
Presented by: The Pacific Statistics Steering Committee and Brisbane Accord Group
The Pacific Islands

- The Pacific Islands face many challenges in collation and reporting of births, deaths and causes of death. These challenges include:
  - Widely dispersed populations
  - Transport and accessibility issues
  - Staff capacity and retention of trained staff
  - Limited resources and competing priorities

- We witness a great variations between Pacific island countries and territories ranging from:
  - complete coverage (but not always timely reporting/access to this information), to
  - near-complete coverage but not always timely recording and reporting, to
  - dysfunctional recording of births and deaths of varying severity (regarding completeness, accuracy, timeliness).

The need for better data

- Frequently noted concerns regarding vital statistics data in the Pacific have included:
  - Lack of data
  - Difficulty accessing data
  - Poor quality of data
  - Poor timeliness of data

- Resulting in reliance on survey data and estimates

- In 2009: while all 15 Pacific countries were able to report against all three MDG Goal 4 Indicators, no country was able to rely on data from administrative data sources, such as Civil Registration and Health Information systems, that were less than 3 years old.
Drivers for better information in the Pacific Islands

- Priorities articulated in the Pacific Plan of regional Heads of Governments
- Donor initiatives to improve health systems through improving knowledge about health information systems,
- Global initiatives such as the Millennium Declaration and MDGs.
- There is now greater awareness of the need for quality and timely data to inform decision making around development policy and the provision of technical and financial assistance especially from donor countries and development agencies.

Non Communicable Diseases Emergency

_Honiara Communiqué on the Pacific Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) Crisis issued by Health Ministers on 30 June 2011_

- Leaders expressed their deep concern that non-communicable diseases (NCDs) has reached epidemic proportions in Pacific island countries and territories (PICTs) and has become a ‘human, social and economic crisis’ requiring an urgent and comprehensive response.

- Leaders expressed alarm that 75 percent of all adult deaths in the Pacific are due to NCDs the majority of whom are in the economically active age bracket and that many more times this number suffer severe side effects that undermine their capacity to contribute further to economic development.

- Leaders expressed grave concern that NCDs can undermine the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which for a region that is already struggling to meet the 2015 targets provides an even greater challenge.
Non Communicable Diseases


- The Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan was developed by the Brisbane Accord Group
- The overarching aim of the plan is to assist Pacific countries to improve their statistics on birth, deaths, and cause-of-death through routine collections and thereby provide decision-makers with the evidence needed for effective planning.
- The plan sits under the framework of the Ten Year Pacific Statistics Strategy (TYPSS) 2011-2020.
The Ten Year Pacific Statistics Strategy (TYPSS)

- Background began in 2007 with the Regional Statistical Benchmarking Study
- The TYPSS has been endorsed by all PICT statistical agencies as well as both SPC’s 40th CRGA meeting and subsequent Ministerial conference, and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariats’ Finance and Economic Ministers Meeting (FEMM) in October 2010.
- Identified improvements to vital statistics and civil registration, and to health and education statistics as the four strategic priority areas, with functioning administrative databases seen as essential to supply such statistics on a regular basis.
- Coordination and oversight of the implementation of the Strategy is the responsibility of SPC and the Pacific Statistics Steering Committee (PSSC)
- PSSC is comprised of six Pacific Island government statisticians and four representatives from financial and technical partners (AusAID, ADB, UNFPA and University of the South Pacific (USP)).

The Brisbane Accord Group (BAG)

- In 2010 the HIS Hub at UQ convened a meeting in Brisbane of a number of agencies concerned with improving vital statistics in the Pacific region.
- From this meeting the Brisbane Accord Group (BAG) was established with the aim of providing strategic and technical support to countries around vital statistics improvements, and providing a more coordinated response from partner agencies.
- Partners include SPC, University of Queensland HIS Hub, UNFPA, WHO, UNICEF, PHIN, ABS and the Queensland University of Technology.
Objectives of the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan

- Establish mechanisms for the coordination and alignment of all in-country personnel and development
- Develop country specific strategic plans that can be carried out within the framework of the Ten Year Pacific Statistics Strategy
- Encourage and assist all countries to undertake an assessment of their vital and civil registration
- Promote both community awareness and government commitment to improve civil registration and vital statistic systems
- Enhance understanding of the importance of vital statistics among, and collaboration between, all offices and agencies
- Strengthen training of personnel involved in civil registration and production of vital statistics and improve technical capacity of countries
- Promote the use and dissemination of vital statistics
- Establish mechanisms for regularly reviewing progress on the development of vital statistics and civil registration systems.

Basic Approach of the Plan

- The basic premise of the plan is to work with countries to undertake an assessment of their collection and reporting systems for births, deaths, and causes of death through both in-country visits, and by assisting countries to work through a self assessment using Vital Statistics Comprehensive Assessment tool developed by WHO.

- This information is then used by countries to develop a country-specific Vital Statistics Improvement Plan.

- Partner agencies are then able to focus their support in a coordinated manner to meet the technical assistance needs identified in the plans.
Country Clusters

The Plan takes into account regional diversity and level of statistical development. Different strategies have been developed for four categories of countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Small Island states in South and Central Pacific with VS systems in place</td>
<td>Nauru, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau, Tuvalu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Small Island states in North Pacific, some with spatial logistic challenges</td>
<td>Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Palau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Larger countries with more developed administrations, including a long history of civil registration</td>
<td>Fiji, Tonga, Samoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Larger countries with less developed civil registration systems</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Kiribati</td>
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</tbody>
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Country engagement

- A critical element for the success of this initiative is country engagement through the Pacific Statistics Steering Committee (PSSC).

- This committee oversees implementation of the Ten Year Pacific Statistics Strategy and subsequently the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan, providing the governance structure for the vital statistics work in the Pacific region.

- BAG partners have also made a commitment to report progress against the plan to the Pacific Ministers of Health at their regular meetings.
Progress to date – Highlights (1)

**Group 1 - Nauru, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau, Tuvalu**
- Initial workshop - Suva September 2011
- Follow up workshop Nadi November 2012
- Country follow-up visits complete

**Group 2 - Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Palau (with CNMI and Guam)**
- An initial visit (and preliminary assessment) was conducted for each of the Group 2 countries in Nov/Dec 2011,
- Initial sub-regional workshop held in April 2012 in Guam.

**Group 3 – Fiji, Tonga and Samoa**
- A meeting with BAG members and key representatives from Fiji was held in October 2012

Progress to date – Highlights (2)

**Group 4 - Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Kiribati**
- Planning for the initial inter-country workshop for early next year is well-underway,
- A preliminary scoping visit has been conducted with PNG,
- Work is being supported to assess reporting completeness for births and deaths through the Ministry of Health in PNG to inform national discussions.

**General Activities**
- Medical certification course Fiji November 2012
- Support to PIHOA workshop on HIS and IT September 2012
- HIS short course FNU/ UQ October 2012
- CRVS training course – UQ November 2012
Example extract from country plan – Cook Islands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement Goal</th>
<th>Actions/Activities</th>
<th>Sequence of Steps</th>
<th>Time frame</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Resource Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regulate vital statistics system</td>
<td>To bring all key players in the data production industry together – work as a team.</td>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>End of FY2013</td>
<td>The National Statistical Office - to coordinate all key players institutionally, technically and with respect to their programmes and budgets in order to organise an integrated system.</td>
<td>HR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the quality of medical certification</td>
<td>Information Session with Medical Officers</td>
<td>Within 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td>MoH; SPC; WHO; UQ - HUB</td>
<td>Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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• Thank you