

CBC PNGSI YOUTH COMMISSION HOLDS BOARD MEETING



The Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (CBC PNGSI) Youth Commission held its first Board Meeting on February 25 – 28, 2025 at CBC Headquarters, Gordons, Port Moresby with the following composition:

Youth Board Members

Youth Commission

Bishop Pedro Baquero, SDB-	Deputy Bishop
Bishop John Bosco Auram -	Assistant Deputy
Sr. Sharon Palencia, OND -	Secretary

Youth Animators

Sr. Alice Original, OND	- Port Moresby
Christa Korein	- Wewak

Youth Representative by Regions

Augustine Paiteli	- Alotau, Southern
James Laho	- Lae, Momase
Joseph Kunwa	- Goroka, Highlands
Maryjean Shong	- Bougainville, NGI
Concita Surupua	- Gizo, Solomon Islands

The Youth Board Meeting Kicks Off with Eucharistic Celebration and Visionary Discussions.

The first day of the gathering marked the arrival of the Youth Board members, followed by an orientation after dinner. The next morning, the event officially commenced with a Eucharistic Celebration presided over by Bishop Deputy Pedro Baquero, SDB, and co-presided by Assistant Deputy Bishop John Bosco Auram.

Once everyone had settled and entered into a spirit of prayer, Bishop Baquero called the meeting to order. In his opening remarks, he emphasized two key points for the mission of the Youth Board Members:

1. **Identity** – The Youth Board is at the service of the Catholic Bishops' Conference (CBC).
2. **Purpose** – The Board's role is not governance but **animation**.

Assistant Deputy Bishop Auram reinforced this message, reminding attendees that no one is born by mistake. Amid challenges and hardships, he encouraged self-reliance, urging the youth to work towards their dreams rather than rely too much on external support. He emphasized that the youth work **for both the Church and the government, not the other way around**.

Following this, the Youth Commission Secretary delivered a dynamic and insightful report, highlighting her diocesan outreach efforts, successes, challenges, and future plans. Her presentation reflected the Commission's dedication to ministering with youthful hope and enthusiasm.

Regional Reports and National Youth Policy

Regional reports provided a comprehensive picture of the Catholic youth landscape in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands (PNGSI), shedding light on program implementations, challenges, and best practices. Engaging discussions allowed members to exchange ideas, deepen their understanding of each region's realities, and enhance their skills in youth ministry.

On the second day, the **National Youth Development Authority (NYDA)** provided updates on youth policies and programs across the country. Regional board members deliberated on their local conditions and explored ways to ensure the well-being of young people. A key takeaway was the urgent need for youth empowerment:

"We must involve the youth. We do not create policies for them—let them create policies. We do not define their identity—let them tell us who they are. Let the young people speak!"

Strengthening the Catholic Youth Ministry

In the afternoon, Sr. Sharon presented the **Framework for the Catholic Youth Ministry (FCYM)** and its pending completion, which will be further discussed in an upcoming workshop in June. Additionally, the **seven priorities of Catholic Youth Ministry** were outlined for dissemination across various archdioceses and parishes.

The meeting concluded with thoughtful suggestions and recommendations for strengthening youth ministry efforts. Participants expressed gratitude for being part of the gathering, recognizing their roles on the Board as a **service to the Church and the youth**. Their collective work is not just a duty but a meaningful and fulfilling journey of accompaniment and shared mission.

(Sr. Alice Original, OND -Archdiocese of Port Moresby, Youth Animator)