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Pacific Statistics Methods Board Meeting

Summary Report and Outcomes

9–10 September 2020

Virtual meeting hosted by SPC

Noumea, New Caledonia

Prepared by the
Statistics for Development Division (SDD) of the
Pacific Community (SPC)

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List of abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ADB	Asian Development Bank
CAPI	Computer-assisted personal interviewing
CATI	Computer-assisted telephone interviewing
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HFPM	High frequency phone monitoring
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HOPS	Heads of Pacific Planning and Statistics
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
NSO	National Statistics Office
PICTs	Pacific Island countries and territories
PSMB	Pacific Statistics Methods Board
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
SDD	Statistics for Development Division (SPC)
SPC	Pacific Community
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund

The Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB) met on 9 and 11 September 2020. It was a virtual meeting hosted by SPC, Noumea, and was chaired by Vince Galvin. The meeting was held using Zoom, and the meeting documents are accessible here: <https://sdd.spc.int/events/2020/09/interim-PSMB-meeting>. The meeting was an interim meeting of PSMB, which is scheduled to meet twice annually. The first meeting of PSMB in 2020 was held in July (delayed from April due to COVID-19 disruptions) and the second meeting is scheduled for November 2020.

Participants	<p>Board members: Melanesia – Kemueli Naiqama, Fiji Polynesia – Small NSOs – Australian Bureau of Statistics – Bruce Fraser Statistics New Zealand – Vince Galvin (Chair) UN agencies – James Kaphuka (UNICEF)</p> <p>Observers: Lualua Tua, Cook Islands NSO</p> <p>Pacific Community (SPC) – Epeli Waqavonovono, David Abbott, Michael Sharp, Gloria Mathenge (part meeting), Scott Pontifex (part meeting) SPC Consultants – Allan Nicholls, Ian Cope (both part meeting) Stats NZ – Ofa Ketu'u, Tracey Savage and Temaleti Tupou World Bank – Kristen Himelein (part meeting) UNDP – Christina Mualia-Lima, Potoae Roberts Aiafi (both part meeting) UNESCAP – Chris Ryan (part meeting)</p>
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Summary of proceedings

Review of agenda and administrative matters

1. The Chair welcomed participants and noted that unfortunately no Pacific Island members/Government Statisticians had joined the first day of the virtual meeting.
2. The meeting agreed the PSMB could not make decisions on some agenda items (e.g. poverty measurement) without input from Government Statisticians, and that these decisions should be deferred until they could be present.
3. It was suggested the meeting could proceed with discussion of technical issues. Notes of this discussion could then be circulated to all PSMB members, together with relevant recommendations for consideration. Participants agreed on this approach.

Session 1: PACSTAT project operations manual (POM) (Allan Nicholls and Michael Sharp)

4. Michael Sharp (SDD/SPC) and Allan Nicholls (consultant) presented 'Statistical Innovation and Capacity Building in the Pacific Islands Project (PACSTAT) – The role of PSMB'.
 (The PACSTAT project and drafting of the operations manual were discussed at PSMB's July 2020 meeting.)
5. The presentation reviewed the parts of the draft POM that are directly relevant to PSMB, that is:

- i. PSMB’s decision-making process for ‘PSMB Commissioned Work’ and for ‘Innovative Experiments’;
 - ii. the template for submitting research proposals to PSMB;
 - iii. experiment activity cycle and the role of PSMB; and
 - iv. communication of PSMB findings and recommendations.
6. Communication – Through PACSTAT, SDD will have extra resources for communication with PSMB and wider stakeholders. For example, there may be a special webpage and other mechanisms to disseminate reports on each piece of Commissioned Work and Innovative Experiments, including recommendations for implementation in Pacific Island countries based on the research results.

Comments on the draft POM

7. Participants agreed the draft reflected PSMB’s discussion at its previous meeting and suggested the following amendments:
- a. In addition to commissioning research, PSMB’s role – and value-add – is to prioritise research/experimentation, and to support methodological review/development.
 - b. The scope of work needs to be well defined to ensure proposals meet the development objectives of the PACSTAT project. All proposals still have to go through the World Bank approval process.
 - c. The POM decision-making process describes how Government Statisticians/ PICT NSOs, among other stakeholders, can make research proposals. SDD will support NSOs in developing proposals they want to put forward, given that NSOs already have pressure on their time and resources.
 - d. Joint proposals (e.g. NSO/development partner) will be encouraged. The template could also include a section on ‘Partner consultation’.
 - e. ‘Technical stakeholders’ in each NSO will be identified so they can also receive the request for proposals under the PACSTAT project and, more generally, receive communications from PSMB.
8. MS and AN expressed appreciation for the feedback, which will be incorporated in the draft POM. As a ‘living document’, the POM can be adapted if necessary as the project proceeds. However, any revision will require approval from the World Bank.
9. The Chair said the POM provided a practical process for PACSTAT. Subject to incorporation of the amendments suggested by the meeting, he considered PSMB could endorse the POM.

Recommendation

10. PSMB:
- i. endorsed the Project Operations Manual for PACSTAT, subject to incorporation of the above amendments relating to the:
 - a. PSMB decision-making process;
 - b. template for proposals to PSMB;
 - c. experiment activity cycle and the role of PSMB; and
 - d. communication of PSMB findings and recommendations.

Session 2: Technology and software (Scott Pontifex and Michael Sharp)

Software stocktake survey

11. At its October 2019 meeting, PSMB requested a stocktake of statistical software programmes currently in use in the Pacific region.
12. SDD has designed an online survey to capture information on software used in PICT NSOs. The survey will be sent to all NSOs (sample size 21 if all respond).

13. The survey results will help shape SDD support by enabling a better understanding of NSO needs and future plans in relation to statistical software for data collection, data analysis, data visualisation and dissemination, and capacity building in software use.
14. PSMB members are asked to view the online survey and provide feedback to SDD.
<http://107.191.56.89/WebInterview/U2EYWKBUE/Start>

Skills audit

15. In the lead-up to the review of the Ten-Year Pacific Statistics Strategy Phase 3, and planned TYPPS 2, SDD is conducting a skills audit of NSOs. This will also be an online survey.

CAPI challenges

16. In PICTs, CAPI is being used with a mix of software. For example, SDD uses Survey Solutions (with Android tablets) for census and HIES, and UNICEF uses CSPro (with Windows tablets) for MICS. The World Bank will no longer host Survey Solutions servers so SDD is taking on the servers, which has operational and sustainability risks. Other CAPI software is also used in the region.
17. COVID-19 is affecting access to tablets because of restrictions on their manufacture and distribution.
18. ADB and FAO have developed CAPI resources, e.g. [the CAPI Effect](#)

However, these resources are not contextualised to PICT situations (such as low internet capacity and/or connectivity). Other resources are available – the World Bank supports Survey Solutions capacity strengthening while the US Census Bureau supports CSPro.

Data processing and tabulation challenges

19. A range of data processing software is used in the region, including Stata and R. Excel is also widely used, but is not considered international best practice as it does not include do or log files (i.e., programmes that are used to do the analysis, which can be referred to for review of processed undertaken in data processing/analysis) to track changes.
20. The Pacific Group on Disability Statistics and the World Bank have separately proposed the development of standardised Stata syntax to analyse disability and poverty data, respectively.
21. Challenges include:
 - i. the need for transparent and replicable processing/analysis;
 - ii. data sharing constraints when different systems are used;
 - iii. financial implications – R is open source, other systems have a cost; and
 - iv. capacity constraints among NSOs, technical assistance providers, and other users when moving to new systems.

Discussion

22. Participants commented as follows:
 - Technology/software is more an operational matter than a methods issue and is outside PSMB's terms of reference.
 - UNICEF is currently looking at CSPro v7 and android option for MICS. The technology survey will assist with this.
 - CAPI and data processing/tabulation software challenges will be discussed further when the results of the survey are available.
 - The online survey will be piloted in one large and one small NSO prior to regional roll-out.
 - There was concern about the capacity of NSOs to deal with the range of software options introduced by different agencies.

Recommendations

23. PSMB:

- i. endorse moving ahead with the online survey of software currently used by PICT NSOs;
- ii. provide feedback on the draft software survey, which will be piloted in two NSOs (one large, one small); and
- iii. agree to discuss the results of the survey at PSMB's next meeting, and the potential for developing CAPI information for PICTs.

Session 3: Pacific poverty methodology (Kristen Himelein and Vince Galvin)

24. This presentation was deferred. The Chair said it was intended to (a) provide reassurance to Government Statisticians on poverty measurement issues, and (b) resolve the issues left for further discussion by PSMB's meeting in July 2020.

At the July meeting, PSMB agreed to 'the interim adoption of the guidelines for monetary poverty analysis, pending further analysis and discussion of specific unresolved issues including dietary energy values, the use of spatial price deflators or subregional poverty lines, calculation of imputed rents, the method of calculating adult equivalents and the estimation of non-food components of poverty'.

25. Kristen Himelein said the World Bank will move forward with its consultations with Vanuatu, Kiribati and Marshall Islands on their HIES data. Vanuatu will release its data in October 2020, the Samoa and Fiji analyses are also advanced, and Kiribati and Marshall Islands are underway. The comparison of the old and new methods for the Samoa HIES data has been done and will be presented at the next PSMB meeting.
26. In the absence of PSMB's endorsement of the poverty measurement guidelines, the World Bank will work directly with countries as usual. Best practice would be to have the endorsement of the regional body, but further delay in reporting is not possible given the regional analysis is required by May 2021.
27. In terms of methods, the use of Tornqvist deflators is still under consideration. At present, each country is being treated separately (e.g. Fiji is applying its existing method), but this means different methods and lack of cross-country comparability, which is particularly important for small countries.
28. Following a question about cross-country comparisons, the Chair suggested the meeting discuss this issue after the presentation has been made.

Multi-dimensional poverty analysis

29. UNDP, attending as an observer, reported that it is managing a joint social protection programme in Samoa and is developing a multi-dimensional poverty index (MPI) for Samoa. At present this is in the preliminary stages, with UNDP in dialogue with Samoa and also with SDD.

Recommendations

30. PSMB noted:

- i. at the November 2020 meeting of PSMB, the World Bank will report back on the comparison of the 'old' and 'new' methods for the Samoa poverty analysis;
- ii. at the April 2021 meeting of PSMB, the World Bank will report back on the results of applying the 'interim method' to the Vanuatu, Kiribati and Marshall Islands poverty analysis, and the efficacy of the approach;
- iii. UNDP (in consultation with SDD) is working with Samoa to develop a multi-dimensional poverty index; and
- iv. there is a need for formal review of non-monetary (multi-dimensional) approaches to poverty analysis.

Day 2, 11 September 2020

31. The Chair welcomed Kemueli Naiqama, Government Statistician, Fiji, and Lualua Tua, Cook Islands NSO, who joined Day 2 of the meeting.

Session 4: Pacific road map to increase use of registers or administrative data in census (Gloria Mathenge and Ian Cope)

32. SPC is leading the project 'Utilisation of registers and administrative data in census programmes for Pacific Island countries'. Phase 1 of the project focuses on awareness raising through webinars, round tables and thematic information papers. Phase 2 will comprise in-depth work with countries that want to take the work further.
33. The project supports the priorities of the Ten-Year Pacific Statistics Strategy (e.g. 'greater utilisation and integration of key administrative databases'), and aligns with the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan, e.g. in promoting use of civil registration systems as sources of vital statistics.
34. Ian Cope (consultant) presented a potential roadmap (see Paper 4 and presentation <https://sdd.spc.int/events/2020/09/interim-PSMB-meeting>) for the process of making more use of registers and administrative data in Pacific countries, and moving from a traditional census to a register-based census. Experience in Europe and the Nordic countries shows this is generally a long process.
35. For the 2020 round, globally 12 countries plan to implement fully register-based censuses, and 29 countries will combine registers with census/surveys. All countries that use register and admin data for their censuses have followed a similar development approach, including for linking data from various sources. The potential road map for PICTs follows similar steps.
36. However, even if individual PICTs do not want to aim for a register-based census, there are advantages in making more use of register/admin data, such as:
- i. supporting census planning (by enabling small-area population estimates);
 - ii. replacing some census questions, filling in response gaps; and
 - iii. providing a contingency in the event of a poor census response rate.
37. All countries with fully register-based censuses have Person ID systems and national population registers, with the same Person ID used consistently across registers. Person ID data is updated frequently (even daily in some countries). An address register is also critical to enable people to be allocated to businesses and households.
38. For Pacific NSOs, constraints to developing increased use of registers and administrative data in censuses include shortage of resources such as IT capacity; and in some PICTs, lack of legislation giving access to data held by other agencies, and the incompleteness of existing registers (such as civil registration systems).
39. Opportunities and benefits for increased use of register and administrative data among PICTs include potential savings on the costs of traditional censuses, especially for remote areas; ability to take advantage of newly developing national ID registration schemes; and ability to capture high-quality register information in small PICTs with centralised facilities (e.g. in Nauru and Niue).
40. In the Pacific, six countries (Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu) have, or are developing, national ID schemes, which provide a basis for a central population register.
41. Political and public support (and understanding) for NSOs' use of registers/admin data are essential, along with trust in data-sharing arrangements and constraints.

Next steps for the project

42. The series of webinars and round tables will finish at the end of September 2020. To date, the webinars

have been well attended, suggesting there is appetite for progress. Participants include Pacific NSOs and register owners (primarily civil registration officials):

- iv. the project proposes to provide six papers on register development to PSMB; and
- v. general and specific recommendations will be made for PICTs wishing to develop population registers.

43. No matter how far Pacific NSOs plan to move towards increased use of registers/ administrative data in census, NSOs with experience of the process say it is important to start as soon as practicable.

Discussion

44. Participants commended the paper and agreed that considerable work is needed to enable increased use of registers/administrative data in PICTs. There must be time allowed to build experience, iron out bugs, work out data linkage methods, etc. It is also important that support is tailored to the needs and scale of specific countries, as planned for Phase 2.

45. In other countries, even where NSOs have access to administrative data, the quality of the data may be poor. NSOs have to work with other agencies to improve data quality. Once NSOs start using the data, the feedback/dialogue that occurs helps to improve data quality, though this may be a slow process.

46. Fiji's NSO needs an MOU with other line ministries to access their admin data. Drawing up an MOU helps to make line ministries more aware of their obligations to supply data, including for SDG reporting.

47. PICTs can learn from other countries on the way they update their registers. Some registers in PICTs are never updated after the information is initially entered.

48. Political support for use of registers/admin data is extremely important. New Zealand has an integrated system that pulls in data from around 40 agencies. The resulting integration of information led to changes in how the government invests in social programmes. For example, when the government saw integrated data on at-risk children, a new agency was established to focus on child protection.

49. There are benefits on the way to achieving increased use of admin data. Identifying case stories could demonstrate the value of investing in registers and help build government support.

50. Systems are dependent on people providing information. Data on vulnerable people may therefore be harder to capture. On the other hand, some vulnerable people interact with a range of agencies, providing information that can be linked.

51. In response to a question on what variables are included in a population register, the following feedback was provided via email from Ian Cope on 15 September 2020:

- Helge Brunborg (Norway) listed the following 'flow' variables (data on events) that are contained in the Norway CPR (civil registration system).
 - Births
 - Deaths
 - Marital changes (marriages, separations, divorces, annulments...)
 - Emigration and immigration
 - Internal moves
 - Address changes
 - Name changes
 - Citizenship changes
- IC also listed the most important status (stock) variables in the CPR (i.e. data that is permanent or changes infrequently).
 - PIN (may include date of birth and sex)
 - Residence status (Resident=1, Emigrated=2, Deceased=3, No permanent address=4, Disappeared=5)
 - Address

- Municipality
- Dwelling number
- Place of birth (municipality or country)
- Full name
- Surname prior to marriage
- Citizenship
- Country of immigration
- Country of emigration
- Marital status PIN of spouse, mother and father (links between siblings, cousins, children and grandparents ...)

One-on-one meetings with NSOs

52. Ian Cope said the project plans to have one-on-one meetings with countries to discuss which stage they are currently at in relation to using register/admin data, and welcomes feedback from NSOs interested in a meeting.
53. Gloria Mathenge said the first country to seek support is Tuvalu, which wants to build a population register.
54. The Chair noted the recommendations of Paper 4, which are addressed to the leaders of PICT NSOs, and said the PSMB members present recognised the benefits of the proposed plans and encouraged their adoption.

Recommendations

55. PSMB:
- i. encouraged participation (from both the NSO and relevant register owners) of all Pacific Island countries and territories in the remaining series of webinars and round tables;
 - ii. endorsed the project and the proposed next steps;
 - iii. noted that the project will be engaging with a smaller number of pilot countries to crystallise the details of the next steps. (PSMB looks forward to hearing progress and offering advice as issues are identified.); and
 - iv. noted the step-by-step process towards greater use of register/administrative data in censuses, as outlined in the paper, *A Pacific road map to increase use of registers or administrative data in census and, potentially, other statistical outputs* (<https://sdd.spc.int/events/2020/09/interim-PSMB-meeting>), and stands ready to participate in refining them as they are applied and in the pilot countries.

Session 5: Update on HFPM surveys

Cook Islands Socioeconomic Impact Assessment

56. Lualua Tua (Cook Islands) said the questionnaire for the socio-economic impact assessment has been developed with support from SDD. The NSO has collaborated with the Departments of Internal Affairs and Health to ensure the questions cover all data needs. In terms of the sampling frame, the NSO has asked Vodafone for a list of phone numbers and has also been advised to look at the 2019 Labour Force survey, although this covers only 50% of households. Households will be contacted first to assess their willingness to take part in the survey and the iterations. Both CAPI and CATI will be used to collect data.

HFPM surveys in the New Zealand realm countries, and the next steps

57. Dr Ketu'u provided background on plans for rapid assessment surveys in the New Zealand realm countries (Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau). NZ's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) asked the realm countries if they wanted to conduct the surveys and will, in principle, fund the work. The survey approach and design will be similar to the one used by the World Bank, with adaptations to suit each country's situation and specific needs. Stats NZ will support the countries together with SDD.
58. David Abbott said SDD is waiting for further information on the outcomes of the first round of the World

Bank's HFPM surveys in PNG and Solomon Islands and the approach used to resolve sample bias, and will then be able to go forward with the realm countries as appropriate. The budget is a work in progress. It is hoped to get data collection underway in one to two months.

National workshops

59. Chris Ryan (UNESCAP) recapped plans to support countries to finalise their surveys, including providing guidance on methodology issues. In general, there has not been much interest in the proposed national consultation workshops with individual PICTs. They are also waiting for the results of the PNG and Solomon Islands surveys. Discussions with SPC indicate they are updating survey plans, and these may include HFPM. It may be useful to support countries then.

World Bank HFPM surveys in PNG and Solomon Islands

60. Kristen Himelein presented an overview of the results of Round 1 of the two surveys and the methodology used. (At the time of the meeting, the survey results were embargoed. The PNG results were due to be reported 14 September and the Solomon Islands results a short time after that.)

Papua New Guinea HFPM survey

61. Random digit dialling was used to contact 3115 households between 18 June and 3 July. Questions included employment, food security, assets, coping strategies and well-being.

Results

62. A high majority of respondents had heard of Covid-19. Radio was the main source of information; the bush telegraph was effective, but messaging was hard to control; internet access was limited outside urban areas.

63. There were high levels of financial anxiety – approximately 25 percent of respondents who were working in January were no longer working in June.

64. Coping strategies included reducing the number of children attending school, which is concerning. This finding applied across the whole country, but the cause may relate to recent fee increases as well as COVID-19 effects.

65. Other coping strategies included reducing consumption, selling livestock, and using savings. In higher quintiles, some people received remittances.

66. Food access was not a major problem and there was little evidence of health-care avoidance. On trust and security issues, women in rural areas were most likely to say things had deteriorated (but there is no baseline to attribute this finding to COVID-19).

Solomon Islands HFPM survey

67. Random digit dialling was used to contact 2650 households between 20 June and 4 July.

Results

68. There was high awareness of COVID-19. Radio was the main source of information plus the bush telegraph.

69. Approximately 15 percent of respondents who were working in January were no longer working in June. Some of these changes in employment status were reported to be direct effects of COVID-19 (despite no case of active transmission in Solomon Islands).

70. Coping mechanisms included taking on debt, reducing food consumption, and receiving assistance from churches and other organisations (again there are no baselines for these findings). Remittances (mostly domestic) provided a safety net for some people.

Methodology issues

71. *Sample bias* – For both surveys, the samples were biased. In PNG, respondents were more likely to be male and more educated than the general population, and a disproportionate number lived in Port Moresby. In the Solomon Islands survey, the sample skewed more male and younger than the general

population. In both cases, the respondents were wealthier than the population generally, as measured by the wealth index from the most recent DHS. The two lowest quintiles were under-represented in PNG and almost wholly missing in Solomon Islands.

72. *Reweighting* – Propensity score, raking, and post-stratification were used to re-weight the PNG data and the team is relatively confident that the resulting estimates are nationally representative. The issues with bias were more serious in Solomon Islands, and the resulting survey estimates have wide confidence intervals. Multilevel regression with post-stratification (MRP) is a complex statistical technique that was applied to maximize the representativeness of the results for certain variables in the Solomon Islands but changes to the fieldwork plan will be required in future surveys to decrease the potential impact of response bias.
73. Response bias will be addressed in the next survey rounds, including by supplementing random digit dialling with lists of households obtained from community leaders and others.

Discussion

74. Participants were interested in the usefulness of the information obtained in the two surveys, and in the methods used to address the problems of sample bias. KH responded to the questions and comments as follows:
75. *Did the surveys demonstrate the value of HFPM?* – The PNG survey went better than expected given the low penetration of cell phone ownership. There was a good relationship with the provider (Digicel) and the survey was implemented using best practice based on experience in other countries.
- In Solomon Islands, the provider was Tebbutt Research. As the results show, more work should have been done with Tebbutt to modify approaches and reduce sample bias.
- Procurement is currently proceeding for the second round of both surveys.
- Although these were perceived to be the most difficult countries in terms of size and poverty levels, the surveys nevertheless yielded useful information on people's needs. It was also clear which questions did not work.
76. *How are decision-makers in other (global) countries using the information from HFPM surveys?* – This varies by country. Several are using the information to expand safety nets, e.g. for the 'new poor', and to target programmes. Different countries show different impacts. COVID-19 is having less effect on the rural poor who are sustained by agriculture, which is largely sheltered.
77. *How were responses from urban areas defined?* – Respondents were asked the question directly and were also asked which ward they were in to differentiate rural/urban areas.
78. *The lack of data for lower quintiles is obviously a problem in Solomon Islands. MRP reduces variance but at the risk of some bias for the model.* – It was a case of fitting the model to poor data. However, the surveys did get decent geographic and sector coverage even though they missed the lower groups.
79. *In round 2, will information be available for response rates and are there plans to target the sample?* – The response rates are available for Solomon Islands. In terms of information for targeting, there is none for Solomon Islands, but it is possible in PNG, e.g. Digicel estimates people's literacy based on type of phone usage (do they send/receive texts, or solely make and receive calls), and their wealth (size of each top up).
80. *Were the NSOs involved in the surveys, including from the point of view of capacity building?* – There was limited time to involve the NSOs. The PNG NSO was not involved at all, in part because the office is currently undergoing an internal restructure. The Solomon Islands NSO had some involvement, including providing DHS data, but at the time was also busy with processing census data. It is hoped to get more involvement of NSOs in the monitoring phase.

PSMB endorsement

81. In response to a question from Chris Ryan on whether PSMB has endorsed HFPM surveys, the Chair

confirmed that PSMB endorses plans to proceed with HFPM surveys in PICTs, though with caveats, noting (1) the methodological issues highlighted by the presentation on the PNG and Solomon Islands surveys, which showed both the upsides and risks of HFPM, and (2) the concerns expressed by Pacific Government Statisticians, which were noted in the report of PSMB's July 2020 meeting (page 14, 2. iii.).¹

82. In this regard, Bruce Fraser, ABS, noted that the high-frequency aspects of the surveys have not been discussed.

83. KH agreed HFPM surveys have upsides and risks. In the case of PNG and Solomon Islands, information was required quickly to support disbursement of loans. Especially where resources are low, it is good to have data to enable targeting of assistance rather than to make guesses.

For these surveys, 'high frequency' means quarterly – which is high frequency for countries where surveys are usually at 5-year intervals.

Recommendations

84. PSMB:

- a. agreed that it is desirable to continue exploring the role HFPM surveys have in providing information rapidly for decision-makers, particularly in critical situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic or natural disasters;
- b. noted the methodological/sampling challenges of phone surveys, which include obtaining data from lower quintiles;
- c. noted that international experience is highlighting that COVID-19 economic impacts are being found to be distributed differently from those of previous shocks, suggesting the importance of collecting information that can help understand the order of magnitude of these distributional shifts;
- d. endorsed plans to proceed with HFPM in several PICTs, while recognising the methodological issues highlighted for the first round of the PNG and Solomon Islands surveys, and the concerns expressed by Pacific Government Statisticians, which were noted in the report of PSMB's July 2020 meeting.

Session 6: Administrative matters

TYPPE review

85. SDD has been in contact with Dylan Roux (DFAT), who has given assurance that the review will happen in the near future. An update on timing and also funding for the review will be provided at PSMB's November meeting if possible.

Tracey Savage asked whether PSMB will have input to the review.

PSMB review

86. The Chair noted the requirement for a review of PSMB also and said it could be discussed at HOPS along with the election of the PSMB Chair. It was suggested the process for the PSMB review could be discussed at the November meeting.

Next PSMB meeting

87. The dates for the next PSMB meeting are **5 and 6 November 2020**. The meeting will again be virtual (via Zoom).

All NSOs will be invited to attend, noting PSMB's current representation structure is a concern.

¹ <https://sdd.spc.int/events/2020/09/interim-PSMB-meeting>

Proposed agenda items for inclusion in the November meeting

88. The following items were proposed:

- vi. Proposal from Nauru that USP establish a Centre of Excellence for Statistics at its Nauru campus.
- vii. Results of the software stocktake survey.
- viii. Poverty measurement.
 - Methodology for monetary poverty measurement.
 - Samoa poverty profile – results of using old and new methods of analysis for comparison.
 - Need for harmonised approach to poverty analysis.
 - Multi-dimensional poverty measurement.
 - Follow-up in relation to methodology for non-monetary approaches to poverty.
- ix. PSMB governance.
 - Review of PSMB terms of reference.
 - Election of new Chair at 2021 HOPS meeting.
 - Strategic planning for PSMB.

89. April 2021 meeting

To potentially include a session on the results of the interim poverty method that is to be applied to the 2019 HIES of Vanuatu, Kiribati and RMI.