



Regional news

Pacific Regional Sustainable Development Goals Indicator Availability Assessment

In March 2016, the United Nations Statistics Commission endorsed a final set of 230 indicators that countries will use to measure and report on progress against the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and associated 169 development targets. This is a massive increase on the 2000–2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which comprised only 8 goals, 18 targets and 60 indicators. Even so, most Pacific Island countries struggled with the required level of regular data collection and reporting.

The Pacific Community's (SPC) Statistics for Development Division (SDD) has therefore embarked on a preliminary SDG indicator availability assessment in two countries to identify data gaps and likely challenges in regular collections. Considering that most of the statistics required to measure progress against many of the 169 global development targets are not yet collected (at least not on a regular basis), this data gap analysis will serve two immediate practical and strategic purposes:

- First, to test the methodology before an eventual roll-out across the region, thus avoiding a repeat of the MDG experience where no assessment was available until 2005. This meant countries lost valuable time in being able to accurately benchmark their development status on education and health, economic well-being and food security, access to water and basic infrastructure. In other words, in the early MDG stages, countries lacked updated information to identify national development priorities and build up their statistical infrastructure.
- Secondly, a more strategic purpose is to gather evidence on the precarious state of statistical information regarding development challenges of specific significance to Pacific Island countries and other small island developing states: climate change, oceans, and terrestrial ecosystems, as well as food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture. The current lack of statistical information in these sectors is alarming – a situation not helped by the inability of the global statistical community to agree on concepts, standards and methodology for

climate change, oceans, and terrestrial ecosystems. Of a total of 31 indicators across these 3 SDGs, agreement has so far been reached on only 10 indicators.

Focusing first on the 147 indicators that are conceptually clear, have an established methodology and are produced by most countries on a regular, or at least intermittent basis (**Tier-1** and **Tier-2** indicators), the first country assessment showed a promising coverage of 70% across the SDG spectrum:

- Education (100%), gender and poverty (86%) and health (73%) had the best coverage, reflecting gains made in national statistical collection and production during the MDG period;



- But the assessment also pointed to immediate challenges in the areas of food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture (SDG-2), resilient and safe cities and human settlements (SDG-11), sustainable consumption and production (SDG-12), oceans (SDG-14) and terrestrial ecosystems (SDG-15), with data coverage of only around 40–50%.



The second national assessment will take place in late June, and information gathered from both exercises will inform the design and modalities of a regional assessment.

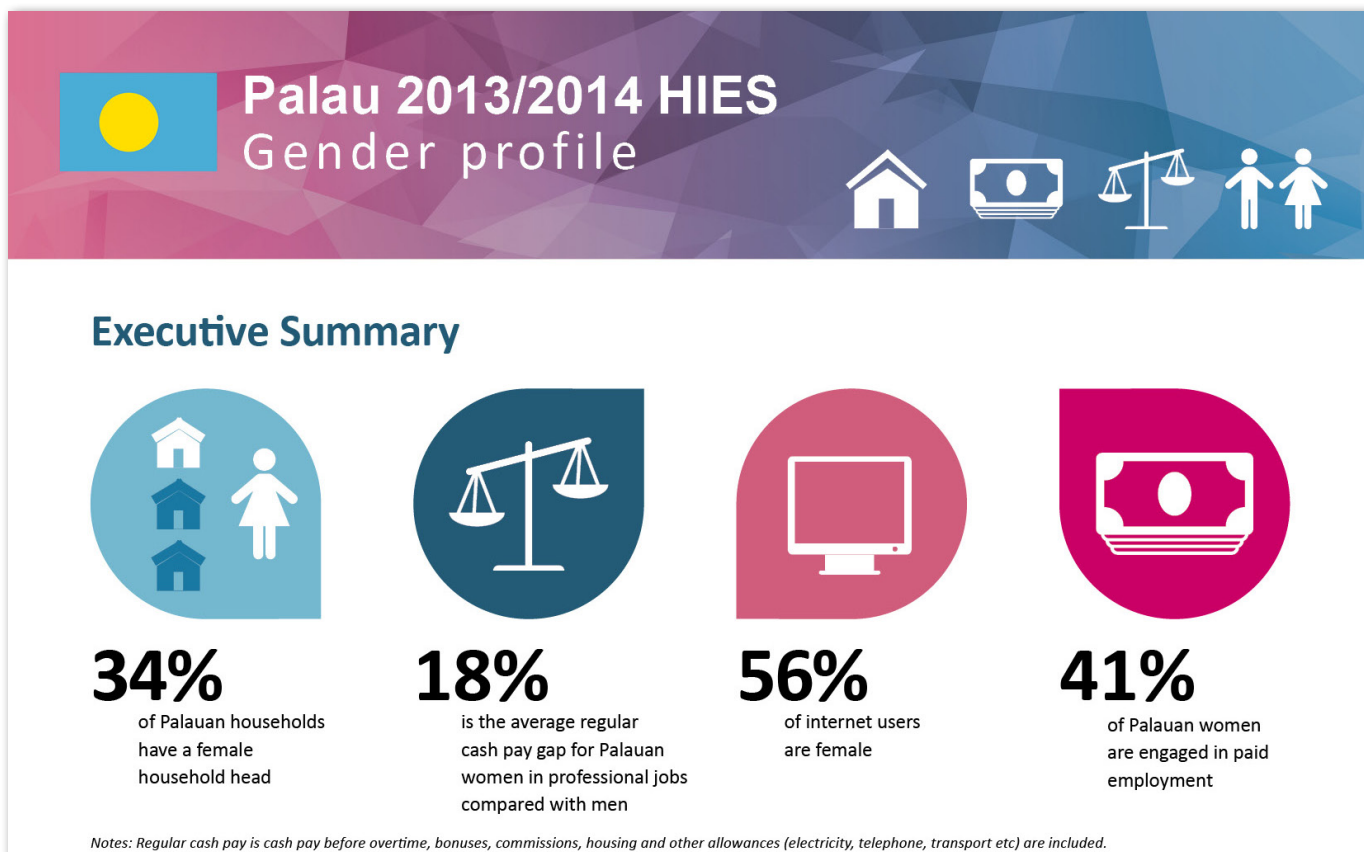
Gerald Haberkorn

Director, Statistics for Development Division

Palau 2013/2014 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) gender profile

The SDD, the Palau Bureau of Budget and Planning and the Social Development Programme (SDP) Gender Statistics Advisor have supported the Palau Ministry of Culture and Community Affairs to produce a gender profile from the 2013/2014

HIES. The profile uses sex disaggregated HIES statistics to analyse differences, as well as similarities, between Palauan women and men in terms of economic activity, wage and salary income, access to communications, and household (HH) income, expenditure and amenities. SDD and SDP will be supporting other Pacific island countries (PICs) to produce HIES gender profiles in 2016.



Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics week in Thailand



May 2016 saw the organisation of the very first **Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics (APES) week**. The Economic statistics week aims to provide a regular forum where countries and development partners may present and discuss the development and implementation of products related to the **core set of economic statistics** as defined in the **Regional Programme on Economic Statistics**. In particular, the APES week is designed to:

- Share research on the implementation of international standards with a view to facilitate the uptake of newly developed methodologies;
- Encourage economic statistics research and information sharing on themes and areas prioritised by member States;
- Facilitate and support analytical work by national statistical systems on economic statistics outputs as well as production, processing and dissemination frameworks.

Attending the conference on behalf of SPC were economic statisticians Rens Hendriks and Nilima Lal, who gave a presentation on best practices in the establishment and adoption of Standard Business Registers in the Pacific. Furthermore, SPC and other

development partners provided updates on the implementation of their work plans in relation to the regional programme on economic statistics. In the Pacific, the goals of the regional programme have been aligned with the national development priority agenda's and are integrated in the Ten Year Pacific Statistics Strategy.

The first APES week was a great success, made possible by the contributions by member countries and the excellent organisation and facilitation by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for

Asia and the Pacific (**UNESCAP**), Asian Development bank (**ADB**) and United Nations Statistics Division (**UNSD**). From the Pacific Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Samoa attended, with Fiji giving a presentation on the research and development of its Tourism Satellite Account. The knowledge and experiences shared will prove to be of great value in the accelerated implementation of **Phase 2** of the Ten Year Pacific Statistics Strategy and the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics.



Seminar component, © UNESCAP

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Useful links:

www.sdd.spc.int

National Minimum Development Indicators (NMDI) database:

www.spc.int/nmdi

Palau 2013/2014 HIES gender profile:

http://www.spc.int/DigitalLibrary/Doc/SDD/flyers/Palau_2013_2014_HIES_Gender_profile.pdf

First Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics week:

<http://communities.unescap.org/economic-statistics/asia-pacific-economic-statistics-week>

<http://communities.unescap.org/committee-statistics/economic-statistics/rpes-outputs-and-core-set/rpes-glance>

<http://www.unescap.org/>

<http://www.adb.org/>

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/default.htm>