

SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

REGIONAL MEETING OF HEADS OF PLANNING & HEADS OF STATISTICS (HOPS)  
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 17-21 September 2007)

*Future directions for evidence-based decision making in the Pacific*

**DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS**

(Document presented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community)

**PURPOSE**

1. This paper presents the purpose and objectives of main activities undertaken in the Statistics and Demography Programme's (SDP) area of '*Demographic Analysis*' during the period 2006-2007. The paper concludes with three key points for discussion by country representatives.

**BACKGROUND**

2. Good quality, timely and relevant data are needed to underpin national policy development and planning. They are also becoming increasingly important to assist countries in monitoring and documenting development progress in line with their own national governance requirements, as well as to honour internationally agreed-up development goals and conventions, such as the Millennium Development Goals, and CEDAW (*Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*). To produce and interpret such data, it is important that National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and national and sectoral planning agencies have staff with skills in data collection, processing, analysis and dissemination. It is also important that statisticians and planners have adequate skills to analyse and interpret social and economic data, as well as population trends and implications to assist in the formulation of appropriate policies. This will help ensure that the information needs of policy-makers and planners are adequately met.
3. The purpose of activities undertaken in the area of '*Demographic Analysis*' is to provide and improve the quality and availability of information produced by national statistical systems (NSS). Specifically, the activities aim to build and supplement the analytical capacity of national statistical & planning offices, as well as the analytical skills across the NSSs; improve the quality of social and economic statistics released by NSOs/NSSs; produce outputs that meet the information needs of national policy makers & planners; reinforce international best practice in demographical/statistical methods; and develop professional standards in the presentation of official statistics.

**PREPARATION OF ANALYTICAL (CENSUS) REPORTS (CAPACITY SUPPLEMENTATION)**

4. During the last 10 years, SDP has produced a long list of census reports and demographic profiles for most Pacific Island Countries and Territories, PICTs (see attached). The main objective of the Profiles is to facilitate data utilization by improving the awareness, understanding and use of population and socio-economic data for policy development and planning. To achieve this objective, technical information is communicated so that it can be understood and applied by both technical and non-technical users. The aim is to familiarise planners and policy-makers with some of the key features of the socio-economic and demographic situation of the country.
5. Knowledge in demographic analytical methodologies requires specialised training (population studies, demography), and few national staff have formal training in specialised areas such as demography. Small NSO's and other national departments/agencies usually do not have the resources/capacity to prepare in-depth analytical reports. This situation is exacerbated by high staff turnover, which severely limits national capabilities.
6. However, SDP emphasizes the importance of analytical reports/Profiles being prepared in close collaboration with national counterparts to ensure the transfer of knowledge – improvement in analytical methodologies, enhancement of planning, and training in report writing skills in general. An invaluable input by national counterparts is the provision of background and country specific information for example: compulsory school ages, retirement age, specific events that impact on public health (cyclones, epidemics), family planning initiatives and so forth.
7. The general purpose of the analytical reports/profiles is to present major demographic findings of available demographic and socio-economic data, usually a census and, where possible, to compare them to earlier censuses. The specific purpose of each report/profile varies from country to country, and depends on data availability. Ideally census data are compared, evaluated and complemented with available vital registration or other administrative data. The core themes of each Profile are an analysis of recent population growth and dynamics. In particular the level, trends, and patterns of fertility, mortality, and migration are discussed. Most Profiles include a brief discussion of the likely impacts of some of these patterns and developments on wider socio-economic development issues such as health, education, and economic activity. Profiles usually include the provision of a set of population projections in order to facilitate planners and policy-makers with possible scenarios of their population size and structure in future.
8. A basic requirement for the production of any Profile is the availability of country specific data. It is the responsibility of the country (usually the NSO's project manager) to provide data presented in table form, suitable for analysis. As part of SDP *work attachments*, one or two national staff members prepare specific sections of the profile/report, with SPC-staff providing guidance and advice.
9. During the period 2006-2007, 5 reports/profiles were prepared for Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue and Wallis and Futuna.

10. **Problems** identified with capacity supplementation:

- Data sets are often not final, clean, and/or consistent at the time of data analysis;
- Preparation of reports is a very time consuming exercise; and
- There is a lack of national counterparts with adequate demographic training.

11. **Recommendations**

- Ensure datasets are final, clean, and consistent before commencing data analysis
- Recognise SPC's role of capacity supplementation in the area of demographic profiling; and
- Continue to provide work attachments with the Statistics and Demography Programme in Noumea, to build capacity of suitable national staff.

**TRAINING (CAPACITY BUILDING)**

12. Training and capacity building are provided through conducting in-country workshops/seminars, via technical assistance missions, and through SDP work/training attachments in Noumea.

**National and sub-regional technical workshops**

13. Following the completion of a demographic or population profile, or of a census report, countries are strongly encouraged to organize a data dissemination workshop in order to raise awareness and encourage utilization of available current and up-to date information. Participants generally include representatives of the private and government sectors, and NGOs. The targeted participants for the workshops are primarily middle level positions in the public service, and sometimes include senior staff and managers from other government agencies involved in undertaking work which analyses administrative or survey data and produces statistical reports.
14. The objective of a data utilization workshop/seminar is to highlight impacts of change in population size and structure on different aspects and sectors of society. The instructor teaches participants the fundamental methods of data analysis so they can complete practical exercises using official datasets.
15. The objectives of a population projections workshop, on the other hand, is to teach understanding and interpretation of population projection's potential and limitations, and to enhance national capacity in preparing meaningful population projections.
16. Social Statistics modules were developed by SDP and incorporated in SIAP (Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific) sub-regional courses in statistics for Pacific Island developing countries. The Social Statistics modules are consistent with Social Statistics as recommended by the United Nations Statistics Division. The objective of the modules is to strengthen the capability of PICTs national statistical services in the collection, analysis and presentation of official social statistics.

17. The participant evaluation forms received from completed workshops rated workshop topics as informative and relevant, especially in combination with useful practical exercises using country data. While some participants may have found a course too short, most commented that the content of a course was well balanced and delivered at the right pace.
18. During the period 2006-2007, SDP conducted 7 workshops:
  - 4 data utilization/dissemination workshops conducted (*Nauru, Niue – naechste Woche, Kiribati, Tuvalu*)
  - 1 national workshop taught in Population Projections (*Guam*)
  - 2 Social Statistics modules held as part of the SIAP courses (*Guam and Nadi*).
19. General **problems** encountered with capacity building:
  - Suitability of participants (a general observation);
  - Minimum background knowledge in demographic and statistical methodologies is often missing;
  - Computer skills are sometimes limited.

### **Recommendations**

20. With the conduct of training workshops representing very resource-intensive activities, we need to ensure in partnership with national counterpart agencies, that prospective workshop participants meet minimum professional requirements..
21. This is of particular relevance for training in population projections, where it needs to be ensured that:
  - participants' professional duties and responsibilities require their understanding and utilization, or the preparation of population projections; and
  - that they have previously received a basic training in demographic methodologies.

### **Work attachments with SDP, Noumea**

22. The purpose of an *attachment* is to transfer skills from the SDP professional staff to the *attachment trainee* in data analysis, report writing, and presentation of results (in table and graph form). Candidates need to have some experience in data analysis and report writing. Most of all, they need to have a keen interest in demographic and general socio-economic issues such as population change, and its impact on wider development issues such as education, labour force, and/or household and dwelling characteristics.

23. During the period 2006-2007, the following achievements were made by various *Demographic Analysis* attachments:

Kiribati, 1 person:	Production of Volume 1, Basic Tables of the 2005 Population Census.
Niue, 1 person:	Drafting of Niue Population Profile.
Guam, 2 persons:	Drafting of chapters on Education, Military characteristics, Labor force, Household characteristics, and Implications of demographic trends for Guam Population Profile

### **Recommendations**

24. In view of its success and effectiveness, we propose for your consideration, to continue to provide opportunities for SDP work attachments in Noumea.

### **FACILITATE EVIDENCED-BASED DECISION MAKING THROUGH REGULAR DISSEMINATION OF DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC INFORMATION**

25. One of SDP's main objectives is to facilitate evidence-based decision making through effective data dissemination and analysis. Another main activity of SDP's *Demographic Analysis* is the provision of regular up-to-date baseline population data to national, regional and international organizations and agencies, and NGO's to monitor regional population developments. As part of the routine activities of *Demographic Analysis*, national demographic or population profiles are prepared whenever countries undertake a new census, and estimates and projections of population size and structure, as well as its growth components fertility, mortality and migration, are updated and disseminated. The results are published on SDP's website and on PRISM. Furthermore, a population poster displaying demographic information is produced every two to three years. As part of this exercise, levels and trends of fertility, mortality and migration, as well as household size and urbanization are produced that compares country specific information of all PICTs.
26. With SDP's more recent involvement in undertaking a pilot regional Demographic and Health Survey program in four countries, these surveys will provide comprehensive databases requiring demographic analysis.

### **KEY DISCUSSION POINTS**

27. The following key points are proposed for discussion by country representatives:
- Whether the overall *Demographic Analysis* needs of NSOs/NSSs are being met by SDP
  - Timeliness of published reports (drafting, editing, lay-out, printing)
  - The need to conduct sub-regional workshops on Population projections.

### List of available Country Reports/Profiles

<u>Country</u>	<u>Title</u>
Niue	Niue Population Profile: based on 2006 Census of Population and Housing (forthcoming)
Guam	Guam Population Profile (forthcoming)
Kiribati	Kiribati 2005 Census, Volume II: Analytical Report (forthcoming)
Wallis & Futuna	Profil Démographique de Wallis et Futuna basé sur le recensement de 2003 (2007)
Nauru	Demographic Profile of Nauru, 1992-2002 (2006)
Cook Islands	The Demographic Profile of the Cook Islands, 1996-2002 (2005)
Tuvalu	The Tuvalu 2002 Population and Housing Census, Volume 1 – Analytical Report (2005)
Tuvalu	The Tuvalu 2002 Population and Housing Census, Volume 2 – Demographic Profile, 1991-2002 (2005)
New Caledonia	Profil démographique de la Nouvelle-Calédonie basé sur le recensement de 1996 (2001)
Cook Islands	Cook Islands Population Profile based on 1996 Census 1999
Tonga	Tonga Population Profile based on 1996 Census: a guide for planners and policy-makers (1999)
Fiji Islands	Fiji Islands Population Profile, based on 1996 Census (1999)
Niue	Niue Population Profile based on 1997 Census (1999)
American Samoa	American Samoa Population Profile (1999)
Nauru	Nauru Population Profile: a guide for planners and policy-makers (1999)
CNMI	CNMI Population Profile, based on 1995 Census (1998)
Kiribati	Kiribati Population Profile, based on 1995 Census (1998)
Tokelau	Tokelau Population Profile, based on 1996 Census (1998)
Tuvalu	Tuvalu Population Profile (1998)
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia Population Profile (1997)
Guam	Guam Population Profile (1997)
Tonga	Tonga Population Profile (1996)

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