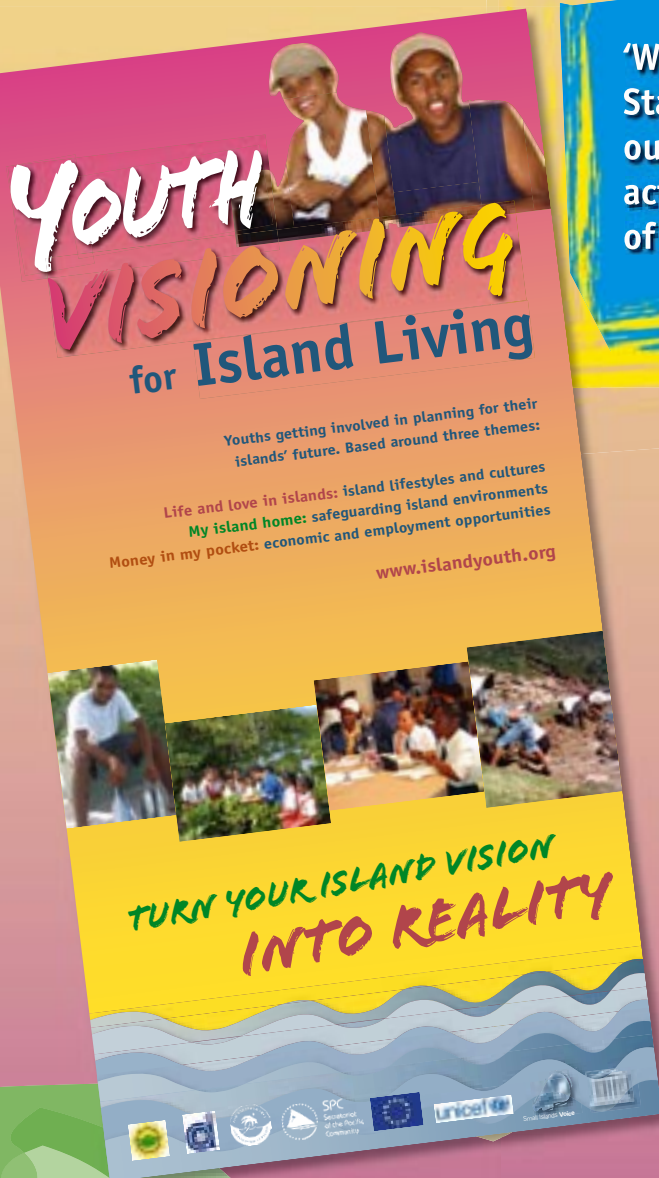


YOUTH VISIONING

for Island Living



'We, the youth of Small Island Developing States, came to Mauritius in 2005, we shared our ideas, and we committed ourselves to take action to assist in the sustainable development of our island homes'

WHAT IS Youth Visioning?

Youth Visioning is a process whereby young people living in small islands envision how they would like to see their islands develop and change over the coming decade; and then work to implement their proposals and plans on the ground in their islands. Supported by many organizations at the national, regional and inter-regional level, Youth Visioning seeks to build capacity among island youth; to give youth a voice in sustainable development matters; and to make positive changes at the local and national level.

HOW did Youth Visioning start?

Small islands, big stakes. The unique and diverse challenges facing small island states, combined with their vulnerability, have prompted special action from the world community. In 1994 the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), held in Barbados, set out a specific Programme of Action. In January 2005 governments, civil society and youth representatives met in Mauritius to evaluate progress and chart a way forward.

TOGETHER in Mauritius

Following many months of preliminary activities in individual islands, including an island art competition, and with the support of national, regional and inter-regional partners, 94 youth from 37 small island states and territories arrived in Mauritius ready to share their visions for change and to give



Some of the youth participants in Mauritius

their islands a voice. The young people came from the Caribbean, Pacific and AIMS (Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, and South China Sea) regions. During the meeting they focused their attention on three main themes : **Life and love in islands; My island home; Money in my pocket.**

Life and love in islands

All aspects of island culture, from language to dance, and legends to cooking styles are seen by island youth as part of their heritage and their identity.

Drawing by Vicki Seechum, Mauritius, (winner in 14-17 age group)



My island home

Youth feel passionately about their environment and the need to save what is left before it is too late.

Drawing by Shinal Priyanka Chand, Fiji, (winner in 14-17 age group)

Money in my pocket

Their future employment is perhaps one of the biggest concerns for young people growing up in small islands.

Drawing by Wilner Tilma, Turks and Caicos Islands (winner in 9-13 age group)



MAKING a statement

An intense week of discussions and activities culminated in the drafting of the **Youth Visioning Declaration**. This articulated the priorities for young islanders concerning the development of their islands and their own key role in this process. On 12 January 2005, youth representatives presented this declaration at the main UN meeting. On the same day they had the opportunity to present their commitments for follow-up action to United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, and UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura.



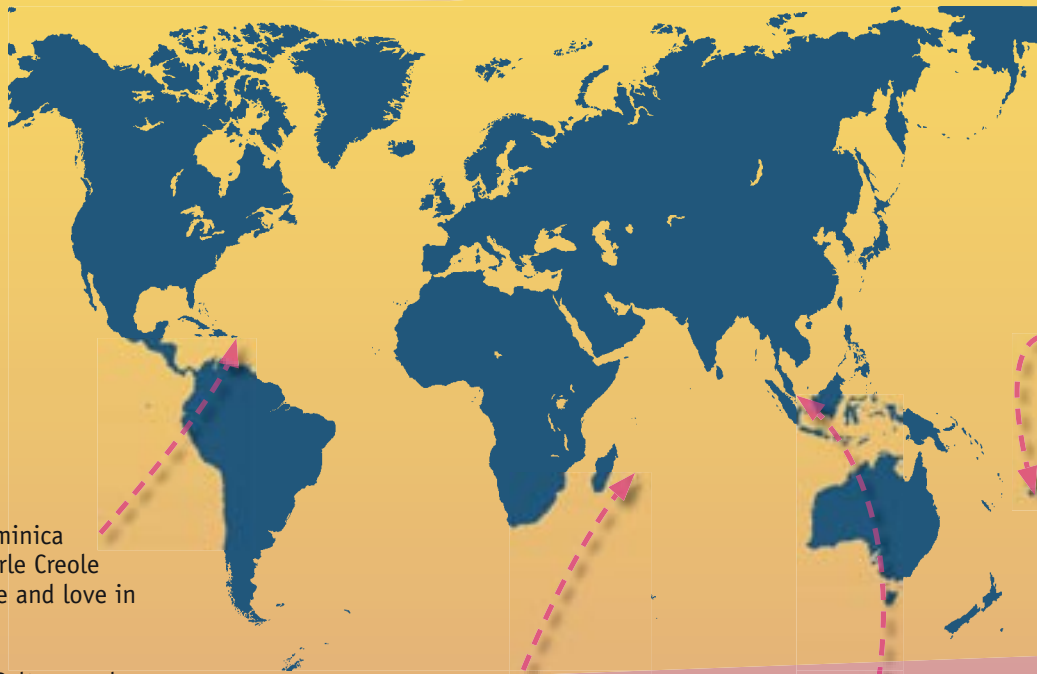
(Top) Wendy Barnet Rivas presenting the Youth Visioning Declaration at the main UN meeting

(Left) Koïchiro Matsuura and Kofi Annan at the Youth Visioning closing ceremony

TAKING action

Youth Visioning is all about youth-led activities for positive change at the local and national level. Since the meeting in Mauritius, youth in each of the 37 island nations and territories are now embarking on specific projects.

As the list of creative, dynamic Youth Visioning projects grows, it is anticipated that the combined impact will demonstrate to the rest of the world that these young people are taking a stand and contributing to the sustainable development of their island homes. Here are just a few examples:



Island: Dominica
Project: Parle Creole
Theme: Life and love in islands

The Youth Culture and Heritage Movement is preserving and revitalizing the Creole language and culture.

Island: Mauritius
Project: Help disabled youngsters to be self-independent
Theme: Money in my pocket

Mauritian youth are organizing seminars to raise awareness of disabilities and to promote products made by disabled young people.

Island: Singapore
Project: Project 'Joy'
Theme: Life and love in islands

Youth Challenge student volunteers embarked on bridging the generation gap by preparing and sharing a dinner and activities to celebrate Chinese New Year with senior citizens from their community.

Island: Fiji
Project: Young Leaders for a Sustainable Fiji
Theme: My island home

Youth in Fiji are holding a one day workshop for young leaders to raise awareness of environmental issues and HIV/AIDS and conducting several clean-up and awareness campaigns.

SOME COMMENTS from young islanders

'I learnt a lot from the issues discussed at the forum as well as how to draft a declaration and implement good projects. I can transmit this know-how to the youths in my country so they can be more involved in youth-initiated campaigns and activities as everyone deserves a right to be educated.'

Geraldine Ong, Singapore



'I developed a better appreciation for the cultures of other people. Having seen all the cultural presentations from the different regions, I have come to realise that the people of Small Island Developing States share a common heritage, a common dream and a common culture.'

Jamion Knight, Antigua and Barbuda



'Realising that youth can really make a difference – I can make a difference. Adults will sit up and listen to what we have to say. I feel empowered to do something not only for Niuean youth, but for youth in general.'

Lynsey Talagi, Niue



Partners supporting Youth Visioning for Island Living

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization: Coasts and Small Islands Platform, Small Islands Voice cross-cutting project, Bureau of Strategic Planning Youth Section; Field Offices in Africa, Caribbean, Indian Ocean and Pacific regions; National Commissions for UNESCO

Government of Mauritius: Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Social Security, Government Information Service, Mauritius College of the Air

Lighthouse Foundation

Caribbean Community
Caribbean Conservation Association
Indian Ocean Commission
Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States – Environment and Sustainable Development Unit
Pacific Concerns Resource Centre
Pacific Youth Environment Network
RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia
Secretariat for the Pacific Community
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United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Pacific Office, Fiji
United Nations Development Programme, Mauritius
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