

Ninth Meeting of Ministers of Health for the Pacific Island Countries June 2011





Honiara Outcome

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Contents

Executive Summary	1
Foreword	3
Comments From The Secretariat	5
Introduction	7
Section 1: Scheduled Topics	9
Strengthening health leadership and multisectoral action to address noncommunicable diseases	9
Healthy islands: framework of action for revitalization of healthy islands in the Pacific	10
Improving performance: strengthening national health planning and monitoring and evaluation	11
Strengthening food security in the Pacific: Pacific Food Summit and beyond	12
Achieving MDGs 4 and 5: Pacific strategy for scaling-up action on women's and children's health	13
Section 2: Ministerial Open Forum	15
Mental health	15
Social determinants of health	17
Health information systems, evidence, epidemiology and statistics	18
Human resources for health (HRH)	19
Other priority areas	20
Annex 1	24

iii

Executive Summary

The first Meeting of Ministers of Health for the Pacific Island Countries was convened in Fiji in 1995. Subsequent biennial meetings have further confronted key health issues in the Pacific. The Ninth Meeting of Ministers of Health for the Pacific Island Countries was held in 2011 in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

Scheduled topics included noncommunicable diseases (NCDs); revitalization of Healthy Islands, and recognition of those cited in WHO's Healthy Islands Recognition Programme; improving performance through strengthening national health planning, monitoring and evaluation; strengthening food security in the Pacific; and achieving Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5. Additionally, an Open Forum format led to the discussion of 10 further topics: 1) mental health; 2) social determinants of health; 3) health information systems, evidence, epidemiology and statistics; 4) human resources for health; 5) clinical care and clinical governance; 6) emerging and neglected infectious diseases; 7) disaster risk management; 8) laboratories; 9) health care financing, health leadership and governance; and 10) new technologies. The Open Forum format proved highly successful in increasing inclusiveness and ownership of the meeting process and outcomes.

Further discussions resulted in a variety of suggested ways forward for each of the topics discussed, with several dominant themes emerging: the need to build upon and optimize use of existing mechanisms, such as regional networks and existing frameworks, plans and tools; the benefit of using health system strengthening as a cross-cutting way to address all issues; and the vital importance of multisectoral and whole-of-society approaches. The majority of topics were highly interrelated, such that action in addressing any one topic would result in progress in other areas.

Delegates affirmed their political commitment toward combating NCDs, and endorsed an NCD Communiqué, which called upon stakeholders to give the highest priority to this critical issue; this served as an input into the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting and the United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting on NCDs in New York.

The vision of Healthy Islands was reaffirmed as being as relevant now as when it was first articulated; the delegates embraced Healthy Islands as a unifying and overarching framework for addressing other health issues.

Foreword

On behalf of the Government and people of Solomon Islands, I am honoured to have had the opportunity to chair the Ninth Meeting of Ministers of Health for the Pacific Island Countries. The participation of such distinguished Ministers and Partners at these Meetings is a clear indication of a great commitment to advancing the health needs of people in the region.

Our "Blue Continent" is currently faced with a number of grave challenges to the health of our people. These challenges include many of those deliberated during this Meeting, including the crisis of noncommunicable diseases, the challenge of reaching Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5, the rising burden of mental illness, and the critical shortage of human resources for health. The Healthy Islands vision remains only partly attained. The geography of our Blue Continent is challenging as far as the delivery of much needed health services is concerned.

However, I have hope for the future. Our Government, like those of my colleagues, is fully committed to reforming the health sector, to ensure that the delivery of these much needed services reaches our people, relieves their suffering, addresses their health care needs and also improves their standard of living. With the wisdom, knowledge, support and goodwill of the participants

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