infrastructure for rural, maritime, peri-urban and urban communities that can affect women and young women's daily lives. This includes access to quality and sustained water supply; accessible, safe roads and bridges with reasonable accommodation (sustained maintenance); proper lighting of streets to ensure the safety and security of women and girls and the sustained/affordability of rural electrification.

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*The APFSD country and sub-regional briefs were developed through collective discussions and engagements between youth advocates at the APFSD Youth Forum in Bangkok on 19-21 February, 2025. The Fiji Call to Action was drafted by Shayal Nand. Overall supervision was provided by the ARROW Call To Action team.*

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