

SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

REGIONAL MEETING OF HEADS OF PLANNING & HEADS OF STATISTICS (HOPS)  
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 12–16 July 2010)

*Statistics2020 – Developing sustainable national and regional statistical capacities*

**DRAFT SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. This summary report makes reference to titles of working papers, information papers and other presentations, without detailed reference to the full presentations. A full set of all working and information papers, as well as of all PowerPoint presentations will be made available to participants on CD-ROM, and is available on the Internet at [www.spc.int/sdp](http://www.spc.int/sdp). The focus of this report is to capture comments from meeting participants which addressed specific discussion points and recommendations listed in the working papers.

## **Day 1: SESSION 1 – SDP Strategic Plan period 2006 - 2009**

### **Working paper 1** (Gerald Haberkorn)

#### ***SDP Strategic plan period 2006–2009: Achievements and ongoing challenges***

2. The representative of Cook Islands commented that small countries and territories need to both manage and make proposals to aid agencies and requested that:
  - i. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) be more proactive in assisting countries with their aid proposals; and
  - ii. country capacity assessments be done to improve the process.

SPC responded that offices with a strategic plan and proper capacity assessment at the outset will avoid problems later.

3. The representative of Samoa commented on Annex 3, noting the unequal distribution of technical assistance and:
  - i. asked how much capacity-building was included in the technical assistance, as countries that have received a lot of assistance should soon be able to work alone;
  - ii. noted that Samoa has been declined technical assistance because work is being done for other national statistical offices (NSOs), which delays Samoa's work.
4. SPC responded that Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga and Kiribati are priority countries because they are currently undertaking censuses and surveys. SPC assured Samoa that it will receive assistance soon but stated that shifting assistance from Solomon Islands is not practical at the moment because of ongoing commitments. Technical assistance can only involve capacity building if NSOs have people in place, for capacity to be built.
5. The representative of Solomon Islands thanked SPC for its technical assistance, noting that even more assistance would be useful, and assured the meeting that capacity building is underway now. Advice provided by SPC can now be passed on to other countries, particularly concerning scanning and questionnaires. The representative thanked his government for the support it has provided and noted improvements made in cartography with aerial mapping etc. He also noted the positive work relationship with SPC and thanked the organisation.

6. The representative of Australia noted SPC's positive results despite the constraints of political environments and asked whether SPC's role is to facilitate the sharing of positive experiences. SPC in reply confirmed this and assured that work will be carried out on this.
7. The representative of Wallis and Futuna noted the lack of political support faced by some countries. The representative emphasised that it's the NSOs' job to garner political support, and thanked the French Government and New Caledonia for their support. The representative also thanked SPC for always assisting when requests were made (PopGIS).
8. The representative of Samoa asked whether the SPC has enough staff or needs more staff for the new technologies. SPC replied that there is no need for a large increase in number of staff as the current size and upcoming recruitment is sufficient for the tasks anticipated in the first period of the 2010 to 2020 implementation plan (PRSIP). The ultimate goal is for NSOs to be able to carry out technical assistance themselves, and assist where possible other countries through a managed South-South technical cooperation programme, which will allow for greater regional capacity building.
9. The representative of Tokelau stated that Tokelau did not appear to be a priority for SPC's Statistics and Demography Programme (SDP). Despite making contributions to SPC and making training requests, no training has been provided. In reply, SPC acknowledged that training for Tokelau has been insufficient, which has also partly resulted from a desire by New Zealand for closer re-engagement with Tokelau, including the provision of census assistance. SPC committed to a technical assistance activity with Tokelau before the end of the year.
10. The representative of Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) highlighted the provision by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) of a funding proposal template, which was very helpful. He suggested that this type of template could be put on a website for use by other countries.
11. The representative of Papua New Guinea (PNG) stated that their census was delayed by 12 months in part because support was not provided by politicians. Lack of support resulted in less time for the census and a reduction in the areas covered. Now, problems have arisen with the boundaries of two new provinces and SPC's help is needed immediately for mapping.

12. The Chair noted that the concentration of technical assistance to three countries is largely because those countries are doing censuses. The importance of political support from national leaders was recognised by many NSOs and by SPC. NSOs must take responsibility and obtain support from leaders for their own statistical programmes. The absence of support to Tokelau was also acknowledged.

**Recommendations and action points**

- a. Provide additional assistance with funding proposals, possibly by providing proposal templates.
- b. Work could be carried out to assist NSOs in gaining support from their national politicians.
- c. Provide technical assistance to Tokelau as requested.

**Working paper 1.1 (Arthur Jorari)**

***Technical assistance with population censuses and household surveys***

13. The presenter confirmed that SPC is proactive around census preparation, but also highlighted that requests for technical assistance are often received late or not received at all. To improve data collection, requests need to be received well before census groundwork begins.
14. The representative of Samoa asked whether SPC will request support directly from politicians or whether it is asking NSOs to do this. SPC replied that this issue arises because countries want to do surveys/censuses and internal funding is not forthcoming. SPC cannot provide support unless some internal funding support is provided.
15. The representative of Niue agreed with SPC, stating that political help needs to be obtained by the NSOs themselves. PARIS 21 was useful as it provided guidance on ways to gain political support.
16. The representative of Vanuatu suggested that a regional manual for censuses would assist NSOs.
17. The representatives of Wallis and Futuna, Vanuatu, Fiji Islands and Kiribati discussed the importance and challenges relating to getting political support for their censuses. Many politicians ignored requests made by NSOs and cut budgets, which had a negative impact on the quality of data produced.

18. The representative of Wallis and Futuna requested better training on how to raise the awareness of politicians regarding the importance of statistics and suggested that meetings of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA) could be a useful forum for raising these issues. During CRGA, countries could commit their support and donors could record that support, allowing SPC to follow up.
19. The representative of Solomon Islands noted that a Statistics Act is a useful way for NSOs to kick off requests for political support.
20. The representative of Nauru requested that SPC recommit itself to assisting countries with implementing recommendations from the 2007 HOPS meeting, as spelled out in paragraphs 8–9 of the working paper, and asked SPC to produce guidelines and manuals regarding realistic timelines for censuses. It was also noted that post-enumeration surveys are important, and that these need to be factored in by donors and SPC.
21. SPC responded that the Parliamentary Assembly project would be a useful means to engage politicians and educate them on the importance of statistics. It was acknowledged that a legislative framework can be useful if implemented sufficiently in advance. Confirmation was given that a Pacific version of the UN Census manual is being considered and work is underway on a similar manual for household income and expenditure surveys (HIESs). It was agreed that documenting requirements for best practice is helpful. SPC thanked Nauru for its helpful comments regarding post-enumeration surveys.

### **Recommendations and action points**

- a. Recommendation by SPC for NSOs to pay greater attention to best practices in census and survey management and implementation, to ensure collection of quality data and timely dissemination of information.
- b. Two areas that require particular attention are:
  - i. Census and survey preparations (to be well planned, organised along realistic timelines, and well resourced; special attention to be devoted to training of field supervisors and enumerators, from selection to training); and
  - ii. Census and survey evaluation (to ensure user confidence in the census/survey data quality, it is recommended to undertake post-enumeration surveys and general evaluations against census plans).

- c. Recognising that UN manuals, such as *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*, might appear intimidating to some PICT NSOs, it is recommended that SPC produce a standard training and reference manual on *Pacific Islands census and survey operations and procedures*.

**Working paper 1.2** (Andreas Demmke)

***Increased range of published data, indicators and reports produced by NSSs, national planning agencies and by SPC***

22. The representatives of Samoa, Niue and Wallis and Futuna stated that ongoing technical workshops are necessary. The low staff turnover in Wallis and Futuna means that training does not need to be very regular and should instead focus on new technologies.
23. The Representative of Nauru emphasised that not only NSOs but also the national statistical system (NSS) itself should be addressed, otherwise the lack of coordination when statistical issues are done ad-hoc by the NSO themselves, particularly for health statistics, can result in poor records.
24. There was general agreement amongst delegates that the end-users of statistics need to be considered when determining whether statistics are useful, as statistics are only helpful when used. Reports are important but they must be understandable. Planning is about passing information on to policy-makers and the representative of Vanuatu asked how much these activities are directed to planners.
25. The representative of Vanuatu noted that the relationship between data producers and users is important and how they work together nationally is very important. NSOs need to gain politicians' support so politicians understand the usefulness of data. This is an area to build support.
26. The representative of FSM requested copies of other countries' census reports to guide their own upcoming work in report writing especially the census monographs.
27. SPC noted that the focus is traditionally on NSOs, but the report writing workshops are popular and additional people attend these. Sometimes planners are not willing to participate in this type of training, however.

28. The representative of Australia noted the dual role of skill supplementation and development and asked whether there been much success in staff development.
29. In reply, SPC stated that although training success is difficult to measure, evaluation forms suggest that people have learned a lot. SPC can provide examples of good census reports.
30. The representative of University of the South Pacific (USP) noted that the analysis of HIES data is now part of USP's formal training programmes, and the aim is to show people how to make data useful for politicians. The representative requested that HIES data be made available to students so that they can then make this data into reports that would be useful to politicians.
31. The representative of Niue thanked SPC for the help provided for reports and census work.
32. The Chair asked SPC to describe the problem it had referred to concerning DHSs. SPC replied that it was overambitious to attempt to write the reports collaboratively with national counterparts. For example, officials from the Marshall Islands Health Department were not available during an entire SPC trip to the country. This meant that the report couldn't be written in Marshall Islands.

### **Recommendations and action points**

- a. Despite the success of current and past training sessions, ongoing training is still needed, particularly for planners and NSSs as a whole.
- b. SPC is to place stronger focus in its training on making statistics more understandable and useful for end-users, including planners, policy-makers and politicians.
- c. SPC is to provide NSOs with examples of good census reports as guidelines.
- d. SPC is to conduct its outstanding DHS data utilisation workshops as a matter of priority.

### **Working paper 1.3 (Chris Ryan)** ***Statistical training***

33. The representative of Palau noted that small Pacific nations have small offices that are often understaffed. It is also difficult for them to find qualified people. Consequently, the staff is often too busy to avail themselves of SPC training opportunities.
34. The representative of Samoa remarked that it would be helpful to have a way to measure the transfer of skills during technical assistance. Making sure that the skills are transferred is

essential and NSOs need to be committed in order to seek political support. It was also noted that translation of training material into local languages is needed.

35. The representative of Wallis and Futuna underlined the effectiveness of indicators and emphasised that the documents produced post-training constitute a good measure of the effectiveness of that training. The language barrier should be considered.
36. The representative of USP noted that many courses were offered and that USP was working together with UNFPA to offer several training options.
37. The representative of Cook Islands advocated close collaboration between agencies and emphasised the importance of networking to stress the usefulness of statistics. It was noted that small offices face special challenges. Once trained, their members are often solicited by other employers. In addition, 4-week training courses, such as the data analysis and report writing workshop, are too long.
38. The representative of Vanuatu noted that training is also provided by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

#### **Recommendations and action points**

- a. NSOs is to pay greater attention to document procedures, processes, updates and data analysis.
- b. SPC is to seek more systematic feedback from countries so that the transfer of skill can be assessed.
- c. Increased coordination and collaboration in statistical training between USP and SPC.
- d. SPC and NSOs is to ensure training is well planned and coordinated: this includes ensuring that participants have the necessary pre-requisites for the training (e.g. necessary background knowledge, such as basic computer skills, and being in a job where the training can actually have an impact), and access to complete databases for participants to work with.

#### **Working paper 1.4**

##### ***Pacific Regional Information System, PRISM*** (James Hemphill)

39. The representative of Niue commended the progress that had been made and emphasised the usefulness of the table-building technology that will soon become available.

40. The representative of FSM also noted the usefulness of the table-building technology and pointed to the importance of communication, not simply dissemination. SPC can help in this regard in order to add value to the data produced.
41. The representative of Wallis and Futuna requested the assistance of SPC to train the person who is currently setting up the website there, indicating that data will be published soon. He also noted that indicators need to be adapted to different contexts, especially according to whether or not a country is independent.
42. The representative of New Zealand indicated that progress was notable and proposed to review data dissemination protocols.
43. The representative of Nauru emphasised that some of the data ascribed to Nauru in some regional tables were not sourced from the Nauru NSO. He noted that Nauru should be responsible for any data gaps in this area, suggesting that this could also help point to specific problems with NSOs and NSSs.

#### **Recommendations and action points**

- a. List what information comes directly from the country and what information does not.
- b. SPC can provide advice on geographic information system (GIS) server and global positioning system (GPS) technology. Countries are invited to make use of that assistance.
- c. Current FrontPage 2003 NSO websites are to be upgraded to the Joomla CMS (content management system), with schedule yet to be determined.
- d. Given its responsibility for the dissemination of regional tables on PRISM, SDP will occasionally rely on data from sources other than NSOs. In such circumstances SDP is requested to notify the country and seek concurrence for the proposed use of this data.

#### **Working paper 1.5 (Phil Bright)** ***Population Geographic information Systems (PopGIS)***

44. The representative of Samoa underlined the importance of GIS technology and noted that Samoa would adopt GPS technology for census cartography.

45. The representative of Vanuatu inquired about the use of maps for planning purposes, particularly at provincial level, inquiring about the possibility for training of provincial planners.
46. The representative of Niue noted that the GIS technology is still needed there.
47. The representative of Wallis and Futuna underlined the many possible uses of PopGIS, including for education systems, agricultural mapping, land use, water sanitation, etc.

**Recommendations and action points**

- a. SPC is to offer refresher courses in PopGIS in order to allow NSO staff and planners to train others in their own countries (such as provincial planners).
- b. The sharing of equipment and expertise, such as GPS technology and equipment, should be considered for wider applications.
- c. Countries need to be aware of issues of confidentiality, particularly when small populations are involved.
- d. People need to be trained in identifying the type of information they want to get from statistics (see also Recommendation 1.2-b); using the tools alone is not sufficient.

**Working paper 1.6** (Alick Nyasulu)  
*Economic statistics*

48. The representative of PNG indicated that its HIES will be completed soon and requested assistance of SPC concerning consumer price index data, national counts and updates.
49. The representative of Samoa emphasised that NSOs have no ability to enforce legislation to improve the coverage of surveys.
50. The representative of FSM indicated that there is room for improvement in terms of legislation. Despite the legislative authority that NSO has to collect data, that authority does not necessarily extend to other Agencies to be compulsorily obligated to provide information.

**Recommendations and action points**

- a. SPC and NSOs are to identify country-specific human resource constraints to allow for targeted technical capacity supplementation, particularly of small island states' NSOs.
- b. NSOs are to pay greater attention to publicity, to help increase greater compliance by businesses with national statistical legislation, requiring provision of business statistics to NSOs.
- c. NSOs are to address technical capacity issues in the area of economic statistics, as more trained people are needed to deliver better quality outputs; this is a particular challenge for small NSOs.

## **Day 2: SESSION 2 – Pacific Region Statistical Implementation Plan (PARSIP)**

**Working paper 2** (Len Cook and Massasso Paunga)

*A Pacific Island regional plan for the implementation of initiatives for strengthening statistical services through regional approaches, 2010–2020*

### **Session 2.1 – Overview of the plan**

51. The representative of Samoa noted that the presentation provides hope for Pacific nations wanting to move to a higher level of statistics. The representative asked the following questions concerning the proposed advisory group:
- i. Will members be invited from each Pacific nation or from donor nations?
  - ii. What would the role of members be?
52. SPC replied that HOPS must determine this, but it could be range of different countries, with smaller countries likely to have less weight. HOPS meetings occur every three years, so it may be useful for a smaller body to monitor progress each year or even half-yearly. It should be an advisory group to work on agreed actions. SPC noted previous proposals to have HOPS meet every two years with one smaller meeting between, as three years between meetings can be too long. Len Cook's consultancy was cited as an example whereby a body of stakeholders was appointed to guide the work.
53. The representative of the Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC) urged the delegates to determine what a new body's mandate would be. Would it be a decision-making body or an advisory body? Would its decisions be binding? If they are binding, it will need to derive authority from someplace other than SPC, which is mainly an advisory body. If more weight is needed, where can that come from? Once that's determined, the next question is how will it be resourced and what are its key needs?
54. The representative of the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM) summarised the role of its Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS), noting that it is the equivalent of HOPS but:
- i. it meets annually, and
  - ii. it makes binding decisions.

SCCS is mandated by the Caribbean Treaty, which provides the body with political support. SCCS has different organs (councils that report to the heads of governments). Meeting once a year wasn't adequate to follow through the decisions made by SCCS; therefore, an advisory group was formed to follow up on the decisions. The advisory group reports back to SCCS on what's been done and SCCS ultimately makes decisions. Further work is now underway, including a common work programme on the harmonisation of statistics. Terms of reference have been created for all the advisory groups.

55. The representative of FSM observed that it can be difficult to translate ideas into national activities. If the NSOs objectives are clear, they are easier to act on.
56. The representative of Australia sought clarification around governance. Is this a proposal for a steering committee to ensure this report is on track? Or is it taking **all** the HOPS responsibilities forward for the next 10 years?
57. SPC replied that it's a mix of both – mainly the first, possibly leading into the larger model. Creating more formalised processes for regional decision-making will have flow-on effects. Australia replied that any increase would have to involve a report back to HOPS and expressed some caution about giving a subcommittee too much responsibility without clearly articulating the role.
58. The representative of Cook Islands observed that under-resourced statistics offices are a common theme. Lack of demand/resources can result from a lack of planning capacity. The representative asked whether consideration had been given to capacity building in the area of planning. SPC replied that to improve statistics, health and education ministries etc. must also be included, hence the need for a NSS-focused strategic plan (NSDS).
59. The Chair noted the issue of the varying levels of political support across the region and emphasised that in Samoa political support is very strong – with all sectors receiving support – and stated that this should be recognised in the report.
60. SPC described some basic differences in the governance structures between the CARICOM and SPC heads of statistics meetings, illustrating different levels of access to politicians, which seems instrumental in raising the public profile of statistics. CARICOM's SCCS, the equivalent of HOPS, regularly reports to the CARICOM Council of Ministers, whereas HOPS reports to CRGA, which comprises of senior government officials. Outcomes of HOPS meetings can be tabled for information at annual Forum Economic Ministers' Meetings (FEMM), but this is not

required. FEMM report to the Pacific Islands Forum, the region's political leadership, through the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat.

61. The representative of Wallis and Futuna asked what the connection is between the Forum and SPC members. The representative found the idea of an advisory committee interesting and stated that the modalities of such a group should be discussed, along with how it could be resourced. To respect the SPC governance structure, this issue should be referred back to CRGA. The body should also include a francophone member.
  
62. The representative of Nauru agreed that whether a regional body has decision-making powers is an important issue. The representative suggested that an extra dimension, not currently captured on the diagram, is how statistics are used. A new body must be coordinated properly so decisions are followed up and properly monitored. The representative noted problems with the links between CRGA and FEMM and emphasised the need to act quickly on this while the momentum exists.
  
63. The representative of Niue asked what happens when there are separate Ministers of Finance and Ministers of Statistics and they are both at different meetings. The representative noted that there appear to be links missing if FEMM directs statisticians to do work set out in the Pacific Plan.  

In reply, SPC stated that CRGA is a long-standing governing body. There is a mandate from FEMM because the members of FEMM considered that the state of economic statistics wasn't good enough for them to do their job. A report was set up that led to the benchmarking study, which had a weak implementation section that did not provide sufficient guidance for the next 10 years' work. The PARSIP report expands on that implementation section. The body should have an advisory role as the decision-making body for SPC is CRGA and its bi-annual ministerial conference. Monitoring is lacking, largely because HOPS meets only every three years and only evaluates achieved outcomes; there is currently no role for regular monitoring.
  
64. The representative of New Zealand stated that the governance issue is unclear and the project aims in the medium to long term may need more governance work. The representative asked where the mandate will come from when decisions need to be made. It may be necessary to seek recommendations from politicians concerning where ongoing high-level evaluation is needed.

65. The representative of Samoa noted SPC's stated preference for an advisory group. The representative asked how the reporting between an advisory group and HOPS would work out in practice. The representative recommended that the advisory group monitor the technical assistance provided to countries by SPC to ensure a fairer distribution of resources. SPC replied that the advisory group should report back to HOPS members regularly noting key discussions and outcomes.
66. The discussion finished with Len Cook commenting on the interface between Ministers of Finance and Ministers of Statistics, noting that a Finance Minister is a major user of statistics so is likely to support the Statistics Minister. Each time a national statistics office changes its classifications that country is exercising its own governance. Harmonisation of statistics has led to new tools and systems that have been developed by NSOs, simply as part of getting their job done. Hopefully a regional body will result in better, lasting decisions being made without taking decision-making authority away from local bodies.

### **Recommendations and actions**

- a. Delegates generally supported the idea of an advisory group, but required further information about its exact mandate and operating procedures.

### **Session 2.2 – The balance between regional and country solutions**

67. The representative of Samoa commented on the three approaches discussed:
  - i. Process – The representative of Samoa agreed with this and noted that CSPro software is an example of a common tool. It allows SPC to provide the same advice throughout the Pacific. Metadata are also a common tool; the representative requested another metadata meeting for other countries.
  - ii. Investing in Pacific Island people in statistics – The representative of Samoa recognised the support of USP and suggested they play a bigger role in terms of providing qualified people. The representative requested that SPC link with national universities to do statistics courses etc.
  - iii. Coordination of regional development – The representative of Samoa was pleased that this was mentioned as it will assist SPC in training and sharing experiences between PICTs. The representative encouraged the development of networking opportunities other than HOPS.

68. The representative of Niue appreciated the affirmation that the region is moving forward and working together well. The representative agreed with the approach in the report but expressed some caution about a one-size-fits-all approach. The representative noted that the common use of CSPro enables PICTS to request help from each other rather than having to wait for SPC.
69. The representative of Nauru added that the PCTrade system did not work for it as the NSO was not able to meet the standards required for PCTrade. The representative asked whether additional assistance is available from New Zealand to assist Nauru to comply with PCTrade. In reply, StatsNZ stated that New Zealand remains committed to PCTrade in statistics offices and accepts requests for assistance via its aid programme; however, budget constraints mean support is being withdrawn from national customs offices.
70. The representative of Vanuatu noted the inconsistencies in data between NSOs and UN agencies. Because these discrepancies undermine the NSOs' data, Vanuatu urged action on this point.
71. The representative of USP commented that its mandate is to provide training in the region, in particular concerning the synchronisation of data. There was a lack of clarity around USP's role within the process outlined in the report. If possible, USP would like to participate in the advisory group.
72. The representative of Australia recognised the importance of the implementation plan and its outcomes, but expressed some concern that the proposed workload over the first two years was too ambitious. He noted the risk of taking actions that don't fit outcomes which may result in scope creep and undelivered outcomes.
73. The representative of Fiji Islands stated it also used CSPro for data entry, editing and processing but relied on SAS for analysis.
74. SPC responded to comments made by NSOs:
  - i. Samoa – South-South arrangements will cover the issue raised, which is key to option 2 in the report.
  - ii. Niue – it is best if NSOs approach each other first and only approach SPC if the other NSOs are not available. This will strengthen regional capacity faster.
  - iii. Vanuatu – SPC agrees with concerns about discrepancies between UN and NSO data, but these are impossible to avoid because of how the UN processes data.

- iv. USP – SPC emphasised that it wants a closer relationship with USP, particularly if SPC can broker the training carried out by USP, and hence would welcome USP's participation in an advisory group.
75. Len Cook stated that:
- i. Common systems are important because the level of expertise rises when everyone uses the same tool (example CPro, common questionnaires).
  - ii. It is up to the Pacific to decide what its statistics system includes and it is the NSOs' job to persuade donors to use particular tools.
  - iii. Making a commitment to a tool is often more important than the decision-making process around which tool to use. Cross-country support is only possible when the same tools are used.
  - iv. In reply to Australia's concern, he noted that not making a decision now risks locking countries even further into a mix of different tools.
76. The representative of USP observed that commonality between statistical systems is needed because of regional free trade agreements, like PICTA. A future PACER will cover more than just trade, and will result in an even greater need for PICTs to work together in harmonising relevant parts of their statistical systems with those of Australia and New Zealand. Secondly, Australian and New Zealand should move away from their previous aid paradigms, which delivered institutional strengthening with large consultancy projects for NSOs, when perhaps it would have been more useful to provide PICTs with more access to technical assistance on an 'as needed' basis – often simply providing an experienced person for a discrete period.
77. The representative of Nauru pointed out that tools are often selected because they are free (CPro and PACTRADE) and urged a stocktake to identify which tools are needed and where gaps exist within the statistical system.
78. The representative of FSM observed that standardisation is important and will involve some compromise. The representative cautioned that the level of standardisation should be carefully considered as it is possible to over-simplify and not reflect country differences in demand.
79. The representative of PFTAC suggested that discussions around next steps could start by looking at the approaching HIESs and censuses and determining what can be standardised for them. The representative urged delegates to move their focus from principles to outcomes.

### **Recommendations and actions**

- a. Delegates largely agreed with the report and considered that common tools and standardisation will be beneficial as long as nations' autonomy is not affected.
- b. It was recommended that SPC and USP work more closely on statistical training.
- c. It was recommended that a provision be made for Pacific NSOs to source short-term technical assistance if the need arises.

### **Session 2.3 – Organisation and processes to make it work, including donor relationships and expectations**

80. The Chair noted that the two presentations scheduled for the afternoon were especially important and invited participants to indicate whether or not they would support the summary of plan goals in the three activity cycles of the period 2010–2020, listed on page 9 of the report. The following comments refer to the list of suggested actions that can be taken early to influence future decision-making.
81. The representative of Palau expressed some reservations and asked if some of the activities might be switched or deleted to allow for some flexibility.
82. The consultants indicated that the list consisted mainly of examples and that it could be adjusted to the needs of each country.
83. The representative of Samoa expressed support for the proposed plan with the understanding that adjustments must be allowed to be tailored to the needs of individual countries. The representative also asked what would be the specific expertise of the future members of the suggested committee.
84. SPC responded that the main idea behind the proposed plan was to expand the existing group and establish new partnerships.
85. The representative of Tokelau supported the seven listed actions and emphasised that small island states have specific challenges, suggesting that a representative of a small island state be included in the proposed committee.
86. The representatives of Tuvalu and Vanuatu indicated that they supported the proposed plan.

87. The representative of Wallis and Futuna suggested that a representative of the French territories be included in the proposed committee along with a representative of a small island state.
88. The representative of Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) welcomed the suggestions of the report and noted that they would need to check back with their government since they are administered by the US.
89. The representative of Australia commented that the report offered an excellent vision for the long-term future. For the short term, the representative expressed concerns regarding the workload involved, particularly for the next four years. Suggesting that the plan may be too ambitious given the work involved and the resources available. To mitigate against this risks clarity of the role of the new governance group was needed and the representative of Australia proposed that draft terms of reference be developed by the end of the meeting.
90. The representative of American Samoa supported all points with the exception of legislation issues given the territory's relationship with the US.
91. The representative of Cook Islands noted that the proposed plan was very comprehensive and indicated that terms of reference were needed to clarify: 1) the responsibilities of the proposed committee, 2) what actions were directed to what level (regional or national), and 3) how to administrate the data.
92. The representative of FSM supported the plan and emphasised that FSM's current priorities are capacity building and economic statistics. The representative expressed some reluctance to elect a body without a clear understanding of specific terms of reference.
93. The representative of Fiji Islands supported the plan and noted a need to prioritise actions.
94. The representative of French Polynesia expressed specific interest in administrative data and the development of new technologies, particularly the Internet.
95. The representative of Kiribati fully supported the plan but emphasised the importance of defining what should be done at the national level versus at the regional level, given Kiribati's limited resources for implementing all suggested actions.

96. The representative of Guam seconded CNMI in underlining the specificity of their situation given their relationship to the US. It was noted that there already is some collaboration among territories in the northern Pacific and that an effort should be made to have documents be comparable.
97. The representative of Nauru reiterated the importance of taking into account the difference between independent and non-independent nations and territories in terms of formalising the proposed plan. Nauru supports standardisation and harmonisation, and the representative suggested that legislation be reviewed. The representative of Nauru also emphasised the importance of the suggested plan and invited colleagues and NSOs to join efforts in taking the first steps.
98. The representative of New Zealand acknowledged the plan to be ambitious and supported it, adding that some clarification was needed regarding legislation. The representative also encouraged colleagues to focus on priorities and noted that items 1 through 4 on the list were especially important.
99. The representative of Niue supported the plan and asked that it be more specific about release dates of key statistics.
100. The representative of Solomon Islands supported the plan and asked for terms of reference for the advisory committee to be produced before it can endorse a final decision.
101. The representative of PFTAC remarked that such terms of reference will be the key to this project and that priorities will have to be defined. The representative also emphasised that PFTAC support was specifically geared toward macro-economic statistics.
102. The representative of Samoa noted some differences between countries and territories in terms of what has already been achieved and what still needs to be done. The representative encouraged colleagues who have already defined their priorities with their respective political authorities to base their statistical plans on those.
103. The representative of the University of Queensland (UQ) complimented PICTs on their vision for the future as laid out in the proposed plan. The representative of UQ also noted that the details of the plan could be worked out later on and strongly encouraged countries to support the general idea.

### **Recommendations and actions**

- a. Delegates provided unanimous support to the proposed plan, while seeking clarification on specific administration/implementation issues, as illustrated in previous paragraphs.
- b. Delegates asked for terms of reference concerning the proposed advisory group to be drafted as soon as possible, so that countries and territories may have a common understanding of the expectations, and can come to a decision about its establishment by the end of this meeting.
- c. SPC responded that it will provide terms of reference no later than Thursday morning, so they can be discussed in a later session.

### **Session 2.4 – Influencing the long-term position of national statistical offices and the statistical system they lead**

104. The representative of Nauru emphasised that there is some confusion concerning what responsibilities and activities should be at the regional, NSS and NSO levels. The representative suggested that there be specific strategies defined for each one of those levels. The representative also noted that the plan at this current stage needs clarification and the different strategies should be linked.
105. SPC emphasised the link between the presented report and the previous week's workshops with Paris21 and Metadata. All efforts are meant to generally improve on statistical services throughout the region. The plan should be read as a set of guidelines.
106. The representative of PFTAC again emphasised that terms of reference for the advisory group will be the most important issue to tackle at this time.
107. The representative of Samoa agreed with the representative of PFTAC and suggested that terms of reference be discussed before colleagues go back to their home countries and discuss the plan with political authorities there.

### **Recommendations and Actions**

- a. SPC replied that it will look for a time slot before the end of the week in order to discuss the terms of reference.

### **Day 3: SESSION 3 – Economic statistics**

#### **Session overview**

108. Following the presentations by SPC and PFTAC, the chair emphasised the main intended outcome of today's session on economic statistics: to obtain a clearer appreciation of country and territory priorities regarding economic statistics.
109. The representative of FSM voiced concerns regarding the challenge posed by classifications. Complying with classifications requires some changes in other agencies' programmes, which increases costs. For that reason, the status quo is often preferred. In addition, FSM reports to the US, which is also asking for changes to take place. The representative also responded positively to PFTAC's suggestion for statisticians to broaden their reliance on data sources when trying to document or account for a particular type of economic transaction. The representative illustrated this with an example, suggesting that where countries are interested in recording shipment of food products overseas, it was important to include capturing number of 'coolers' (ice-boxes) filled with fish shipped regularly to Guam from other Micronesian countries.
110. SPC also referred to agriculture departments' quarantine sections as good data sources, as food shipments, commercial exports and private shipments usually require a quarantine certificate for entry in the destination country.
111. The representative of Palau noted a need to improve measures to count fish and thanked FSM for the idea of counting coolers, adding that it might be a good option to avoid double-counts.
112. The representative of Cook Islands emphasised that small island states tend to have general statisticians and that they cannot afford specialists. Economic statistics are often done by consultants. Therefore, it was suggested that technical assistance be aimed at the existing staff and targeted toward increasing the understanding of general principles and approaches to economic statistics. The representative of Cook Islands also asked Vanuatu to clarify what was considered a 'normal year' in the presentation.
113. The representative of Vanuatu responded by clarifying that a 'normal year' referred to a year with no dramatic changes in industries, crises, or significant increases or decreases in specific areas.

114. The representative of Samoa welcomed the idea of integration and suggested that NSOs play a more important role with other organisations in terms of collaboration and the use of new technologies. The representative encouraged the standardisation of classifications, especially when dealing with population censuses. Noting that a lack of capacity is a general issue, the representative thanked PFTAC for the help they provide and noted that a standing committee would be helpful in identifying priorities according to limited capacities.
115. SPC suggested that countries and territories investigate the data that is acquired by quarantine departments as a way to look at the transfer of goods. SPC specifically encouraged collaboration with departments of agriculture and quarantine officials. Such data can also serve to validate other sources.
116. The representative of New Caledonia asked whether the Pacific region had a tool comparable to what is being used in Europe and invited the documentation of sources as references.
117. The representative of USP reiterated that NSOs suffer from a general lack of political support and suggested that they seek the support of public opinion to strengthen their argument for the importance of statistics. The public needs to be informed regarding the possible impact of such data in their lives so that they may support the idea. This, in turn, will encourage political support.
118. SPC asked PFTAC to clarify what was required to move forward toward integration given the differences of staffing levels between small and large offices and reminded the meeting of the importance of the trust fund as a source of help. SPC also encouraged informal counts and suggested that data be sought from different sources given the complications added by gifts, remittances and other such transfers.
119. The representative of PFTAC responded that most systems varied from country to country and that there was currently no unified tool. Noting that statisticians are not always aware of the opportunities that are available, the representative suggested the completion of an inventory for the data that is available in the region. The representative underlined classifications as a good starting point and encouraged collaboration with projects already underway.

### **Session 3.1 – National accounts**

120. The Chair asked the presenter whether non-member countries were eligible to participate in the upcoming international comparison programme (ICP).
121. The representative of PFTAC asked how the PPPs (Purchasing Power Parities) and ICPs were generally used by agencies, and how they fit into decision-making.
122. The presenter confirmed that non-member countries can participate and that PPPs are used extensively by many agencies to calculate the allocation of resources. PPP information is published for most countries by the World Bank. Apart from Fiji, the PPPs published for PICTs are derived using modelling. Participation in ICP programme would generate a more realistic estimate of PPP adjusted GDPs for the region.
123. The representative of USP pointed out that when an international body calculates a country's income per capita, it often has significant consequences on that country's ability to attract financial support. PICTs need to be especially aware of how such changes can affect them.
124. SPC expressed concern over the choice of components for the mathematical model used by the World Bank, as it appears to yield inflated figures, which may adversely affect member countries. SPC indicated that the issue had been raised with the World Bank and that the World Bank had agreed to review the model for Pacific countries. Concern about the model was echoed by several speakers.
125. The representative of ADB acknowledged the challenge of many PICTs in coming up with resources and noted that Australia has asked the World Bank for suggestions on how countries could participate.
126. The presenter indicated that Fiji Islands had been intensely involved in the previous ICP, and that the World Bank is especially encouraging the participation of additional PICTs, as was recently communicated to SPC.
127. The Chair encouraged NSOs to be proactive regarding the issue of data ownership and how such official data are put to use by international agencies.

### Session 3.2 – Economic surveys, continued

128. The Chair noted that the key issue discussed in the morning's session was the lack of status NSOs have in the international sphere. This must change. NSOs' status can be improved with:
- i. active participation;
  - ii. increased advocacy;
  - iii. regional cooperation; and
  - iv. capacity building.

Integration will keep NSOs relevant and raise their status. Improved status will enable the statisticians in the region to become the experts of their own data. The Chair recommended that donors provide technical assistance that enables NSOs to build their economic status and that an additional SPC staff member be recruited to strengthen economic capacity.

129. The representative of Cook Islands asked how many quarters an NSO should wait before removing an imported product from the CPI that is not available for a long time. With so many imported products in the region, this is a common issue. Electricity is difficult to compare when the unit charges change following government decisions. Discounts are also a problem when they occur regularly (weekly). The representative recommended that the SPC carry out technical workshops on CPI and how to compile these data, and stressed the difficulties faced when determining whether a household is personal or commercial if the overflow of vegetables grown are sold on the market. The representative noted that current regional reform is pushing statistics to the forefront and ADB has been instrumental in emphasising the importance of regional economic statistics.
130. The representative of Vanuatu recommended that a Pacific-wide document be developed outlining lessons learned in recent surveys in the region that sets out a standard approach. The representative asked Samoa whether it also faces problems with multiple languages.
131. The representative of Samoa stated that business information-type surveys could be shared throughout the region and noted that in Samoa, English is the main language and surveys are only translated into Samoan for those who need it.
132. The representative of Tonga commented on data processing and the use of COICOP (classification of individual consumption by purpose) for classification. NSOs need assistance with classifications and using COICOP with Pacific products. Targets are set for decision-

making but sometimes the sources of these targets are not referred back to when work is carried out.

133. The representative of French Polynesia agreed that PICTs share similar problems. In French Polynesia there are issues with the new CPI and how local products are integrated into the system like in COICOP. French Polynesia standardises product descriptions, and this helps with classification. All the data collected are qualified (i.e. if there's a discount applied to a price etc). Then, when data is collated everything is standardised. All PICTs have issues concerning budget, etc., and using quality assurance products will improve data and ensure staff have less work to do.
134. SPC replied that international guidelines set out what to do when a product is not available. Regionally, we will need to adapt to individual situations. How discounts are dealt with should be determined when data collectors are trained and will be based on the type of discount.
135. The representative of Wallis and Futuna replied to Cook Islands stating that in their situation, self-consumed items had to be given a value. As an example, breadfruit is not sold but is consumed widely and was repeatedly referred to in HIESs. As a result, breadfruit had to be valued, and this was done by comparing similar products. The representative noted that household surveys are done with SPC's assistance and the fact that methodology is uniform is advantageous to Wallis and Futuna as it saves time and can be adapted to individual needs.

### **Recommendations and action points**

- a. Donors should seek to provide support that would assist NSOs to strengthen their overall capacity and reputation in the international arena as providers of official statistics of their own countries.
- b. SPC should consider recruiting additional staff members to increase its economic technical assistance capacity.
- c. SPC should carry out further workshops on the compilation of CPI data.
- d. SPC and NSOs are to consider including additional modules in the current HIES design to capture more information on household subsistence production activities.
- e. SPC is to compile a document outlining lessons learned in recent household surveys and setting out standard approaches to be used.

### Session 3.3 – Administrative data

- Issues in international trade statistics –Presentation by Fiji Islands
  - Economic administrative data availability and extraction – Central Bank, PNG
136. SPC asked whether Fiji Islands has faced any challenges with its customs office being less interested in export than import data. The representative of Fiji Islands responded that there is no under-reporting of goods exported. Exporters must fill in the requisite form, which is sent to customs. Goods can only leave the port when customs officers provide clearance. The representative added that there is a national technical committee, which includes the Reserve Bank, to verify the import and export figures provided by the NSO.
137. The representative of Guam noted that in Fiji Islands the statistics office works closely with the customs office. This is no longer the case in Guam and it's encouraging to hear of countries where there is communication between the two offices. The representative noted that in contrast with PNG, in Guam there is no longer any incentive for banks to produce industry information.
138. The representative of French Polynesia recalled the presentation on external trade and commented on issues around data dissemination. The representative noted that data can be effectively disseminated on a well-designed website that's designed to meet users' needs and expectations. In French Polynesia, the statistics website is the authoritative source, and that's where data tables can be generated as required.
139. The representative of Samoa noted the marriage between the central bank and the statistics department in PNG. The representative asked whether this is an ongoing situation and how much money is involved, as it seems that the bank is doing the statistics department's work. The representative of PNG responded that the partnership between the NSO and Bank of PNG is ongoing and began around 2000/2001. Surveys are all completed under the Bank of PNG budget, which is about PGK 100,000 (USD 40,000). When the NSO stopped producing GDP figures in 1993, the offices started working more closely together on these figures.

### **Session 3.4 – User and policy dimension**

- Statistical requirements for national development strategies (UNESCAP – David Smith)
  - Statistical challenges for economic policy monitoring (Central Bank, Solomon Islands)
  - Poverty analysis – New Caledonia’s experience (ITSEE, New Caledonia)
140. The representative of French Polynesia asked whether New Caledonia has an absolute measure of poverty in UN standards such as USD 1 per day. The representative of New Caledonia replied that poverty is complex and when an absolute measure was applied to New Caledonia it didn’t work – it suggested that no one is poor in New Caledonia. The representative confirmed that the amounts referred to in the presentation are monthly household incomes.
141. The representative of Guam asked New Caledonia if there were household clusters of poverty. The representative of New Caledonia replied that poverty clusters will be studied at a later stage of this major project.
142. The representative of Cook Islands reminded delegates that statistics are important to allow planners to make better decisions that will ultimately improve standard of living. The demand for statistics is low in Cook Islands because people don’t understand how important statistics are. Not only must planning capacity be improved, but who the planners are should be defined. In Cook Islands there are 22 heads of ministries to include. Demand for statistics is often driven by donors who in turn have been driven by the MDGs. Ministries should ask why an outcome has happened rather than just trying to fix a negative outcome.
143. SPC in summing up the session, remarked that capacity in economic statistics is still low in most countries and that countries must focus on short-to-medium term priorities. It is important to determine the direction countries will pursue collectively and aim to align objectives so countries can develop their own national reporting codes that also translate regionally. It is necessary to develop concrete ideas around which to focus energy and resources.
144. The representative of USP urged NSOs to consider how they can assess the impact and effectiveness of their governments. Reserve banks don’t face the budget constraints and political problems that are faced by NSOs, and as part of ongoing reform, NSOs need greater independence regarding their own decisions and budgets so they don’t have to rely on reserve banks. The representative noted that in the Pacific, the USD 1 PPP is not effective. A better measure is based on a basket of food. Once the measure is determined, it’s best to work out the total population below the poverty line, rather than the number of households below the line.

The representative of USP enquired what percentage of the 17% of the New Caledonian population below the poverty line is Melanesian. The representative of New Caledonia replied that the survey did not collect figures on ethnicity but data was collected by region, and the populations of the Loyalty Islands and the Northern Province are largely Melanesian.

### **Recommendations and action points**

- a. Delegates agreed that there is not enough expertise in the region concerning economic statistics.
- b. NSOs should work on strategic plans for economic statistics that align with their objectives, as this will assist in the development of national reporting codes.
- c. PICTs should work towards giving NSOs greater budgetary and political support and certainty.
- d. NSOs are to take leadership within their NSSs as a way to strengthen statistics across sectors and ensure harmonised standards and procedures.

### **Session 3.5 – Future perspectives and other strategic issues**

Panel discussion: Chair (David Smith, UNESCAP), panelists reserve banks of PNG and Solomon Islands; economic statistics divisions, NSOs of Samoa, Fiji Islands and Vanuatu, PFTAC and SPC

145. David Smith discussed the demand from planners and government policy-makers, noting that demand is not great and doesn't guide effectively priorities.
146. The panelists summarised what they consider to be the key priorities for their respective NSOs, ministries and organisations.
  - Reserve Bank of PNG
    - a. Focus on basics (national accounts up to date etc.)
    - b. Fix CPI – current composition of basket of goods is obsolete
    - c. HIES underway – survey will review the CPI basket
    - d. NSO to seek assistance of SPC, PFTAC to help with the basket rebase
    - e. Once basics sorted, work on National Strategic Plan – must tie in with Pacific Regional Plan
    - f. Produce national accounts on time
    - g. Ultimate aim is to produce quarterly GDP data

- **Reserve Bank of Solomon Islands:**
  - a. Need for qualified economic statisticians
  
- **Samoa**
  - a. Aim to produce data that users need
  - b. Determine which indicators are needed over the short, medium and long term
  - c. Produce national account statistics and CPI data
  - d. Those countries that already have these now need to improve on them
  
- **Fiji Islands**
  - a. Priority = work plan
    - National accounts tables
    - Release of quarterly GDP data
    - Balance of payments
    - GDP rebase
    - CPI rebase and industry production index
    - Supply use table
    - Producer price index
  - b. Tourism data
  - c. Environment data
  
- **Vanuatu**
  - a. Work to meet the needs of Treasury, Reserve Bank and the planning office
  - b. Rebase national accounts
  - c. Provide quarterly national accounts
  - d. A better regional network would assist sharing available regional resources

- **PFTAC**
  - a. Turn national issues into regional goals
  - b. The production of regular and timely national accounts are the main and common issue
  - c. Countries must produce reasonably timely GDP stats with quarterly production the ultimate aim
  - d. Improve source data – balance of payments data is critical
  - e. Link through from census – HIES – CPI – GDP, noting that the overall plan should recognise this cycle and plan around it
  - f. To get good support it's important to let PFTAC and SPC know what priorities are so they can feed that back to their Steering Committee
  - g. Countries must act quickly on HIES data and then produce GDP data
  
- **SPC**
  - a. Aim for good quality statistics
  - b. Improve source data
  - c. Develop good relationships with key users
  - d. Get NSOs to connect across their offices
  - e. Resource needs vary greatly and resource sharing is important – this South-South sharing needs to be thought through and may work well if countries are open to sharing to improve national systems
  - f. Focus on providing statistics for users, not on making statistics for the sake of statistics

147. The representative of UNESCAP emphasised the importance of detailed trade data. Demand is driven by Pacific nations involved in trade negotiations. The core indicator set is also important. The representative emphasised that the importance of getting the basics right.

148. The representative of Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics – ABS) discussed PPPs and commented that because of the problem of scale full participation in the ICP programme is not practical for most PICTs. He said that where PICTs are able to incorporate ICP requirements into their future work plans, the easier it will be to meet ICP requirements in future rounds of the ICP. The representative noted that the PPP equation used by the World bank to estimate PPPs for countries that did not participate in the ICP only used gross national income per capita and gross secondary school enrolment. If the Pacific can participate in the current round of the ICP, PPPs can be calculated directly for participating countries and a new Pacific model could

be applied to non-participating Pacific countries. The new model should work better than the current World Bank modeling based on gross national income per capita and gross secondary school enrolment. Structured product descriptions or SPDs are increasingly used for CPI. The representative urged NSOs to put the use of SPDs for CPI data collection at the forefront of their work programmes.

149. The representative of Samoa reflected on PARIS21 and emphasised the importance of marketing. The representative noted that if NSOs have to compete with other data sources, they must go beyond what's required in their statistics acts and consider that their users need. This will require a high level of communication and the NSO's products will then be used extensively. The representative urged NSOs to take the lead in their own NSSs.
150. The representative of Guam asked for a set of common economic indicators to be provided by SPC quickly so that comparable data can be prepared. In Guam, a statistics act would be very helpful, but the NSO does not consider such an act important.
151. The representative of New Zealand noted that its basic economic accounts are high priorities and a key aspect of the work programme at the moment is how to make the system work for users. As a number of national statistical plans are currently being developed in the Pacific, it would be timely to include a specific emphasis on users. This greater prominence of the end-user of the statistics may also assist NSOs with securing greater budgetary support.
152. SPC remarked that it is working with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to develop a regional trade statistics database, and the initial version will be available online in a few months. This project was undertaken because FAO wanted better access to agriculture data, but it was persuaded to collect everything. Such an integrated system will allow problems to be flagged.
153. The representative of UNESCAP stated that involving stakeholders in national plans will assist with drawing in resources and donors. He also emphasised that economic strategic plans must be developed at the national level and greater consideration should be given to the implications of non-implementation of these plans and strategies.
154. SPC announced that funding is available for an additional economic statistician position, whose terms of reference will reflect the priorities identified during today's proceedings.

### **Recommendations and action points**

- a. Delegates agreed on the general need to improve trade statistics and national account data.
- b. Regional and national statistical plans should explicitly focus on ensuring available data meet user needs and demands.

## **Day 4: SESSION 4 – Population censuses and household surveys**

### **Session 4.1 – Census planning (SPC - Arthur Jorari, Scott Pontifex)**

#### **Country response: Samoa and FSM**

155. The representative of Cook Islands asked SPC whether there has been a move to design questionnaires that can be completed on the Internet. SPC replied that often countries have no Internet access so using Internet questionnaires is not yet realistic, but urged the forum to discuss how this could be integrated in the future. The representative of Cook Islands noted that questionnaires are designed in A3 format with small boxes and they are difficult to complete. The representative also asked whether there has been a move to integrate the different GIS assistance programmes available from the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) and SPC, and expressed interest in using the type of census maps used in the SPC presentation. SPC replied that SOPAC is actually very close to it in terms of its cartography, and will be even more so as of 1 January 2011, when it joins SPC as a new division. The representative of Cook Islands also asked whether Samoa has complete government support for its upcoming census. The representative of Samoa replied that Samoa has commitment from its government and UNFPA.
156. The representative of French Polynesia remarked that the region is collectively moving towards the use of new technology like maps, GPS etc. The representative asked SPC how a large country like French Polynesia can ensure the quality of the satellite data when frequent updating is so important in order to use GPS. Are there tools to regularly update data through partnerships with companies or through legislation? SPC responded that SPC, SOPAC and a satellite imagery provider now have an agreement to share data purchased by CROP (Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific) agencies. This means that Samoa now has free, full satellite imagery. SPC urged French Polynesia to access archived imagery from providers such as Google Earth, as images are archived that are only three months old. SPC also noted that costs can be shared across other projects.

157. The representative of Niue asked whether a small country like Niue is too small to justify the use of new technology referred to in the presentation. Working regionally, both large and small countries should have the chance to improve by having access to new technologies like PopGIS. SPC replied that technology can provide the same benefits to Niue and it should work well for a small country.
158. The representative of FSM noted that it had to purchase some maps at a cost of about USD 2,000 each. The representative also recommended that the purchase of satellite images be prioritised as the images can be used for censuses, analysing the impact of climate change and natural disasters etc.

### **Recommendations and actions**

- a. SPC is to provide continued assistance, including training in census and survey project planning and implementation management, along the lines of its previous technical collaboration with ABS.
- b. NSOs are to document their census and survey operations at every phase, to provide the institutional memory for future censuses and surveys.
- c. NSOs are to include a pilot census and a post-enumeration survey as integral parts of PICT census operations. A pilot census serves as a complete ‘dress rehearsal’ of census operations and procedures, which allows for a comprehensive monitoring and assessment of systems and procedures, thus laying the foundation for improved main census operations. A post-enumeration survey is necessary to establish population coverage and ensure user confidence in census data.
- d. SPC and NSOs are to adopt greater use of available technology (such as satellite imagery, aerial photography, GPS, GIS) to support census and survey planning and implementation.
- e. SPC and NSOs are to support the regional pooling and sharing of technology, experience and resources, including South-South technical collaboration to support census and survey planning and implementation.
- f. The purchase of satellite imagery should be prioritised, along similar lines as the current tripartite SPC-SOPAC-PDC memorandum of understanding with a major supplier in Canada.

### **Resource mobilisation and coordination at country level (UNFPA – Eduard Joengstra) Country response: Vanuatu and Solomon Islands**

159. The representative of Samoa asked for countries to outline where they went wrong with census implementation, as this will help countries doing censuses at the moment.

160. The representative of Cook Islands agreed with Samoa and raised concerns about the use of A3 as compared to two A4 questionnaire forms. The representative noted that Cook Islands' census planning has begun; stakeholder consultation is underway. The representative noted that statistics offices do not have finance offices, so reporting and acquisition of funds is difficult. The Chair replied that the issue of A4 versus A3 size questionnaires relates to scanning: it is easier to scan one compared to multiple forms for the same household, and to undertake validation checks between different household members.
161. The representative of PNG noted that census planning is problematic when governments reject funding proposals before they realise how important censuses are. PNG deferred its census for one year because it was important to allow enough time and get the timing right, and it could only be deferred once.
162. The representative of Vanuatu outlined the failures Vanuatu experienced when conducting its census. They related to making sure funding is available when it's needed and recognising that a census is a national project.
163. The representative of Fiji Islands noted that Fiji had to cut its A3 forms in half because they did not fit in the scanner, resulting in the loss of some information, which then had to be re-entered manually. This process also delayed data processing considerably.
164. The representative of UNFAP requested the latest work plan for the Cook Islands census. The representative noted that Cook Islands has a good reputation for getting things done, so it was not worried about current lack of reporting.
165. The representative of Wallis and Futuna stated that scanning was used in Wallis and Futuna's 2007 census and reminded delegates that scanning is not a miracle cure for issues such as unclear classifications. It's important to have coherent databases.
166. SPC urged countries to focus on allowing enough time to plan their censuses. If planning time is insufficient, it's important to stop the census. At least two years is needed to plan a census. If adequate time is not dedicated to planning, census results will suffer.

**Session 4.2 – Questionnaire design (SPC – Andreas Demmke, Bertrand Buffiere)**  
**Country response : Kiribati**

167. The representative of Samoa commented that stakeholder demands cannot always be fully met through surveys; however, Samoa tries to communicate with stakeholders to try to design surveys that will assist them.
168. The representative of Tonga commented that in 2006 Tonga first incorporated the International Labour Organization (ILO) definition of unemployment. In fact, Tonga has many people who are not in employment but don't fit this definition. Tonga requested that the next census re-examine the definition. SPC recognised that the ILO definition is not applicable in the Pacific, as people who don't work are still productive.
169. The representative of Cook Islands responded to SPC's concern about proposed 'last minute additions' to census questionnaires and also expressed some concern over the suggested inclusion of questions without substantiating their importance.
170. The representative of Palau asked how to measure the importance of new questions requested by different ministries. SPC responded that additional questions must be considered on a case-by-case basis, as there are no international guidelines. If additional questions are proposed, the requester should be asked to define exactly what they want to measure before a decision for inclusion can be made.
171. The representative of Vanuatu asked how to integrate questions to ensure that planners get the important information they require. By including planners in the design of a questionnaire, you get their buy-in.
172. The representative of Samoa commented that Samoa is using the UN manuals, and they have been useful in the development of questionnaires. The representative urged delegates to involve data users in the development of census questionnaires; however, satisfying many requests of data-users is not always easy. This can be done by focusing on the national priority questions in the census. The representative also encouraged SPC to convene technical workshops on questionnaire development. When dealing with user requests, it is important to always ask whether information could not be collected from other data sources.
173. SPC reminded delegates that the primary focus of a census is counting the population and obtaining accurate demographic statistics and information about education, labor force and

housing as spelled out in the United Nations manual 'Principles and Recommendations'. A census is not meant as a general statistical collection to cover all sorts of social, economic, health and environmental conditions which are more appropriately captured by specific surveys. SPC also cautioned about including too many extra questions, which could compromise the census response rate.

174. The representative of New Zealand noted that it is currently carrying out a Maori cultural survey which aims to identify what the cultural traits of young Maori are today. SPC will be provided with a copy of this survey.

### **Recommendations and actions**

- a. SPC should consider offering training in questionnaire design.

### **Session 4.3 – Data capture and processing (SPC – Phil Bright, Leilua Taulealo)**

#### **Country response: Vanuatu**

175. The representative of Australia stressed the benefits of sharing information about processing systems but noted the risks of unauthorised staff having access to citizens data. He then asked Vanuatu about its legislation regarding the dissemination of sensitive, personal data.
176. The representative of Vanuatu responded that there were laws protecting such data from being released and that agreements existed for users to gather some of the data without infringing the law.
177. The representative of Samoa inquired about the methods used in Vanuatu, quality checking, guidelines, testing procedures and verification of accuracy.
178. The representative of Vanuatu indicated that there were several levels at which the information gathering process was checked. The sources of errors that were made are documented and will be available.
179. SPC noted that scanning methods occasionally pose mechanical problems and that logistics and field control often present challenges. SPC recommended that offices regularly check on the progress of their fieldworkers with the help of technologies such as software and texting options.

180. The representative of Cook Islands recommended the pooling of specialised equipment (such as GPS units) between NSOs. SPC replied that this was already being done, as illustrated by Kiribati currently using Fiji NSO GPS units to draw up its census enumeration areas.

**Recommendations and actions**

- a. Implement better field management during census and survey operations, including regular communication between NSOs and field staff, to contribute to more accurate data capture and quality.
- b. SPC and UNFPA to continue support current practice of sharing equipment (e.g. GPS units, scanners) between bigger and smaller NSOs.

**Session 4.4 – Operations management (SPC – Phil Bright, Kaobari Matikarai)**  
**Country response: Vanuatu**

181. The Chair reiterated the importance of training and emphasised field training and data processing as priorities in Vanuatu.
182. The representatives of Samoa and Palau voiced concerns regarding the comparison of full census data and pilot studies.
183. SPC responded that pilot testing made it possible to highlight possible data deficiencies, which could then be used to train enumerators prior to a full survey.
184. The representative of Samoa asked Solomon Islands and Vanuatu for feedback on pilot testing, particularly affordability and lessons learned from training enumerators.
185. The representative of Vanuatu responded that the trained enumerators were also involved in data processing and suggested training could also be improved by involving enumerators in the scanning process as well.
186. SPC noted that enumerators in the French territories are tested prior to going into the field as a way to ensure their qualifications and to highlight possible challenges to address in the training. SPC suggested that similar measures could be undertaken in other countries and territories.

**Recommendations and actions**

- a. NSOs are encouraged to apply transparent screening procedures when recruiting temporary field staff, to ensure the best candidates are selected.

- b. NSOs are invited to consider greater use of technology to allow better communication between Noumea-based advisors and census/survey managers and operational managers.

#### **Session 4.5 – Census and household survey applications: moving beyond standard products – addressing key national and regional policy concerns**

##### **Improving vital statistics (University of Queensland – Alan Lopes/Lene Mikkelsen)**

187. The representative of Vanuatu recommended that UQ, USP and SPC coordinate their efforts regarding training on ways to improve vital statistics.
188. The representative of Samoa confirmed Samoa's interest in a programme aimed at improving vital statistics, indicating that the registration of births and deaths are incomplete in Samoa. In practice, only 'hospital births' are mostly likely to get reported in birth registration, while births 'outside the hospitals' are usually under-reported causing incomplete birth registration. Therefore, the Population census is the only other source that can count all births born inside/outside of the hospital and providing more reliable birth data. In terms of death registration, this is optional in Samoa mainly because there is no legislation to enforce where families should bury the deceased relatives. Hence families are free to bury their deceased relatives on their own family lands and not at a public cemetery which means the family decides whether to register the deceased or not.
189. The representative of Nauru underlined a need for training in additional skills that are often prerequisites, such as training in classifications, Excel, etc. While vital registration systems should be improved, this is not currently a priority for the government.
190. The presenter responded that improvements to vital statistics systems did not need to be electronic. There are possibilities for paper-based solutions. The presenter also recommended convincing governments of the need for such data in order to gain donors' support.
191. The representative of Tonga recommended that countries and territories statistical agencies cultivate a close relationship with their respective ministries of health, and indicated that improving vital registration was the responsibility of NSOs.
192. The representative of Cook Islands suggested that countries and territories currently lacking legislation requiring vital registration integrate data collection requirements into other policies or administrative procedures, such as applying for welfare benefits or the issue of health cards, to assist in capturing births and deaths.

**National Minimum Development Indicator Database (SPC – Gerald Haberkorn)**

193. The representative of Australia congratulated SPC on the National Minimum Development Indicator Database initiative, and asked if this could be shared with other countries in the region, like Timor-Leste.
194. The representative of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) applauded the initiative to develop common core development indicators across countries, referred to it as a useful example of regional collaboration, and expressed a desire to closely collaborate with SPC on this project.
195. The representative of FSM suggested including estimates of the cost to generate the statistics required.
196. SPC responded that costs were not the most pressing concern at this stage, since the database was mandated by heads of governments in the 2006 Pacific Plan. The emphasis should be placed on identifying the availability of statistics and existing data so that data gaps can be identified. Once that is done, the costs related to gathering any missing data can then be estimated and referred to those bodies that commissioned this exercise in the first place.
197. The representative of UNESCAP congratulated SPC on the database initiative and recommended the inclusion of additional macro-economic indicators as well as some standardisation for the region in this area. UNESCAP suggested the inclusion of the following categories as a minimum: general fiscal monetary data, investments, remittances, employment and wages, export and growth.
198. SPC welcomed UNESCAP's suggestions and encouraged continuing guidance from PFTAC, UNESCAP and other agencies in compiling such additional macro-economic indicators, using the template provided in information paper 10.
199. SPC was asked whether there is a plan to combine various thematic indicators into one composite indicator.
200. SPC responded that instead of compressing large amounts of information and indicators into a single measure along the lines of the Human Development Index (HDI), it would recommend the use of other means to visualise the complexity of the information.

201. The representative of Samoa emphasised that most PICTs need primarily economic statistics and that the challenge is to obtain such data regularly. Making sure that countries have ongoing social and economic statistics should be a priority.

**Gender and culture statistics (SPC – Linda Peterson)**

202. The representative of Samoa encouraged the inclusion of statistics on gender and culture in the region and asked for clarification regarding classifications and possible questions and answers regarding the gathering of data on this subject. The representative emphasised that classifications should be comparable and recommended that the proposed statistical working group take charge in this matter.
203. SPC encouraged Vanuatu to share information on the current work taking place there on gender and culture statistics. SPC reminded the audience that countries reporting to the UN can then get advice on improving gender equality and be better prepared to make priorities in their planning process.
204. The representative of Vanuatu responded that Vanuatu welcomed questions and was available for assistance.
205. The representative of Tokelau underlined the importance of working with several departments at the national level so that NSOs could receive data from all available sources.

**Food security (SPC – Arthur Jorari, Marita Manley)**

206. Responding to the presentation on food security, the representative of Fiji Islands remarked that statistics on food security needed to be improved and recommended that be one of the tasks of the proposed standing committee. The representative of Fiji added that in so doing, PICTs would also address any concern on the part of donor countries regarding a lack of economic statistics.
207. The representatives of FSM and Samoa echoed the importance of statistics on agriculture and food security.

**Recommendations and actions:**

- a. Delegates requested assistance from both University of Queensland and SPC to assess and improve PICT vital statistics systems.

- b. The University of Queensland (UQ), University of the South Pacific (USP) and SPC are to coordinate their efforts regarding training on ways to improve vital statistics.
- c. NSOs are to develop and cultivate closer working relationships with their ministries of health.
- d. A list of macro-economic indicators should be compiled under the guidance of macro-economic statisticians to be coordinated by *PINACLE*, to be subsequently included in the *National Minimum Development Indicator Database*.
- e. The statistical advisory group is to include the improvement of statistics on gender, culture and food security as one of its priorities.

### **USP presentation on statistical training**

- 208. The Chair highlighted the need for a close collaboration between USP and NSOs.
- 209. The representative of FSM expressed a strong interest in online courses as a way to train its staff and reduce travelling expenses.
- 210. The representative of New Zealand indicated that courses are now available through Victoria University and that similar online programmes exist to train entry-level statisticians who are already part of NSOs.
- 211. The representative of USP clarified that online courses were not yet available but will be in the future. USP expressed a desire to collaborate with New Zealand on such a project.
- 212. The representative of Palau asked SPC to inform PICTs on any progress on capacity building.
- 213. The representative of Samoa thanked USP and noted that online courses would be very beneficial to NSOs. The representative also asked about the possibility of short courses.
- 214. The representative of Solomon Islands expressed concerns regarding sending staff to USP for studies in lieu of working on collecting data.
- 215. The representative of USP welcomed possible agreements between organisations regarding cooperation on course delivery methods, scholarship opportunities and short-term training.
- 216. SPC cited the University of the West Indies as an example of an institution that has already arranged short-term courses and training. SPC offered assistance in contacting the university if needed.

### **Recommendation and actions**

- a. Developing agreements between organisations and governments in order to facilitate the development of short-term courses at USP.

## **Day 5: SESSION 5 – Data dissemination**

### **Session 5.1 – Data quality**

#### **The role of metadata and documentation (SPC – Scott Pontifex, Phil Bright, James Hemphill)**

217. The representative of Cook Islands noted that administrative data is not collected primarily for statistical purposes so statisticians and agencies have work together to determine what NSOs need and how to collect it. In many countries, this partnership needs development. To improve the quality of statistics, regular stocktakes are necessary to audit data sources. Statistics will not be provided in a timely manner unless there is the necessary technology to assist countries, as small countries have very little manpower. It is necessary to determine not only how to buy technology but also how to use it.
218. The representative of French Polynesia noted that it invested a decade in the development of a metadata catalogue. As it takes time to plan everything, it is useful to start the development of a data catalogue with small surveys. This requires time and planning, as the organisation and inclusion of metadata should consider management needs up-stream and it is difficult to work backwards after the catalogue has been constructed.
219. The representative of Samoa noted that there is a need to make statistics more meaningful to all. The representative asked if SPC could go one step beyond collecting data and actually translate the documents into policy statements. That way, not only would NSOs understand better, but politicians and policy-makers would understand statistics too.
220. SPC replied to Samoa that it co-hosted a workshop with PARIS21 last week on making data meaningful. SPC also noted that one key area of ongoing concern is the lack of traction with planners. With the exception of some countries, as can be seen at this meeting and was clear during our last meeting, many planners tend not to prioritise these meetings. PopGIS was a direct response to planners as a result of the 2000 meeting that included a plea from planners for more meaningful data that is spatially referenced. In fact today, planners hardly use it. One example of an area in which SPC is working to provide policy messages is the DHS surveys. The DHS factsheets summarise the full DHS reports and include policy notes.

221. The representative of PFTAC commented on quality, noting that there are frameworks for measuring the quality of statistics (General Data Dissemination System – GDDS). Some countries participated in a 2002 Pacific GDDS Workshop organised by PFTAC, and some economic metadata were gathered; GDDS also covers some social statistics. PFTAC is planning another data workshop for the end of the year. If delegates demonstrate a real interest in the workshop, this will go ahead and PFTAC will ensure that the framework includes the plans for data improvement.
222. The representative of Australia compared data and metadata and noted that metadata can be overlooked by users. Most users don't look at all the information Australia provides. It is best to extract the most important messages from the metadata into a very short summary.
223. The representative of FSM discussed the metadata workshop last week and understood that it was necessary to import the datasets for surveys in order to describe the data. Data sharing is useful but there must be explicit national endorsement for data to be shared. It is unclear to what extent that dataset has been shared. SPC replied that no data is shared with anyone, unless there is explicit written consent provided by the government. SPC is very strict in ensuring confidentiality of data. SPC reassured the meeting that no data will be accessible to other users unless the NSO has approved it and a formal data user agreement has been signed. SPC confirmed that survey data countries brought to the PARIS21 workshop was used and discussed by all participants during the workshop, but that no access was granted to anyone else.
224. The representative of Samoa asked whether SPC has a specific person available to provide policy statements and advice all the time. SPC replied that it is not in a position to promise there will always be policy assistance available; however, in the medium term there will be ongoing work on making data meaningful, with workshops being run on this issue.
225. The representative of French Polynesia requested clarification from Australia about the use of metadata on its website. If there are metadata online that no external people use, the data is still useful internally as it enables specialists to ensure consistency. This is why cataloguing is so useful. The work should be made available on the Internet even if the general public does not use it. Metadata can be more useful internally than externally. The representative of Australia responded that Australia recognises that metadata documentation is essential but emphasised the need to pull out key messages relevant to users.

226. The representative of Vanuatu reflected on the dissemination standards in the region and asked whether HIES and other surveys can be compared on the PRISM website. The representative requested capacity building around the development and management of micro-data sets, because having access to micro-data builds NSO capacity.
227. The Chair reminded delegates that PARIS21 has offered another workshop on metadata if there is interest from other countries.
228. SPC also emphasised that to ensure clarity and simplicity in data dissemination, technology, means of communication and messages must be simple.

### **Recommendations and action points**

- a. Acknowledging need for documentation of major statistical collections, like censuses and household surveys, countries requested ongoing capacity building regarding their documentation and management of micro-data sets.
- b. SPC is to assist NSOs in developing national census and survey data cataloguing/archiving capacity on their national websites, and provide advice, as requested by Vanuatu, in developing a micro-data access policy for non-NSO users.

### **Session 5.2 – Data accessibility – expanded role of PRISM ([www.prismstats.com](http://www.prismstats.com))**

#### **Data accessibility and the expanded role of PRISM (SPC – James Hemphill)**

229. The representative of Palau asked how safe data are on Joomla. SPC replied that Joomla has been extensively tested and assured Palau of its reliability from a security point of view.
230. The representative of Guam expressed Guam's desire to participate in PRISM and get rid of the extraneous information on its website.
231. The representative of Wallis and Futuna expressed its continuing interest in the PRISM project. Wallis and Futuna would like its website to be hosted by SPC and would like to use Joomla, especially if training can be provided.
232. The representative of New Caledonia noted that often it can be difficult to know what's on its website as it is so large, and expressed interest in sharing experiences with SPC and having someone from SPC looking over their site as the ISEE (Institut de la Statistique et des Études Économique) website is old.

233. SPC replied to Guam and New Caledonia that it looks forward to working with them and noted the need to open up the lines of communication with New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna.
234. The representative of Nauru expressed support for the PRISM project, noting that it helps Nauru disseminate information. The representative asked SPC how it was going to undertake the current project update to Joomla and if countries were going to be trained.
235. The representative of Vanuatu applauded the recent improvements to the PRISM website and emphasised that improving NSOs' uploading abilities must be addressed as a key priority. In response to questions from Nauru and Vanuatu concerning updates, SPC emphasised that with FrontPage, files must be updated manually by SPC. In contrast, Joomla (for which SPC will be providing training) will allow users to:
- i. update,
  - ii. establish a quality check period, and
  - iii. publish the data themselves.
236. The representative of Samoa noted that from a user perspective, the proposed new PRISM layout is eye-catching and helps users see the message. The representative expressed concern that some countries don't have extensive Internet access, and in Samoa Internet is expensive. Can the data be conveyed in an alternative form that is as eye-catching as PRISM? SPC responded that when Internet is not available, documents such as the pocket summaries and the DHS summaries are a useful and eye-catching alternative.
237. The representative of Tonga asked to make Tonga a priority, as its website is out of date and training is badly needed now. SPC responded that it will include Tonga in its upcoming work programme and will ensure that no countries are left behind.
238. Delegates were unanimous in their continued support for PRISM, and many delegates thanked James for the development work undertaken since joining SPC earlier in the year.

### **Recommendations and action points**

- a. The representatives of Tonga, Wallis and Futuna and Guam made specific requests for additional support in the redevelopment of their websites.
- b. The representative of New Caledonia expressed a desire to work more closely with SPC on improving New Caledonia's website.

## **Table-builder technology – Statistics New Zealand, UNFPA/CEPAL, French Polynesia**

(see: [www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz), <http://www.ispf.pf/>, [www.cepal.org/redatam](http://www.cepal.org/redatam))

239. SPC noted that the data files shown in the StatsNZ table-builder were restricted to specific thematic data files (age/sex/education/labour force) and enquired if the table-builder allows for cross-tabulation across two tables. The representative of New Zealand was unsure about this but noted that it is possible to construct tables that include the variables the user wants. The representative undertook to provide a response to the SPC's question later.
240. SPC emphasised that while based on a similar pre-built platform of thematic summary tables like the New Zealand system, REDATAM seems to have a more comprehensive mapping and graphing interface.
241. The representative of Samoa noted that the French Polynesia table-builder could work well for Samoa. The representative asked whether French Polynesia could share its work with Samoa in English if they requested help. The representative of French Polynesia replied that they could.
242. The representative of FSM asked French Polynesia whether the cube is available in English and whether there is coordination between SPC and the UN in order to reintegrate REDATAM into a broader Pacific plan. The representative of French Polynesia replied that the cubes exist in English but they only contain the data you put in them. Put English data in and it will display in English.
243. The representative of Cook Islands noted that as statisticians rather than information technology specialists, they were not in a position determine which table-builder is best. A specialist should provide advice on the benefits of each table-builder. SPC replied that today's aim was to show delegates what table-builder technology is all about. SPC will evaluate various systems and come back to delegates with advice on the comparative advantages of various systems, to allow them to make an informed decision.

### **Recommendations and action points**

- a. SPC is to dialogue further with these three agencies, undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the comparative advantages of these different systems, and communicate results with HOPS before making a final recommendation.
- b. As they showed a strong interest, SPC is to provide further information to FSM and Samoa about the cube technology.

### **Session 5.3 – Data visualisation**

#### **New graphic data displays (bubble graphs and moving age-pyramids)**

244. The representative of French Polynesia asked SPC whether the NSO updates the data or whether SPC extracts data. The representative noted that a site must be constantly updated to make it worthwhile. SPC replied that the presentation was about visualisation and was done using currently available data. This technology can be used when working with policy-makers to emphasise key points, as these graphs are a powerful tool when illustrating demographic trends. SPC added that there has been a review of what data we have on PRISM, where data is missing and what is out of date. This process must be completed, and from there we can standardise input screens from gaps identified.
245. The representative of Samoa asked whether Hans Rosling, who developed the bubble graphs, is a statistician. SPC replied that Hans Rosling is a medical doctor and epidemiologist, who developed the bubble graphs to make statistics more interesting for his students. The Chair asked how NSOs can benefit from this technology and suggested that SPC work closely with NSOs to provide training on how to use these tools better.
246. The representative of Cook Islands referred to the Pacific Islands Growth Charts and asked if they are country-specific and what the margins of error are for them. SPC replied that the country projections are country specific but general assumptions are applied to countries (same as UN World Population Projections assumptions).

#### **Recommendations and action points**

- a. There was support for use of bubble graph technology and a request for training on how to use such tools.
- b. The representative of Samoa noted the importance of also developing alternative or non-Internet-based methods of data dissemination given bandwidth problems in many PICTs, and making greater use of the media, especially television.

### **SESSION 6: Agency presentations** (no rapporteuring provided)

Representatives of UNFPA/UNICEF and UNDESA each made a brief presentation on some recent work. UNFPA and UNICEF reported on the key findings of their Women and Child focused PME diagnostic in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. And UNDESA highlighted the importance of statistics systems at the national level in supporting sustainable development in small island developing states (SIDS), including in developing their vulnerability-resilience country profiles.

## **SESSION 7: Adoption of meeting recommendations**

247. This session focused almost exclusively on discussing the draft terms of reference for a HOPS advisory group or steering committee, as proposed by both the Regional Statistical Benchmarking Study and the Pacific Regional Statistical Implementation Plan (PRSIP), to allow HOPS greater involvement in implementation and monitoring of its recommendations, including agreed-upon PRSIP strategic objectives and associated activities.
248. SPC prepared and tabled draft terms of reference for a Statistical Advisory Group (STAG) in consultation with PRSIP consultants, the manager of PFTAC and the current HOPS Chair and the two vice-chairs.
249. The representative of New Zealand expressed concerns regarding paragraph 3 of the draft terms of reference. The representative emphasised the need to decide whether the committee would be an advisory group or a steering group, and recommended a strong steering group in order to get the support of donors.
250. The representative of Australia echoed New Zealand's sentiments and indicated that this committee should advise SPC rather than take direct responsibility.
251. SPC responded that it sees the role of the committee as providing an opportunity to the Statistics and Demography Programme to report back to HOPS on its implementation of PRSIP on a more regular basis than the triennial HOPS meeting structure would allow.
252. The representatives of Fiji, Guam and Samoa all expressed strong support for the establishment of such a steering committee, which would help HOPS monitor the effectiveness of PRSIP implementation on a more regular basis, as outlined by SPC.
253. The representative of New Zealand sought clarification on whether the committee's main role is strengthening NSSs or overseeing PRSIP implementation.
254. SPC responded that the committee would steer PRSIP implementation, which ought to strengthen NSSs over time.
255. The representative of Nauru emphasised that PRSIP was designed to coordinate all existing micro-governing bodies, not just SPC. The group should, therefore, steer all statistical agencies. Nauru recommended the use of more general wording for the steering committee's mandate.

256. The representative of Australia suggested that the membership for the committee be kept to the people present at the table.
257. SPC suggested that development partners ought to be a part of the committee as well, even if all could not be present at the last day, and recommended that an agreement be reached regarding the initial membership while allowing for future flexibility.
258. The representative of Cook Islands asked how many members would be involved.
259. SPC responded that it could be a total of 10 – two Pacific Island NSO members for each subregion, one member representing SPC bilateral financial partners (AusAID, New Zealand Aid Programme), one member representing SPC multilateral partners (ADB), one representing the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Monitoring and Evaluation group, currently chaired by UNFPA, and USP. As outlined in the terms of reference, SPC would act as the secretariat, with PFTAC providing advice on macro-economic statistical matters.
260. The representative of FSM indicated that as FSM could not commit to funding its regular participation, it wished to know whether external funding would be sought.
261. The chair asked that 6 Pacific Island members be nominated, keeping in mind the different regions and sizes of offices.
262. The representative of Palau proposed that the chair and the two co-chairs for this HOPS 2010 meeting represent the three subregions, and nominated FSM as the second Micronesia representative. The representative of Nauru seconded the proposal.
263. The representative of Samoa nominated Fiji Islands for the second Melanesia seat on the committee; this motion was seconded by the representative of FSM.
264. SPC noted that Fiji Islands and Vanuatu were nominated to represent Melanesia, and invited nominations for Polynesia.
265. The representative of Vanuatu nominated Cook Islands, and the representative of Samoa seconded this nomination.

266. The representative of Cook Islands thanked Samoa for its nomination but declined, indicating that the office has an important parliamentary election to manage, and with a census coming up in 2011 as well, they could not commit to extra responsibilities.
267. The representative of Samoa then nominated Tonga, and the representative of Tokelau seconded that nomination.
268. The Chair expressed concern that the small NSOs were somewhat under-represented, and invited a nomination for a small office to be represented.
269. While acknowledging the chair's gesture and good intentions, SPC noted that the challenge for a small office might be finding time and commitment to undertake the extra work membership of such a committee entails, which will be difficult with few staff resources; this concern was echoed by the representative of Fiji Islands.
270. The representative of Tonga subsequently nominated Wallis and Futuna. The representative of Wallis and Futuna declined based on concerns over language barriers undermining the territory's effective participation, and instead nominated Tuvalu or Tokelau.
271. The representative of Tokelau thanked Tonga for its nomination, and seconded the nomination of Tuvalu as the 2<sup>nd</sup> representative of Polynesia.
272. SPC summarised the elections as follows:
- Melanesia represented by Fiji Islands and Vanuatu.
  - Polynesia represented by Samoa and Tuvalu.
  - Micronesia represented by Nauru and FSM.
  - SPC noted a request received from ADB expressing interest to be one of the representatives of SPC's financial partners; with ADB representative having had to leave that morning due to airline constraints, and with no objections raised to the proposal put forward by SPC, ADB's request for membership was accepted.
  - The representative of the New Zealand Aid Programme declared that they would discuss with AusAID who would represent SPC's main bilateral financial partners on the Statistical Steering Committee (SSC).
  - No objection was received to SPC's proposal for USP's committee membership.

SPC recommended that the election of the chair be deferred to the first SSC meeting, to be held in the periphery of the upcoming CRGA (25–28 October) in Noumea, and that the chair of HOPS act as interim SSC chair until that time.

273. The representative of Australia suggested that all HOPS recommendations and action points be emailed to members as soon as possible, in order to get their feedback and endorsement. SPC undertook to do this as soon as possible, after which HOPS members would have 2 weeks to send in their comments. SPC proposed to consolidate member replies, resend them to everyone concerned, and then submit a final list of recommendations to the SSC meeting in October 2010 for review and approval.

#### **Recommendations and action points**

- a. The committee will be known as the HOPS Statistical Steering Committee (SSC), and will be entrusted with overseeing the implementation of PRSIP.
  - b. The initial membership of the committee will comprise representatives as outlined in paragraph 271. While all country members happen to be government statisticians, SSC membership is flexible to allow for participation of members across NSSs in the future (such as planners, central bankers, health statisticians etc).
  - c. The chair of HOPS will act as interim SSC chair and convene the first SSC meeting in October 2010, when membership modalities will be finalised.
  - d. All HOPS recommendations emanating from plenary discussions following presentations of working and information papers will be emailed to HOPS members for feedback. Final adoption and prioritisation in line with PRSIP recommendations will be undertaken by SSC at its first meeting in October, and be submitted to HOPS for final review and endorsement.
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