



**ADDRESS BY THE
VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT, PROFESSOR PAL AHLUWALIA
AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY
THURSDAY 13 AUGUST 2020, 3.30PM,
USP AUSAID PERFORMANCE SPACE, LAUCALA CAMPUS**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- The UN Resident Coordinator Pacific, Mr Sanaka Kumara Samarasinha
- Officer in Charge for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Regional Office for the Pacific (OHCHR), Mr Robert Vaughan
- Regional students & participants
- Members of the media
- Invited guests, ladies and gentlemen

Good afternoon everyone.

INTRODUCTION

It is my pleasure and honour to represent the University of the South Pacific today as we mark the closing of the International Youth Day 2020 in partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Regional Office for the Pacific and the USP.

I extend a warm Pacific thank you to the United Nations Human Rights, Chief Guests, participants, and all of us who are here to witness International Youth Day.

USP CONTRIBUTION & WAY FORWARD

The International Youth Day theme for 2020 in “Youth Engagement for Global Action” with a Focus Area of “Pacific Youth and Sustainable Food Security during COVID-19”. This presents a call for all of us to come together and recognise the contribution of youth in addressing the challenges they are facing in terms of food security.

We hope that you have had a successful two-day programme emphasising the importance of youth and recognizing the impacts of COVID-19 in the Pacific. Your programme has provided a wonderful platform to dialogue with community-based organisations, national, regional and international organisations.

We are happy to have partnered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in enabling regional students from USP to participate in the programme to discuss the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 and formulate innovative solutions which are contextualized to our Pacific reality.

USP is supportive of the solutions put forward by our young leaders, and this is why the 'outcome document' you have produced is important as it represent your voice, experience, and what you would like to see happen as Pacific youth of today.

The findings from your 'outcome document' will provide key messages with regards to the important connection between youth work and partnership. This is one of the strengths that we can contribute in addressing the key challenges facing our Pacific young people. In particular, this is an opportunity for the Pacific Regional Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator Pacific, USP, and key stakeholders who are here today to work in partnership to take forward the voices in the 'output document.'

USP welcomes research partners who share our aspirations and vision on 'Shaping Pacific Futures' we want through a sustainable focus on regional students and youth.

CONCLUSION

It is our responsibility as regional contributors to help others, collaborate, and build a more youthful society for the benefit of the Pacific region. Wishing you all the very best in all future ventures.

Thank you and vinaka vaka levu