

**SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY****FORTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE
COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 4–7 November 2014)

AGENDA ITEM 8: THEMATIC SESSION**AGENDA ITEM 8: MULTI-SECTOR APPROACH TO ADDRESSING NCDs IN THE PACIFIC –
MOVING AHEAD TOGETHER**

(Paper presented by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

1. A majority of the determinants of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) lie outside the health sector. Important relevant sectors include finance, economics, trade, justice, education, agriculture, fisheries and transport, though the extent of their impact varies. To address NCDs adequately, there needs to be an effective multi-sector approach involving all relevant sectors and incorporating a 'Health in All Policies' approach.
2. SPC is involved in several initiatives to strengthen the multi-sector approach to NCDs, not only within the organisation but also in how we interact with partners in working with Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs).
3. Recent initiatives include the Pacific NCD Partnership that aims to strengthen and coordinate the necessary capacity and expertise to support PICTs, and the NCD Roadmap that was developed in response to demands from Forum Economic Ministers for economic solutions to NCDs. The significant effect of trade on NCDs is also well documented and Trade Ministers have recognised the importance of a balanced approach to public health issues and the need for trade and health officials to work together. Within SPC, an NCDs/Food Security Working Group, which includes all divisions, has been set up to strengthen the multi-sector approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. CRGA is invited to:
 - i. endorse SPC's multi-sector approach to NCDs;
 - ii. advocate that member countries prioritise multi-sector approaches to NCDs and implementation of policies and actions to address NCDs.
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MULTI-SECTOR APPROACH TO ADDRESSING NCDs IN THE PACIFIC – MOVING AHEAD TOGETHER

Purpose

5. This paper outlines SPC's initiatives to strengthen the multi-sector approach to NCDs, both internally and in interactions with other partners working with Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs). The approach is based on recognising that factors in many sectors contribute to the development of NCDs before they become an issue for the health sector.

Background

Burden of NCDs

6. Rates of obesity and overweight in PICT populations are among the highest in the world and continue to rise. In some PICTs, more than 95% of adults are overweight or obese. The obesity epidemic is affecting even our children and it has been said that the Pacific is raising the most obese generation ever in its human history. Diabetes and pre-diabetes rates are among the highest in the world and also continue to escalate. In some PICTs, up to 75% of adults have either diabetes or pre-diabetes. Even children are developing the 'adult' type of diabetes. More and more people are dying from NCDs (up to 75% in some PICTs) and increasingly prematurely. It is now not uncommon to have deaths from NCDs occurring in people as young as the early 30s. Evidence also points to the possibility of decreasing life expectancy as a result of NCDs in some PICTs.

Impact of NCDs

7. The economic cost of NCDs is already more than many PICTs can afford. Some cannot afford basic laboratory tests and cannot provide the medications shown to be necessary in treating NCDs. Treatment of complications resulting from NCDs cannot be provided by most PICTs. For those that do fund some of these treatments, the costs account for a significant proportion of health budgets. The reality for many PICTs is that the rising costs of NCDs are leading to increasing health expenditure in an environment where there is already a high proportion of government spending on health but slow economic growth. This situation does not augur well for the future.
8. Illness and disability caused by NCDs affect individuals, households and societies and represent significant impediments for economic growth.

Global and regional commitment to addressing NCDs

9. In 2011, there was a United Nations High-Level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of NCDs – only the second such meeting held by the UN to address a disease entity (the first being HIV/AIDS). At the recent Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Samoa, NCDs continued to feature prominently and SPC played a key role in drawing attention to the most pressing issues.
10. Pacific leaders have been at the forefront of acknowledging the burden of NCDs. In 2011, Pacific Islands Forum Leaders expressed deep concern that NCDs have reached epidemic proportions in PICTs and have become a '...human, social and economic crisis requiring an urgent and comprehensive response'.
11. In addition, there have been commitments to address NCDs at meetings of Pacific Ministers for Health, Finance, Education and Trade and at the Micronesian Chief Executives Summit.

Multi-Sector approach to NCDs

12. **Pacific NCD Partnership** – In line with calls from leaders for a multi-sector regional partnership to bring about a more coordinated whole of government, whole of society approach to NCDs, the Pacific NCD Partnership was launched at the SIDS meeting in Samoa. The Partnership aims to strengthen and coordinate the necessary capacity and expertise to support PICTs to make significant progress on the prevention and control of NCDs in order to meet the globally agreed targets. SPC will facilitate coordination of the Partnership.
13. **Implementation of the NCD Roadmap** – The inaugural Joint Meeting of Forum Economic Ministers and Pacific Health Ministers in July 2014 approved the NCD Roadmap. SPC worked with the Quintilateral Partners in Health (Australia, New Zealand, SPC, World Bank and World Health Organization) on developing the NCD Roadmap, which provides PICTs with a range of strategies aimed at reducing the burden of NCDs and their economic and social costs. The Roadmap has four key policy recommendations based around tobacco control, unhealthy food and drinks, improved efficiency and impact of existing health expenditure through targeting primary and secondary prevention, and a strengthened evidence base for investment planning. There are also up to 30 additional recommendations that PICTs can choose to incorporate depending on their own situation. SPC will be working together with PICTs and other partners to implement the NCD Roadmap.
14. **Facilitating the Pacific Monitoring Alliance for NCD Action (MANA)** – The Pacific MANA initiative was approved by the Pacific Health Ministers Meeting in July 2014. MANA provides a platform to enable collaborating PICTs and partners to support monitoring of progress towards NCD targets within a system of mutual accountability for effective action to reduce the region's NCD crisis. SPC, WHO and C-POND will act as the joint secretariat for Pacific MANA, which includes a number of partners who play different roles and address different aspects of NCD monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning.
15. **Implementation of an SPC-wide approach to NCDs/Food Security** – As part of SPC's change process, a renewed drive to bring about a more programmatic and multi-sector approach has been endorsed by the senior leadership team. Two areas have been chosen to be the first to carry out this approach – NCDs/Food Security, and Climate Change/Disaster Risk Management. They were chosen as they stand to gain most from a multi-sector approach and also because several divisions are already working to address the interrelated issues in these areas. For example, there are recognised links and overlap between NCDs and food security and they need to be addressed together. As such, an NCDs/Food Security Working Group has been formed to ensure that SPC takes an integrated approach to NCDs internally, and to facilitate an integrated approach in countries. The Working Group includes expertise in fisheries (particularly coastal fisheries), human development (including gender and human rights), agriculture (access to healthy food and food security), education (healthy school policies), statistics (health information systems and civil registration and vital statistics), transport (physical activity friendly environments and planning) and the impacts of climate change. The multi-sector approach by SPC will strengthen the efforts to address NCDs with PICTs, including where efforts to incorporate a multi-sector approach have faced challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

16. CRGA is invited to:
 - i. endorse the SPC multi-sector approach to NCDs;
 - ii. advocate that members prioritise a multi-sector approach to NCDs and implementation of policies and actions to address NCDs.
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