Speaker 1

Thank you Brendan for the warm welcome. Thank you all for coming this evening. I thank the other panellists for coming to support, talk tonight. Very honoured and humbled by your presence here tonight. I’m not used to talking to a room full of very smart people, but [laughs] I’ll try my best.

Speaker 2

You’ll be smart when you’re finished.

Speaker 1

[laughs] I will talk about, I’ll start off by talking about, from the Vanuatu perspective by telling you a custom story from Vanuatu; make it real Vanuatu perspective. There’s a custom story, once upon a time there used to be, there used to live a grandma, grandmother and a granddaughter that live on top of a very high cliff overlooking the sea. And every evening the granddaughter, the grandma would let the granddaughter down on a rope because it’s a very high cliff, and they come down on the rope and the granddaughter would go and look for shellfish along the reef. And every time the grandma, as she puts her down on the rope, lets her down to go looking for shellfish, she’ll tell the granddaughter, “When you go down, don’t look north and never go up north. Just keep going down south and get the shellfish, and then you come back, you tap on the rope and I’ll pull you up.” So that’s the practice; every evening granddaughter goes down, never goes up north. She goes, uses her coconut leaves for torch. One evening it was very windy, she was out there and the fire got blown out, so she starts looking for somewhere to light it up again, and she goes, “I wonder why grandma told me every night not to look up north, and what’s up north?” She looks up, looked up north and she sees two, something glowing up north. [0:02:12.8], “Oh, there’s an ember there, there’s a fire.” So she runs up with her coconut leaves and she puts it into this thing and next thing someone spoke up, goes, “Oh, who’s this poking my eyes?” It’s a big devil. And the devil goes, “Oh, what do you have there?” She goes, “Oh, shellfish.” “Carry me on your back and we go and see, we go home and we can cook it.” So the granddaughter carried this devil on her back, came, tugged on the rope, and the grandma started to pull them up but the, so heavy the rope snapped. Pulled it a second time, pulled them up. There’s a song too, but I’m not going to sing the song. [laughs] But so pulled them up and they prepared the meal and the grandma is going, and they have green snails and the, inside, the green snail has got this white thing around it, so the grandma is like, “Keep those white [0:03:12.7] to it.” So after they had dinner, the shells, they put the devil at the entrance and they left, the slipped through the corner, I mean the back, and they got those [0:03:23.7] and they put them on the ice. So at night the devil wakes up going, “Eat them.” [laughs] And she walks up to them, looks at them and sees their eyes are white,
and goes, they’re still awake, so goes back; comes back later but they still awake. So after a while doing all these trips got tired so fell asleep. So they woke up at night, got the shells that they ate, banged them all together and the devil got up, got confused, ran out and jumped off of the cliff and died. [laughs]

So the story is talking about young people, and they are usually at the, they are usually the ones in front of any change that comes, and globalisation usually affects young people; it’s them that will bring in the change. It’s also speaking about societies, or traditional societies ability to change, the ability to work together with those ones in front who are being affected by the change. There has to be dialogue. It’s also speaking about the need for traditional knowledge and systems to be integrated with Western thinking, or globalised thinking that’s coming in. So together we can form something that can create sustainable development for young people, or for societies.

So I want to start off by talking about this custom story because nowadays there’s lots of, in our culture young people are not meant to talk; you’re supposed to be there in the distant making, you sit until you’re being spoken to or you’re being allowed to talk. And then lots of young people are out there; they know all these things, they know about smartphones, they know about Google and Facebook, they could add a lot of input and value to decision-making in the traditional context or in policies. For example, in policies and programmes when it comes to government policy and decision-making, we’ve been trying to work along this level to try and let young people write the policies that will affect them, that are going to affect them; how do they see it [0:05:30.6].

So what I’m going to talk about tonight, I’ll give you a brief on climate change situation in Vanuatu, very brief because I’m not an expert. And I’m going to talk about in traditional framework for youth participation in climate change, discussions and efforts through the Youth Development Policy 2012-2022, there’s a draft climate change policy framework I’ll touch on and conference of parties where young people can come in to add value, and also making democracy and governments responsive to youth agenda through the National Youth Council and through the National Youth Parliament. Vanuatu is already experiencing the impacts of climate change. There’s some [0:06:22.2] here from the Meteorological Department; what is the air temperature and sea surface temperature [0:06:31.9] continued increase over the course of the 21st century? Very high confidence.

In Vanuatu, in Port Vila and [0:06:40.4] that’s in the centre, since 1950 the temperature has been increasing. Wet season rainfall projected to increase; dry season rainfall, decrease; annual mean rainfall projected increase intensity or frequency of [0:07:03.0] of extreme rainfall of projected increase, and incident of drought. There’s some slight here of what’s happening, this out of season rainfall. There will be less cyclones, but the impact are going to be bigger. So we haven’t had cyclones for probably the last three, four years, and usually it’s very healthy because it comes, it kind of naturally prunes the trees so we have more fruit trees happening. So now we haven’t had them for a while, so this projections that it’s going to increase when they do happen. The National Youth
Policy and Draft Climate Change Policy cope, so in traditional framework for youth participation, climate change discussions and efforts.

That’s a volcano there; it’s a dormant one, but what it’s saying basically is the aspirations and potentials of young people is like a mountain that’s there in front of you that could become mountain that can overflow with rainfall and water the valley, so it could [0:08:12.5] up any time and become a volcano that’s going to destroy the place.

In the Pacific there’s a Youth [0:08:18.7]. The Pacific countries are young countries; most of the young people for example, in Vanuatu are young. The slide here, if you look at, I don’t, this one, this is, this blue one and this red on, these are young people under 30; that’s 68% of the total population of Vanuatu. So this whole pie, we have 234,000 people in Vanuatu; 68% are young people. You’re looking at here, that’s the policy, 12 to 30, that’s 80,000. So the policy of the government for youth is 12 through 30; that’s 84,000, 80,000. So when you take it from children from zero to 18 years old that’s a big batch of the population.

The Youth Development Policy has three objectives: for youth to be prioritised and integrated into mainstream government policies and programmes; capacities of internal and external youth development support and training institutions are strengthened, services integrated and better coordinated; and strength and capacities of young people to participate in nation-building. Key areas for policy on youth: they are create pathways, looking at integration and professional training, we have a DFID policy looking at this, gainful employment and entrepreneurial development, we have a National Action Plan on Youth Employment being developed; professional development, healthcare. So what we’ve been doing now is trying to focus government policies towards young people. So with the Ministry of Health we’ve gone to them and say, “When you comment on health as a health issue, it is only reflected as a health issue, but it doesn’t bring out the young people inside.” So now we’ve brought in a [0:10:17.5], we’ve developed a partnership with UNFPA and it’s being delivered through Family Health Association, [0:10:27.4]. We’re doing the same things with Sports and Recreation for a Sports [0:10:32.4] Plan; Arts and Culture, Environment and Climate Change. So this is a new one for a youth policy in the Pacific to capture climate change and environment. And what we’re doing this one is the one I’ll be talking about, the activities. And we have public participation through civic [0:10:54.2] training, participation in self-help and community development through the National Youth Council.

Target groups: Youth in rural area; youth at risk which involved young people that have problem with the law, substance abuse, and reproductive health issues to do with sexual reproductive health; out of school and unemployed youth; female adolescent youth; youth with disabilities; talented and gifted youth. So this is the new policy that we’re working with. Out of school youth and unemployed youth, we have 94% of young people go to school when they start, and that’s a government policy, but 78% leave school before they reach the age of 20, so there’s a big thing there for government to look at what to do with these young people that drop out of school. That’s about 3,000 young people leaving school every year, and how to deal with that. Female adolescent youth, especially to do
with teenage pregnancies; lots of young girls that go to school when they finish, or when they get pregnant for example, they get put out of the school, whereas the boy stays on in school. So there’s some issues there we have to look at in terms of how do you keep them in school. Youth with disabilities; these are just the forgotten youth. Most of them, nothing’s been done to look at them. And talented, gifted youth; basically there’s some young people in societies that have some skills with sports, art, designs, sometimes they’re overlooked and their talents are not developed. Youth and climate change; so climate change is already threatening the sustainable livelihoods of the 75% of Vanuatu’s population living in rural areas. The maturity of these young people, 67% are also young people under 30 years old. So Vanuatu’s population, 75% are still living in the rural areas and engaging in subsistence farming, or rural development. Most of these people are young people under 30 years old. So we’ve decided to, because of this we’ve decided to work with the newly established Climate Change Ministry. So Vanuatu government elected a first Prime Minister from the Green Party. The Green Party, the Green Prime Minister went and said, “Let’s have a Climate Change Ministry,” so we have a new Climate Change Ministry in Vanuatu, and they’re now looking at developing a draft Climate Change Policy. So we’ve gone in with the young people and we’ve already influenced the policy to include young people as one of its main targets of components inside, especially in relation to capacity building, because young people are going to be impacted by all this environment and social impacts of climate change, especially to do with water shortages, food shortages, increased bushfire and weather, the normal, lower sea level, higher sea level, coral bleaching.

These are some of the impacts of climate change on young people, even with health issue to do with flooding and weather seasons, headache, diarrhoea, flu, sores, fever, stomach ache; it’s going to put lots of strain on the government, especially for young people as well. Food and agriculture, food crops, crops decrease in quality and quantity, diseases and socio-economic, roof damages, homes flooded, transport difficulties. These are some of the examples you can see inside as well, and disruptions in telecommunications.

At present climate change from local, provincial, national to international level, so we’re looking at how we can include young people in all the decision-making from the local level, provincial level, international, national and international level; how to increase young people’s capacity to be able to participate in the discussions or the affecting policy and programmes for climate change in Vanuatu.

So the draft national, draft Climate Change Policy is basically, and the need for the Ministry is basically because also Vanuatu is considered one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change because natural vulnerability to natural disasters is, this is on the Ring of Fire, cyclone belt and also crop failures, infrastructure, sea level rise, biodiversity loss, also lower scale economies. So these are the issues why the Climate Change Policy is going to be addressing, and also looking at how to, the impacts on all sectors of economy. So the Climate Change Policy is looking at how it can mainstream all the sectors inside the policies which is where the young people have come in and say, “Okay, put young people in the policy as well.”
How can young people participate or be included inside discussions in the international level agreements? So we have base UNFCCC Capacity Building Project in Vanuatu that looks at increasing negotiation and presentation in capacity of Vanuatu at the meetings. So what we’ve found when we went in 200-, [0:16:27.8] 15, that’s 2009 in Denmark, there were only four of us from the whole pacific, and what are you going to do? Like you can’t, yeah, so as young people going, and you can’t really have, you can’t really put an impact into the state parties there as well. So also for country like Vanuatu, to participate in the negotiations who are [0:16:55.8] presenting and how can they make their voices heard as well?

So this is looking at improving participation of key stakeholders as well as strengthening general public’s awareness to UNFCCC. For Vanuatu at the Climate Change, the [COPE 0:17:16.3] meetings for [COPE] 19 coming up, these are some of the thing that Vanuatu will be negotiating, in finance, [0:17:22.1], direct finance development, ask that 50% of funds be allocated to adaptation projects, ask for international mechanisms, disaster management capacity building, technology transfer, also looking at less than two degrees increased temperature and 45% reduction by 2050 based on 1990 Kyoto Protocol, adaptation, most support in technology, capacity building and adaptation projects, and emphasise [0:17:52.3] experience. So this is what our team is going to call on this year, [COPE] 19, and they will be pushing for this.

So how to increase the young people’s participation in this? So what we’ve done basically this is looking at making democracy and governments responsive to youth agenda, so local level action. So how we’ve mobilised young people to participate and make an impact at this level as well. So basically this is what, looking at local experiences of climate change impacts and adaptation activities, informed and consult national positions reflecting conscience and priorities of provinces, and then taking this to [COPE]. So now as we, last week there is a meeting happening now to, there’s been an application go out to the provinces to get young people to participate so they have, young people have applied to go and be part of this negotiation team. There has been a training on negotiations so they can be part of the government delegation to Poland. So they’ve chosen about six young people to go on this, for Vanuatu team, so this is a big plus for us.

How have we chosen these young people? Through the Vanuatu National Youth Council structure. So the Vanuatu National Youth Council structure has been established whereby youth groups at the village level, so church groups, sports groups, they’ve all come together and they’ve formed village groups, and then village have come together and they formed Area Youth Councils. So the Area Youth Councils are made up of several different groups within the same area, and then these have come together and they form Provincial Youth Councils. So Provincial Youth Councils, Vanuatu has six Provincial governments; we have six Provincial Youth Councils and we have established a Vanuatu National Youth Council. The Vanuatu National Youth Council has a mandate from the government; it’s the only youth council in the Pacific that is a statutory body. All the other youth councils in the Pacific are NGOs, but what we’ve realised when we got to international meetings, intergovernmental meetings, for example, at the UN or Commonwealth Youth Programmes, the Youth Councils cannot go into the Youth
Meetings and participate because they are NGOs. So we’ve revised that; we’ve made Vanuatu Youth Council a statutory body. So the government is obligated to give funding to the Youth Council, and also it allows the Youth Council to sit on the meetings and participate actively in policies and programmes. So for example, at the Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting in Papua New Guinea, the Youth Council of Vanuatu is the only one that goes and actually discusses and debates, and is considered a government.

So that’s the decision-making. At the provincial level we have provincial governments; now we’ve spoken to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, they’ve put in decentralisation, through the Decentralisation Act we’re getting Youth Presidents at this area, at this provincial level to be put into the Provincial Council Meetings as well, so they are participating at that level. And at the Area level, we have a, now I’m working with a province down south in Tafea called Tafea Province where I come from, and we’re already putting strength in these areas as well, putting young people there. So what we’ve done for, leading up to [COPE] 19, we’ve mobilised these youth groups and in two weeks we organised Vanuatu National Youth and Climate Change thing, and we mobilised these youth groups for, to have different activities happening on the same day simultaneously through radio. We ran the radio programmes for two hours life and got everyone participating in and sending in pictures, and even having video conferences as well. So this is the activity. So the first Student Climate Change National Day as a way to engage with the people of Vanuatu about climate change international negotiations, so capturing the voice of youth as one vulnerable group to climate change. And these are the activities that happen. So cloud [0:22:03.4] is an activity that was produced by climate change; we used this and show it in some remote areas, in some provinces. There are some four questions; I will show you later what the four questions are, and talkback shows, this was a programme that was running so people are ringing in from different provinces, and eco-friendly activities like planting trees and video competitions, photo competitions. These are our partners, Vanuatu National Youth Council and Department of Youth, Radio, Oxfam, [0:22:31.6].

So the four questions that we asked and that had, were put through radio and were about, “What would you like the government of Vanuatu to do to help us deal with, or adapt to climate change? What would you like to tell other countries to do about climate change? How is climate change impacting you personally? What are you already doing to respond to the challenges and other areas of concerns?” So this is one of the activities that happened in Tafea province, so I was there so I got the pictures here. So what you have here is a presentation on climate change happening and then young people planting trees, so young people here singing a climate change song, and the discussions with the UNFCCC negotiator, consultant in the, in Vanuatu. And with just last week as well, because of these things happening we’ve fast tracked a five year plan to also set up a National Youth Parliament. We’ve also put the National Youth Parliament, today had its first session; the main session today is on climate change debated by youth. So Vanuatu has been having these Youth Parliament that’s been happening all this time, and they’ve installed the video cameras in Parliament they’ve never used, so this week we used the video cameras so all the debates that were happening, today they elected the Prime Minister, the Opposition, everyone, and they’re working with partner, all the elected
Members of Parliament to debate the issues of climate change. So what you have here is the clerk of Parliament during the opening, and the young people already debating. So we’ve already brought it up to the next level. What we’re going to do after this National Youth Parliament is, so next month we’re going to launch the Presidential Award, which is going to go in line with this, so how we’re engaging young people and making governance responsive to youth agenda through the National Youth Parliament. Next month we’re going to, through the Commonwealth Youth Programme and UNDP, we’re going to launch the Presidential Award. So the Presidential Award is basically about getting the Ministers or MPs, they usually have allocations. So they use the allocations, they nominate one of these Youth Parliamentarians, usually from the constituency to implement the programme or a project. For one year this young person is implementing this programme or project, they get to go through a series of trainings, and the Parliamentarians too, before they choose a project they go through like a three, or a week training on different issues affecting young people, and then at the end of it they choose the young person to implement a programme. After one year of the successful implementation of the programme the President is going to award the Parliamentarian and the young person. The Award is run through the Duke of Edinburgh Award; it’s an Award that you, young people do in the community level. They choose a programme they want to do, it’s on a voluntary basis, but with the allocation from the MPs it’s supposed to support them to implement this programme.

Well, lessons learned: Need for greater understanding of climate change within the community, and also just the language and the terms that we use. It’s very, now one of the things, before people blame the government for everything, “The road is not good; the government is not doing something right.” So now, “There’s no fish in the sea: climate change.” So people are now putting blames on climate change; there has been an incident where because of the sea level rise in some areas where it affected, well, salination basically of wells in a school, they had to relocate the school to the mainland. But when the school was built by the community, but when the government came in through, with climate change [0:26:41.2] and they decided to move the school to the mainland, now the people are saying, “Well, government, you moved the school, you build it, put concrete and stuff in it so, and then climate change, like I don’t have budget for it.” Ministry of Education is like, “I don’t even have budget for it,” so the school is now very basically left on its own, it’s quite run down. So this is basically greater need for understanding of climate change and what it means when we do the assessments and provide the information to the communities. Do the community really need to know about climate change or is it something that only government need to understand? But we provide them with tools to be able to deal with the effects of climate change, like flooding and stuff. Greater information sharing from a national level to provincial level also; that is also one of the reasons why young people have come in is because after [COPE] 19 or after [COPE] meetings we don’t really know what the stand was and what is, what happened. We know at the [COPE] meeting this big thing happened and then, you know, what is it come about? Do we get any commitment from anyone? What’s happening? So yeah, that’s, and, but also for other departments, so the Ministry of Youth is basically the only Ministry that’s already including climate change in its policy, but there’s a need for other departments to buy into it and look at, so we can integrate climate
change across the board. Need for pilot studies and research: Pilot, more scoping, and basically also there are lots of things happening already on the ground in terms of integration of traditional knowledge with climate change, adaptation, for example, in Futuna where down south they’re using some, before they had, for food security they used to bury banana in the ground, but this got lost. So now with the shortages of food they’re now going back to that [0:28:39.0] as a food security measurements.

Next steps, basically development of national Policy for Climate Change and Disaster, the improved [0:28:46.4] of CC, and there are in the different departments; this has already happened. There’s some good projects of the integration of climate change than [0:28:54.7]. Inclusion of climate change and disaster knowledge: It comes in the school curriculum, so they moved to include this in curriculum. Development of communication strategy to ensure accurate information, [0:29:06.1] to stakeholders at the community, accurate knowledge but also what type of knowledge needs to go down to people at the local level. Number of projects and project partners: looking to develop climate change adaptation programmes to improve the resilience of the community and increase capacity building of the young people.

Thank you very much. Yeah, these are our partners, the Parliament of Vanuatu, Ministry of Climate Change, Ministry of Youth Developments within Training, Ministry of Internal Affairs through the Provincial Government, National Youth Council, and the radio and transparency [0:29:40.8].