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Report on the progress of the Healthy Islands Monitoring Framework

The Eleventh Pacific Health Ministers Meeting recommended developing a framework to monitor progress towards the Healthy Island vision. Following technical reviews and an intensive consultative process, 48 mandatory and 31 optional indicators were proposed for the Healthy Island monitoring framework. The framework aims to align with the indicators of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), the SDG Pacific Headline Indicators and the Dashboard for Noncommunicable Disease (NCD) Action, developed by the Pacific Monitoring Alliance for NCD Action (MANA).

Of the 22 Pacific island countries and areas that were contacted as part of the data validation and collection process, 21 checked the prepopulated data and provided update. Both national data and global and regional estimates are used for the Healthy Islands monitoring framework progress report.

Ministers are invited to acknowledge the progress and endorse the Healthy Islands monitoring framework and the first progress report. Implementation of the monitoring framework requires continuous investments in strengthening health information systems at the regional and national levels.

1. BACKGROUND

At the first Pacific Health Ministers Meeting (PHMM) in 1995, the health ministers declared their [vision of Healthy Islands](#). Findings from [the 20-year review](#) in 2015 concluded that the Healthy Islands vision should remain as the unifying vision for health development in the Pacific. The Eleventh Pacific Health Ministers Meeting in 2015, however, recognized the absence of a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to track the progress towards the vision of Healthy Islands and tasked the Secretariat to develop a monitoring framework and reporting mechanism. The task is related with: 1.1 strengthening Pacific leadership, governance and accountability; 1.2 improve the quality of data and evidence for policy- and decision-making, resource allocation and progress tracking; and 3.4 ensure reliable and timely data on key health indicators' in the 2015 Yanuca Island Declaration.

This document provides a report of the progress made in developing the Healthy Islands monitoring framework and presents the first progress report. It offers a snapshot of achievements and challenges as well as opportunities and priority actions for reporting the indicators defined in the Healthy Islands monitoring framework.

2. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

2.1 Progress in developing the Healthy Islands monitoring framework

The Healthy Islands monitoring framework was developed through multiple rounds of consultations and revisions between April 2015 and April 2017, including at the side meeting of the Pacific Health Ministers at the WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific in Guam (October 2015), a side meeting of health information officers at the Regional Meeting on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics for the Pacific Islands in New Caledonia (February 2016), the fourth Heads of Health meeting in Fiji (April 2016), the Pacific Health Information Network Meeting in Fiji (May 2016) and the fifth Heads of Health meeting in Fiji (April 2017). At each stage, reviewers were given the opportunity to provide comments on the relevance of proposed indicators for monitoring progress towards the overall vision of Healthy Islands, the feasibility of collecting data on the indicators, the usefulness of retaining any so-called optional indicators and data collection mechanisms.

The current draft Healthy Islands monitoring framework (Annex 1) comprises 48 mandatory indicators. Where possible, indicator definitions have been sourced from global frameworks to ensure harmonization and adherence to international standards, notably the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the universal health coverage (UHC) regional framework, the SDG Pacific Headline Indicators and the Dashboard for Noncommunicable Disease (NCD) Action, developed by the Pacific Monitoring Alliance for NCD Action (MANA). The framework is divided into *core* and *complementary* indicators under the four main sections that correspond to the 2015 Yanuca Island Declaration.

In addition to these mandatory indicators, 31 optional indicators are proposed. Countries will not be required to provide data on these optional indicators but are encouraged to choose optional indicators

that best suit their needs and capacity to collect and analyse data. Details of the monitoring indicators, including detailed definitions, specifications, data sources and assessment criteria, are included in Annex 1.

2.2. Data collection and reporting mechanisms

Using the Healthy Islands monitoring framework, the PHMM Secretariat coordinated with Pacific countries and areas to produce the first progress report (Annex 2) for review by the PHMM. This report provides a baseline for each of the core indicators. Forty-two (88%) mandatory indicators are already being reported through the regional and global reporting mechanisms. The Secretariat prepopulated the latest available data from these existing regional and global estimates and then shared these prepopulated indicators with countries and areas, asking them to either approve the indicators or propose new national data while collecting indicators that were not available in the regional and global databases. Of the 22 Pacific island countries and areas that were contacted as part of the data validation and collection process, 21 checked the prepopulated data and provided update.

3. CHALLENGES

Countries in the region already collect a number of health indicators for their own planning and management purposes, as well as for reporting to different international mechanisms. Still, there is some variability in data quality and the definitions of core health indicators that are critical for monitoring programmes. This means that variances in the scope and purpose of national data collection can result in differences among available data and affect comparability across countries and areas. Within this context, the Secretariat uses global estimations in addition to the national data in the progress report (Annex 2).

While the past years have seen substantive improvements in collection of data on vital events, it is often still difficult to access data on births, deaths and causes of death at both the national and regional level. The analysis in Annex 2 reinforces the need for improved cause-of-death data, particularly given the significant burden of disease from NCDs.

Despite MANA's ongoing work to improve the quality of NCD monitoring data across the region, there are still limited data on service coverage for NCD and mental health interventions. For example, data on service coverage for cervical cancer screening, coverage for people with increased risk of cardiovascular disease or treatment coverage for patients with severe mental illness exist currently in only a few countries. It is widely accepted that the Pacific is facing a rapidly increased burden of NCDs. National health information systems thus need to properly provide Pacific decision-makers with information on implementation of NCD policies.

As a consequence of the global spread of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, together with the increasing ease of travel between and within countries, the risk of disease spread has been steadily increasing in recent years. Recent outbreaks of dengue serotypes 2 and 4 as well as Zika virus simultaneously affected multiple countries and areas or spread rapidly in the Pacific. These outbreaks

highlight the need to strengthen early warning systems and surveillance, in particular port of entry and outbreak reporting capacities across the region.

4. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

4.1 Recommendations for governments

The 12th Pacific Health Ministers Meeting may consider:

- endorsing the proposed Healthy Islands monitoring framework (Annex 1);
- endorsing the first progress report (Annex 2); and
- tasking the Pacific Heads of Health to follow up the implementation of the framework and report the progress at the Pacific Health Ministers Meeting in 2019 with any amendment if necessary.

Governments may consider:

- actively participating in validating and reporting indicators every two years as per the framework; and
- continuing improving national health information systems, which include routine information systems, various health surveys and civil registration and vital statistics; and reinforcing equity-oriented health information systems, which entails having more disaggregated data across age, sex, geography, household income levels and other characteristics appropriate to the country context.

4.2 Recommendations for development partners

Development partners may consider:

- continuing supporting the Pacific island countries and areas to strengthen overall health information systems with a focus on quality of data and equity-oriented systems;
- continuing supporting the strengthening of country institutional capacity to collect, compile, analyse, disaggregate and use data at all levels of the health system; and
- continuing supporting countries and areas in implementing civil registration and vital statistics programmes by implementing the [Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan with the Brisbane Accord Group](#) of agencies to improve the quality and availability of birth, death and cause-of-death data.