

ESCAP/ADB/UNDP PACIFIC MDG Workshop:
Taking Stock, Emerging Issues & the Way Forward

16-20 March 2009 Nadi, Fiji

List of Acronyms

ABC	Abstain, be faithful, use Condoms
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIDS.....	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ANU	Australian National University
CBAM	Community-Based Adaptive Management
CC	Climate Change
CD	Communicable Diseases
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CO	Country Office
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DWA	Department of Women's Affairs
FSPI	Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific International
GBV	Gender-based violence
GEF-OFP	Global Environment Facility – Operational Focal Point
GEFC	Global Economic and Financial Crisis
GEPG	Gender Equality in Political Governance
GES	Gender Equality Strategy

GNI	Gross National Income
HDR	Human Development Report
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HPI	Human Poverty Index
HR	Human rights
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFEM	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
MHC	Mother and Child Health
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOL	Ministry of Labour
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NCDs	Non-Communicable Diseases
NSO	National Statistics Office
NSP	National Strategic Plan
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PAA	Prioritized Action Agenda

PHDR	Pacific Human Development Report
PICs	Pacific Islands Countries
PPAPD	Pacific Parliamentary Assembly on Population and Development
PSC	Public Service Commission
SIDS	Small Islands Developing States
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SRH	Sexual and reproductive health
TB	Tuberculosis
USP	University of the South Pacific
UNDP PC	United Nations Development Programme Pacific Centre
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women
VAW	Violence Against Women
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive Summary

ESCAP, ADB and UNDP have forged a tripartite partnership since 2007 to analyze trends in MDG achievement across the Asia/Pacific region and explore policy options at regional and national levels. The Pacific Regional Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Workshop was organized by the tripartite partnership to provide participants with an overview of trends towards the achievement of MDGs, discuss emerging issues and highlight possible options on how Pacific Island Countries (PICs) can move forward.

While there have been some gains across the region, the difficulty of tracking progress from a regional perspective was highlighted. This is largely due to uneven performance towards the goals among PICs, and also a lack of consistent and refined time series data to support findings. Many countries are grappling with emerging issues such as climate change and the global economic and financial crisis, and are off-track on one or more MDGs.

Several gaps were identified in the efforts of PICs to achieve the MDGs, including low levels of economic growth and gaps in policy, strategy, resources and implementation. Countries agreed that to achieve the MDGs, capacity-building and a more efficient utilization of available resources were essential to ensure targeted and effective actions. The importance of consistent, quality and internationally-comparable data is vital to inform policy-development and policy responses. It was also agreed that policies should strike a balance between inclusive economic growth and the need for an ability to pay. In addition policies also need to be holistic and gender-sensitive.

The challenges of building and strengthening national and local governance institutions and frameworks which create a supportive enabling environment for achievement of the MDGs initiated a lot of discussion. In particular, many countries focused on issues around integrating modern and traditional governance systems. However, it was noted that there are some aspects of both traditional and modern governance structures that have not always advanced the principles of gender equality or human rights. Therefore particular attention should be paid to ensuring that approaches taken to integrate traditional and modern governance systems do in fact advance principles of good governance, gender equality and global human rights norms.

Governance and its critical role in the creation of an enabling environment for progress also initiated considerable discussion as a majority of countries maintain traditional governance systems in parallel with modern structures, which often include certain practices that may be contradictory to both basic human rights and the normally accepted principles of good governance.

The contribution of civil society to good governance, service delivery and achievement of the MDGs was highlighted, and some good practices in natural resource management were shared.

The regional workshop allowed countries to take stock and learn from each other, thereby allowing each country to plan new interventions for deepening the response to the MDG agenda. The meeting also provided an opportunity for UN and development partners to learn more about how to respond and strengthen development effectiveness to achieve the best results, drawing out the linkages between the Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness and the achievement of the MDGs, including how UNDP Country Office (COs) can more effectively design or implement national interventions.

The meeting also highlighted the work currently in progress in Vanuatu on MDG Needs Assessment and Costing. The methodology supports governments to determine what interventions are required in each sector to achieve the MDGs in the coming years, and to estimate the cost of these interventions, in line with established policy priorities. The approach builds the capacity of line ministries to develop prioritized, costed and time-bound sector plans, which provide a sound rationale for budget submissions, thereby contributing to a stronger alignment between policies, plans and budget processes.

A range of new resources which policy-makers and civil society can use to address bottlenecks in specific MDGs were launched, such as the *Asia/Pacific 3rd Regional MDG Progress Report*, *Updated MDG indicators for 15 Pacific countries*, *Accelerating health-related MDGs with Equity*, *Results of Recent Pacific Household Energy Surveys*, and a *Regional Study on Gender & HIV in the Pacific*.

At the end of the workshop, there was consensus that more work needed to be done to understand the cost of service delivery per capita, as this would contribute to designing specific responses within countries to achieve the MDGs. This would also help identify governance and other constraints in the delivery of quality basic services in the Pacific. There were strong suggestions for an MDG Fund to be set up for the Pacific region and for a Network of MDG Focal Points across the Pacific to be established to share information, resources and good practices regularly.

Introduction

Fourteen Pacific countries from Micronesia, Polynesia and Melanesia met in Fiji from 16-20 March 2009 to review trends in reaching the MDG targets in the region and discuss policy options and actions for improved MDGs performance in the coming years. The regional MDG Workshop was organized by and is part of a continuum of support being provided under the regional partnership of ADB, ESCAP and UNDP to support the achievement of the MDGs in the Asia and Pacific region. The workshop took place against the backdrop of the global financial and economic crisis, volatile fuel and food prices, and assessed their impact on Pacific economies and implications for MDG achievement.

The workshop was attended by Government officials from Ministries of Planning, Finance, Women, Health, Environment and/or Energy, national and regional civil society representatives, regional organizations and UN Agencies.

The workshop objectives were to:

- Take stock of the progress made in achieving the MDGs in the Pacific;
- Examine the findings and implications of *A Future Within Reach 2008* and the draft *Pacific Human Development Report on Governance for MDG Achievement* ;
- Discuss country strategies and a range of policy options for governments to address among others the food and fuel crisis, climate change and the global financial/economic slowdown;
- Identify countries' constraints and support needed to accelerate progress on the MDGs in the next 8-10 years; and
- Explore development partners' support for Pacific countries to reach the MDGs by 2015.

In looking forward to an acceleration of efforts towards the achievement of the MDGs within the framework of the Millennium Declaration, the organizers framed the expected outcomes of the workshop as follows:

- Maintain advocacy on the need to work towards MDG achievement in the Pacific;
- Enhanced understanding of what is needed to achieve greater progress on human development and the MDGs;
- Strengthened capacities of governments and civil society to formulate evidence-based policy;
- Reinforced understanding by countries of how to integrate a gender and human rights-based approach into policies;
- Capacity needs and support requirements identified to enable countries to move forward towards the MDGs;
- Availability of support from development partners including UN Agencies to facilitate countries' efforts to make better progress on human development and the MDGs ascertained; and
- Launching of a range of publications and resources.

Representatives of the tripartite partnership made opening remarks at the workshop, and emphasized the backdrop of the global economic and financial crisis and its potential impact on Pacific economies. They urged that achievement of the MDGs at national level must be safeguarded in these difficult economic times by maintaining public investment in economic as well as social sectors. They also emphasized the importance of strengthening national capacities; the need to have consistent and quality data available; and knowledge-sharing.

Mr Raj Kumar from ESCAP emphasized that the global economic and financial crisis can be an opportunity for Pacific countries to review institutional and operational structures. Mr. Kumar highlighted that the ESCAP/ADB/UNDP tripartite efforts would continue to support countries address the growth, policy, strategy, resource and implementation gaps for the achievement of MDGs. He also emphasized the need to share best practices.

Mr Keith Leonard from ADB reminded participants of the collective experience and wisdom available in the Pacific and the need to draw lessons from the past and from each other to inform future interventions. Mr Leonard pointed out that, as the region receives the highest level of aid per capita in the developing world, participants need to analyse the MDG gaps, take tangible lessons from the workshop and innovate when strategising.

Mr Garry Wiseman from the UNDP Pacific Centre advocated that budgetary cuts to social sectors as a response to the global financial crisis could directly threaten MDGs gains and result in reversals. He suggested that governments maintain a pro-poor budgetary approach. Mr Wiseman pointed out that while the MDGs are the primary responsibility of governments, collaboration between states, CSOs and development partners is crucial to accelerate progress towards the goals.

The keynote speaker for the workshop was Mr. **Pita Wise**, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for National Planning in Fiji.

Mr Wise acknowledged progress achieved so far in the region as well as the need to intervene with fresh policies and resources. He underlined that the MDGs are universally-accepted human values and rights. Mr Wise stressed that the Pacific Plan offered avenues through which MDGs-related strategies could be implemented within an environment which is conducive for progress. One of the challenges faced by the region is how to progress beyond policies, plans, and strategies to undertake high impact, cohesive interventions at ground level, aligned with targeted budgetary allocations. He underscored the need to come up with innovative solutions to address increasing but familiar challenges. He concluded that a sincere commitment to meeting the MDGs and strong leadership was essential to the achievement of MDGs.

The plenary discussions focused on the impact of the global economic and financial crisis and emphasized the need for improved institutional and state effectiveness to prepare for a possible decline in aid flows. ADB indicated its readiness to assist countries to respond through the likelihood of securing more funding and the possibility of reviewing current arrangements to allow for more borrowing as well as grants.

While it is recognized that per capita aid flows to the Pacific region are seven times the average across all developing countries, Pacific countries questioned the volume of aid resources that are actually spent in the recipient countries. The debate highlighted that in line with the Paris and Pacific Principles on Aid Effectiveness, donors have a responsibility to indicate multi-year funding frameworks to partner countries and provide untied aid.

Countries were enthusiastic about making greater progress towards the MDGs but funding was a core concern for all. This led to discussions on funding options and the responsibilities of developing countries to drive the aid effectiveness agenda and create awareness that addresses the non-tangible nature of the MDGs and the Millennium Declaration.

The role which CSOs play - and can continue to play - was emphasized as discussions centred on gaps and effective advocacy options. In addition participants underlined the need for states to recognize the contribution of civil society organizations in service delivery.

Some good practices in MDGs localization were shared such as Samoa's Pacific Parliamentary Assembly on Population and Development project (PPAPD) and the collaboration between UNDP Pacific Centre/SPC/UNFPA on the important role of Parliamentarians as MDG champions; and the utilisation of CSOs as vehicles for raising awareness on the MDGs and the Millennium Declaration. It was suggested that resources are pooled for parallel but related initiatives.

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Session 2 – Objective: A stock-take of achievements and progress so far and an assessment of difficulties associated with the achievement of MDGs by PICs

Professor Biman Chand Prasad: *MDGs in the Pacific* (USP)

Professor Prasad highlighted that progress on the MDGs is very uneven in the Pacific region, and stressed that MDG-related intentions must be supported by appropriate investment in infrastructure, identified as one of the 'binding constraints' hindering progress towards the MDGs. Generally speaking, the Polynesian countries are making satisfactory progress towards attainment of the MDGs; the North Pacific countries are struggling to prevent a reversal of MDG gains, particularly in the face of the volatility of food and fuel prices, and now the global economic and financial crisis; and the Melanesian countries have not made sufficient progress to be on track to reach the MDGs

by 2015. Several countries are off track on one or more MDGs. Consequently, serious consideration needs be given to issues including the social impact of lost opportunities due to political instability; strengthening jurisdictional resourcefulness; and a more specific aid focus.

Discussants

Mr. Guanghai Wan: (ADB)

The first discussant highlighted that countries can follow a process when examining options for making headway towards achievement of the MDGs. This includes: (1) Identifying constraints correctly; (2) Designing specific policies and recommendations to ensure targeted interventions; and (3) Implementing a coherent response. Actions must be mindful of resource distribution and/or structural barriers to service developments.

Mr. David Abbott: (UNDP)

The second discussant drew attention to the growing incidence of relative poverty in PICs as measured by their national basic needs poverty lines. It was noted that PICs can achieve the MDGs with simple and yet effective responses such as (1) Making service delivery more efficient and more responsive to the needs of the people; (2) States focusing their resources on national and local-level priorities; (3) Promoting growth-oriented policies that are consistent with achievement of the MDGs; and (4) Decision-making that ensures service delivery mechanisms are established and monitored in an efficient and effective manner for better development results.

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The discussions underscored the following key issues: (1) The importance of data and the need to harmonize country statistics with data in the UN databases; (2) The need to localize MDG indicators, where appropriate, a step which some Pacific countries have already taken; and (3) Countries agreed that capacity-building related to data and national planning must be strengthened.

A recurrent theme during the discussions was that PICs have unique realities, and the diversity requires unconventional, non-traditional strategies for the advancement of the MDGs. A one-size-fits-all approach cannot be applied in the region.

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Session 3 – Objective: A review of regional MDG progress tracking work and reflections on data availability and ways of improving cooperation and coordination between national, regional and international statistical agencies

Session 4 – Objective: Based on the draft Pacific Human Development Report, this session takes stock of trends; identifies issues and highlights a range of policy options that may be available to Pacific governments.

Mrs. Margaret Chung: *Presentation of the key findings of 2008 draft Pacific Human Development Report on Governance for MDG Achievement* (UNDP Consultant)

The 2009 Pacific HDR focuses on how governance is impacting on human development and the achievement of the MDGs in the Pacific. It examines aspects of poor governance which affect development negatively and how, before exploring what still needs to be done so that governance can contribute effectively to development and achieving the MDGs. The Millennium Declaration and the MDGs are critical markers of development, and while they can act as goal-posts, there is no road map to take countries to the 2015 deadline. Since the last Pacific HDR was published 10 years ago, there has been an improvement in HPI, life expectancy, and other indicators. The Report highlights varying degrees of poverty of opportunity – reflected in the increasing squatter settlements and/or lack of rural and outer island development. There is a realisation that these problems lie in the realm of politics and management, even when the inevitable handicaps determined by the region’s geography or other structural characteristics of small island states are taken into account. Governance, including management, political leadership and vision, clearly matters in addressing the difficult but not necessarily intractable development challenges.

Dr Vicki Luker: *Commentator* (Australian National University)

Outlining from the outset that natural resources are essentially about ones’ protection, financial or otherwise, Dr Luker discussed some shortcomings including local-level management of revenue and marine resources management. She emphasized that while economic growth is necessary, it is not sufficient. PICs must re-examine the purpose for their natural resources. Dr Luker highlighted that the MDGs are measurement devices and stated that the Pacific has the resources - natural resources, extended family system, and creative solutions – to achieve MDGs.

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Discussions:

Following the presentation, participants discussed the need to integrate traditional governance structures in the Pacific with modern concepts of good governance. It was clear that neither traditional nor modern governance structures are perfect in relation to gender equality or human rights but that in both cases, it is only the discriminatory aspects or impacts that must be changed.

The role that CSOs can play, the need for consistent and quality data and capacity-building were identified as fundamental considerations if countries are to implement the principles of good governance in designing development policies to achieve the MDGs.

Session 5 - Objective: Explore the governance dynamics in the Pacific, the role of CSOs and the impact of conflict on sustainable human development and MDGs in the Pacific

Mr. Ernesto Bautista: *The dynamics of governance and traditional systems in the Pacific* (UNDP)

The presentation highlighted the links between the broader governance environment and indigenous governance systems and their impact on MDGs. It also presented a framework that identified entry points on how those links could be made. It is well established that good governance is conducive to economic growth by improving the efficiency and functioning of institutions. Governance challenges in the Pacific take many forms and are reflected in policy and institutional structures, legal framework, capacity constraints, and weak inter-governmental relations. This is further compounded by the co-existence of a traditional governance system which still exerts a significant influence in many PICs. A useful framework to examine the links between governance and MDGs is to analyze the roles and functions of various stakeholders in the context of service delivery functions, and the extent to which key principles of good governance are embedded in the provision of local services. Services that contribute to the achievement of MDGs must involve national/local government, CSOs, indigenous governance mechanisms, and other local governance actors such as the church, NGOs and the private sector who all interact in the provision and production of local services.

Mrs. Bala Tedumo: *A civil society perspectives on reaching the MDGs: the engagement of CSOs in service delivery in PICs* (PNG)

The case study of the Ok Tedi mining community initiative demonstrated the positive role CSOs can play when meaningful and genuine community consultation takes place. This case is of particular interest in that women participate in decision-making from the beginning of the process. Despite constraints – geographical challenges, high level of illiteracy and/or isolation – the organisation has successfully advocated for the interests of women and children to be taken into account, and ensured that 10% of the indicative budget of this initiative (in this case, US\$50million) targets the welfare of women and children in addressing mine impact in the community. The benefit of community-wide awareness and involvement of all stakeholders during consultations are aptly demonstrated in Ok Tedi. The inclusion of women ensured a more holistic understanding of the issues, a different perspective on the development planning process, and contributed to the empowerment of women through informed decision-making.

Mr. Jean-Luc Stalon: *Has conflict in the Pacific affected the region's progress in achieving MDGs?* (UNDP)

The backdrop to the presentation is that the ultimate responsibility of reaching the MDGs belongs to governments, and without peace and stability, states face difficulty in achieving the MDGs. The commonalities between conflict, poverty and governance in the Pacific include the effect of inequitable access to key public services, resources and opportunities and the potential for conflict, as witnessed in Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. A lack of progress towards the MDGs can contribute to or exacerbate conflicts by creating conditions and grievances that feed conflicts, thus impairing the state's capacity to govern and provide service delivery. It is well known that in nearly all contexts, the impact of conflicts is further exacerbated on women and girls. Because reconstruction is very expensive to the state, private sector and communities, a better strategy is to invest in conflict prevention.

The way forward is to strengthen capacities at both national and regional levels to analyze the dynamics between peace, conflict and development; to design appropriate policies and programs through strong coordination and leadership; and build the capacity of governance institutions to oversee and manage the security sector in the Pacific. Equally important is the need to support post-conflict recovery and state-building efforts in some countries. Additional research is necessary to provide governments with policy options for a conflict-sensitive approach to responding to the global economic and financial crisis in the Pacific as well as forward looking thinking to address the nexus between development, climate change and disaster risk reduction.

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The three presentations were inter-linked and generated a lot of feedback on the various governance systems which exist in the region. In particular, discussions focused on cultural practices including corruption. Participants were reminded that at a time when resources are becoming scarce, it is particularly important to ensure that judicious use is made of existing resources, and that there needs to be a greater focus on meeting the needs of the most marginalized and poor communities. To that end, national budgets are instruments of policy change and need to reflect sectoral and national priorities to achieve the MDGs.

While it was agreed that good governance is essential to foster progress on the MDGs, countries struggle with institutional frameworks and personal attitudes which entrench cultural practices that are sometimes contradictory to principles of good governance. It was noted that there are existing traditional institutional arrangements and systems that could be built on and used to promote the MDGs. For example, the customary system of social safety nets for the less fortunate members of the extended family has traditionally cushioned the impacts of poverty, especially the social and economic aspects. When combined with a rights-based approach, this customary system has the potential to help promote the achievement of MDGs in concrete ways at the local/family level. Countries were reminded that it is a long process to develop and institutionalize good governance.

Session 6 – Objective: Identify and address bottlenecks in relation to the health MDGs (Goals 4, 5, 6 & 7). Country perspectives on Infant & Maternal Mortality, HIV/Malaria and Other Diseases, and Access to Water & Sanitation: Trends, Issues and Country Strategies

During the plenary, **Fiji** expressed its disappointment that it was either off track or regressing in most of the health MDGs. The government was, however committed to address: (1) The need for effective and efficient service delivery; (2) Improved surveillance and monitoring capability; (3) The rural-urban divides; (4) The impact of the global recession; (5) Legislative and health reforms; and (6) The infrastructural support needs. A multi-stakeholder approach supported by quality data will be essential if Fiji is to achieve the MDGs.

Solomon Islands underlined the difficulty of making progress on reducing the infant mortality rate which, despite a slight decrease, remains one of the highest rates in the region. The high rate of under-5 mortality also remains a big challenge. The situation is compounded by respiratory diseases and diarrhea which are often fatal; skin diseases are prevalent; and vaccine-preventable diseases tend to flare up regularly. The regression was attributed mainly to the civil conflict and cultural taboos regarding certain health issues. Strategies need to be sector-wide to be successful and need to respond to (1) The lack of data; (2) The rural-urban disparities; (3) A shortage of condoms in the country; and (4) The lack of adequate maintenance to ensure the sustainability of infrastructure.

Vanuatu is facing a range of constraints including in institutional and infrastructural frameworks, financial sustainability, management of health cases and the lack of up-skilling opportunities for health personnel. Challenges relate to the high turn-over and/or retiring of personnel; the lack of consistent updating of administrative data on health issues; and geography which hinders accessibility to health services. In order to accelerate progress on the health MDGs, strategies should take into account; (1) Access to transportation; (2) Adequate supply of health equipment; and (3) Improvement in information sharing and communication (amongst health workers and stations and between health workers and the population).

Papua New Guinea clarified that provincial (or local) government is responsible for health delivery although the state has incorporated the MDGs into its national plans. While infant and under-5 mortality has declined, maternal mortality remains extremely high. In addition, an estimated 6000 people have died of AIDS leaving behind some 3000 orphans who, apart from a high probability of carrying the HIV virus, also suffer from the social stigma associated with HIV. Increased (human) mobility has resulted in the epidemic evolving from an ‘urban disease’ to one that is now prevalent nation-wide. Constraints in the implementation of policies include a lack of funding; confusion over who is responsible; and the need for a multi-sectoral, coordinated HIV response. Emerging issues include economic pressure (driving rural-urban drift and increasing urban settlements), human resources-related challenges (capacity-building, health

workers) and medical supplies. The overall in-country strategy is to achieve across-the-board improvements by first prioritizing the allocation of resources towards service delivery, before streamlining the implementation of the new Health Plan in 2011.

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The discussions centred on the importance of tailoring the health and/or other MDGs to suit the local context, and subsequently incorporating these targets into sector plans that are then integrated into national development plans and aligned with the national budget framework. While development partners may have thematic priorities, consultation with countries will ensure that support can be made available for nationally-led development goals. The international community can provide financial support through Ministries of Finance which can monitor the process and ensure accountability and transparency within the legal requirements and reporting cycles of donors.

Dr Eliab Some: *Accelerating Health-related MDGs with Equity: An Analysis of Bottlenecks, Opportunities and Priority Actions* (UNICEF)

UNICEF has undertaken an analysis of MDG4 in seven countries – Fiji, Tonga, Solomons, Kiribati, Vanuatu, FSM and RMI. Bottlenecks in neonatal and U5 mortality were attributed to the limited availability and access to essential health services and the need to improve human capacity and neo-natal care. The underlying causes of weak performances in the health sector, while varying by context, overall consist of poor economic performance; social and political instability; frequent natural disasters; gender inequality; and emerging threats such as food and household insecurity, the global economic and financial crisis and emerging diseases. These underscore an urgent need to train more health personnel and focus on strengthening surveillance systems. The idea of a “Pacific Countdown” towards 2015, with bi-annual review meetings, was floated. The MDG Needs Assessment and Costing exercises in Vanuatu (underway) and Solomon Islands (initiated) were seen as viable ways of addressing the bottlenecks identified.

Dr Annette Robertson: *Achieving MDGs 5&6: Policies and Strategies for moving ahead in Population and Reproductive Health* (UNFPA)

The presentation underlined the linkages between sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and poverty and how access to SRH can contribute to the achievement of all MDGs. A decline in fertility can translate into faster social and economic development at national level. At household level, women accessing contraceptives are more empowered in that not only can they make increased investment into their children’s well-being, but they can also decide how to use their time. Access to SRH care can reduce poverty and hunger, infant and child mortality, prevent sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS and reduce maternal mortality. While a significant improvement can be noted in maternal mortality in several Pacific countries (no maternal deaths in Palau, Cook Islands and Niue since the 1990), other countries need to accelerate targeted efforts in order to reach this MDG by 2015. For example, PNG recorded an MMR of 733 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2006. Except for Kiribati and PNG, in most PICs the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel is above 80%. Teenage fertility

is very high in some PICs, and the unmet need for family planning is a threat to national health and development goals. Strategies to move ahead include a rights-based approach, use of numbers rather than percentages to track progress, a focus on treatment, advocacy, integration of SRH policies and MDGs into country plans, upgrading of infrastructure, and investment in national institutions and national capacity. It was noted that early investments in this area can result in cost savings in the long run.

Dr Seng Sopheap: *Status, challenges and issues in meeting MDG6 targets on HIV/TB/Malaria, NCDs and other diseases (WHO)*

The presentation provided an overview of HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and NCDs trends in the Pacific. The transmission of HIV is largely through heterosexual sex and some of the challenges include low condom-use in high risk situations; high level of STIs; limited coverage of interventions, particularly in outer islands; and weak health systems. Responses should include intensified prevention measures; control of STIs; strengthening of the health systems and implementation of integrated HIV and STI control activities as part of primary health care. On TB, while considerable progress can be noted, the targets are still to be met. Strategies should target a strengthening of the health system, focus TB control on high-risk population groups; strengthening procurement of quality-assured TB drugs in the Pacific region; and scaling-up the framework for management of multi-drug resistant TB and TB-HIV in PICs. It was noted that whilst malaria is not endemic in many PICs it remains an important issue in Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and PNG. While the prevalence of NCDs is not included in the MDGs, it was noted that an estimated 75% of all deaths in the Pacific are NCD-related. Consequently, this is a priority which, along with infectious diseases, is putting a double burden on the health systems of PICs. Some countries have considered localizing their health goals to include NCDs. There is a need to address procurement issues and health information systems urgently. It is also important to prioritize improvement to health systems and strengthen the sector as a whole in order to accelerate progress on the MDGs.

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Discussions on the presentations on MDGs 4, 5 and 6 focused on strengthening of staff capacity and health systems as a recurring theme. Potential funding sources exist, and the One UN framework was suggested as a model of a multi-sectoral approach. Institutional support for initiatives or programmes was encouraged to ensure a sustainable arrangement as donor funding should not always be relied upon. Discussions highlighted that condom social marketing programmes are highly needed in the Pacific in order to increase condom acceptance. There is a need to also strengthen health systems including human resource capacity development in the health sector.

Group Work: How can service delivery be improved to further progress on MDGs 4, 5, 6 and 7 in the three sub-regions? What are the constraints and support needed?

During the group work to address constraints in the health MDGs, participants identified the following:

- The lack of appropriate skilled personnel;
- Accessibility to quality health services;
- Maintenance of facilities;
- Procurement of equipments, medical supplies, etc;
- Financial sustainability; and
- Effective awareness.

Strategies to address identified gaps include:

- Recruitment to fill in required expertise gaps;
- Human resource development must reflect training needs;
- Health plans must be aligned to national programmes; and
- Local language(s) to be used in advocacy campaigns.

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Discussions brought to the fore and reinforced the following issues, namely:

- The need to address primary health care if infant, child and maternal mortality is to decline;
- The MDGs are about improving people’s lives, and not only about indicators;
- Conflicts impact directly on MDG processes;
- The role of CSOs in delivering health services;
- The integration of NCDs-related initiatives and targets within sectoral plans;
- Strengthening the link between policy and implementation; and
- The effective and efficient utilisation of existing resources.

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Group A1: Participants from Vanuatu, Solomon, PNG and Fiji

Question: What are the top two constraints that the group agrees on regarding *Infant Mortality and Maternal Health*? What are the strategies to move ahead?

Constraints:		Strategies:	
Constraint 1	Lack of qualified health workers	Strategy 1 - Short-term: Recruitment of medical personnel from overseas (simultaneously addressing knowledge & skills transfer)	Strategy 1 - Long-term: Prioritizing human resources capacity-building (health sector)
		Strategy 2: Provide incentives such as improving conditions for rural work stations	
Constraint 2	Accessibility to quality health	Strategy 1: Phased implementation of quality health services	

	services: one-stop shop that addresses challenges to quality health services	Strategy 1(b): Encourage state provision of basic infrastructure (assistance/influence/pressure from developing agencies)
		Strategy 2: On-going awareness on reproductive health and family planning among the population.

Group B2: Participants from Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Niue and Cook islands

Question: What are the top two constraints that the group agrees on regarding *HIV, TB, Malaria, NCDs and other diseases*? What are the strategies to move ahead?

Constraints:		Strategies:	
Constraint 1	Lack of qualified human resources in the health sector	Strategy 1: Formulate plans and policies for human resource development which should reflect training needs (formal, informal, technical); training requirements; succession plans; and career paths and progress.	
Constraint 2	Maintenance of facilities and procurement of equipments and medical supplies	Strategy 2: Development of performance and service standards to ensure compliance, monitoring and regulations; complaints and discipline; and performance management system.	
		Note: *Develop MOUs and/or MOAs to ensure partnership and commitment; *Strengthen networks to ensure all stakeholders are informed of developments/programmes/progress/etc.	
Additional constraints and strategies on MDG6: Combat HIV/AIDS & Other Diseases			
Constraint 1	Financial sustainability	Constraint 2	Lack of effective information and/or knowledge dissemination
Strategy: Plans must be aligned with MDGs to improve efficiency and effectiveness of existing resources		Strategy: Education programmes must suit the target audience and should particularly be age- and language-sensitive	

Group C2: Participants from Palau, Nauru, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Island and Kiribati

Question: What are the top two constraints that the group agrees on regarding *Access to Water and Sanitation*? What are the strategies to move ahead?

Constraints:	Strategies:
C1: Resources (Human Resources, Infrastructure, Funding, Isolation)	Capacity-building; increased collaboration at local, national, regional and international levels.
C2: Old Ways (Using beaches or the backyards as lavatories)	Enforce laws and regulations, supported by awareness campaigns to affect behavioral changes. Traditional leaders can help influence attitudinal changes. Public awareness programmes must 'speak the language'.

Additional issues raised:

Constraint:	Way forward	Constraint:
Financing and neglect	Prioritized with appropriate monetary support; Financing specific household facilities.	Quality and quantity of resources required, particularly in atolls
<i>Note: Water and sanitation is linked to climate change and can tap into existing sources of fund.</i>		

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Session 7 – Objective: A focus on how countries are dealing with the sustainable management of natural resources looking at the status, emerging issues and the way forward, including strategies and policy options.

Mr. Etika Rupeni: *Managing environmental resources in the Pacific through partnerships: A regional overview of good practices (FSPI)*

The work undertaken by FSPI centres on good governance as a key component of natural resources management and provides a link between communities and policy-makers. FSPI uses the community-based adaptive management approach (community identifies issues/challenges; FSPI facilitates technical support; appropriate action is then planned collectively) to respond to how communities deal with government policies. CBAM uses both scientific and indigenous knowledge to build community resilience. It is particularly necessary to maintain and nurture partnerships at all times. Examples were provided whereby partnerships between government and civil society organizations produced positive outcomes in Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands. In these partnerships, while governments focused on the macro issues, the CSO focused on the management of projects at community level and facilitated community engagement.

The presentations on energy provoked a lot of discussion around fuel alternatives for the Pacific in light of the recent fuel crisis. A good practice was shared by Kiribati on the use of at household level solar photovoltaic (PV) systems in terms of both their management and sustainability. It was suggested that through regional cooperation PICs could explore the modalities for regional bulk procurement of petroleum products.

In context of ongoing and planned mainstreaming efforts Pacific countries were encouraged to assess and quantify the economic value on their natural resources. This is part of ‘making the case’ of why environment matters in particular in the Pacific. It was pointed out that renewable energy, including solar energy, hydro power and biomass, has great potential in this region. Countries were cautioned to consider adopting available *proven* energy alternatives, and these should be supported by enabling policies.

Session 8 – Objective: The Case of Kiribati, followed by a Panel on Policy Options on Natural Resource Management and Energy with a focus on Governance, Gender and Security Implications

Mr. Rikiaua Takeke: *Addressing climate change and disaster risk reduction in Kiribati (Kiribati)*

The framework for the presentation underlined that climate change poses costly risks to economic and social growth in that it threatens poverty reduction efforts, food security, health gains and infrastructure, even national identity, thus threatening a reversal of MDG gains. Kiribati experiences the effect of climate change in various forms including increased temperatures, prolonged droughts, severe coastal erosion, unusually high tides and changes to the traditional period of wet and dry seasons. Kiribati’s vulnerabilities to climate change consist of: (1) decreased water quality and quantity; (2) decline in food production; (3) emergence of more diseases resulting in increasing health issues; and (4) destruction of coastal resources, all of which result in reduced government revenue. Adaptation to climate change requires a holistic approach and integration of adaptation measures into national planning processes to enhance social, environmental and economic resilience. Responses should be strategic, aligned with international agenda in order to attain much benefit from global initiatives and draw on the commitment of developed nations to assist with adaptation needs of developing communities.

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The Panel: Mr. Ben Graham (Marshall Islands); Dr Shiladitya (Shilo) Chatterjee (ADB); Mr. Thomas Lynge Jensen (UNDP); Mrs. Paula Holland (SOPAC); Mr. Siliga Kofe (ESCAP)

Some of the issues highlighted by the Panel underlined the following:

- There is a need for more in-depth analysis of energy and natural resources policies;
- Efficient use of energy and decrease in demand must be prioritized over costly high-tech renewable energy alternatives;
- Effective and sustainable natural resources management practices should be strongly promoted in the region;
- Climate change adaptation demands innovation and personal commitment;
- Regional cooperation needs to be tapped into for more coordinated and collective efforts;
- Forestry and the use of carbon credit is an option for many countries in the region and needs to be analyzed in more detail.
- The need to go beyond the ‘no regrets’ strategy to a more ‘transformational’ strategy for atoll island countries should be considered, given the growing certainty that climate is changing and the sea level will rise.

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Climate change is a pressing challenge for many countries in the Pacific. While some delegations noted that relocation was a possibility, there were divergent views on this issue and clearly there are very many questions to be answered before this could be seen as either a preferred or viable option. However, there was unanimity that climate change was happening and the risk of inundation is high for low lying areas.

Samoa shared its experience in designing a disaster management framework through a central committee that coordinates key agencies involved. The disaster risk management (DRM) plans are implemented at national and local levels, with regular drills being undertaken.

It was pointed out that traditional knowledge was an untapped area in terms of developing strategies to build resilience.

Practical approaches that could be considered by PICs as alternative energy options include solar PV systems and coconut oil for power generation and transport.

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Session 9 – Objective: Address the normative background of MDGs, looks at the human rights framework, women’s empowerment and gender equality in various areas and how to enhance progress in PICs for the achievement of MDG3.

Mrs. Matilda Bogner: *Human Rights-based Approaches to Development and the MDGs: why is this so important?* (OHCHR)

The concept of human rights was unpacked as a set of norms in international law that upholds the dignity of all people. While there is some tension between human rights and Pacific (and other) cultures, it was emphasized that human rights still need to be respected while maintaining the non-discriminatory aspects of one's culture. Human rights and the MDGs share commonalities in that both are about upholding the dignity and well-being of all people, they are underpinned by international frameworks, they face resource constraints and share similar guiding principles. Human rights promote the obligation to address inequality and the needs of the poorest communities. The MDGs should be aligned with human rights to promote a human rights-based approach to development which transforms people through empowerment and participation. The most complex challenge is to prioritise rights by making policy and resource allocation choices within a human rights framework. To enable communities and people to claim the MDGs, strategies must be sustainable, accountability mechanisms must be in place and rights must be enforceable.

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Mrs. Carol Flore-Smrecznik: *What will it take to achieve MDG3 (Promote gender equality and empower women)?* (UNDP)

Despite a specific goal on gender equality, it is recognized that gender is intrinsic to the achievement of all the MDGs. Gender equality is often understood as equality of opportunity where women and men, girls and boys, are not discriminated against in their access to opportunities. While MDG3 looks at gender equality in education, the indicators go further to include economic empowerment and political representation. The Millennium Summit made gender parity a key to achieving the MDGs, and complements other international, regional and national frameworks on gender equality. These promote synergies among human rights frameworks and the MDGs for gender equality outcomes. Achieving MDG3 often requires a need to look at both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of change in empowerment or equality. Recognising the broad spirit of MDG3, UNDP and the UN System have identified an operational framework to understand gender equality in 3 dimensions: *capabilities* (basic human abilities), *opportunities* (access to resources and political opportunities), and *security* (reduced vulnerability to violence) domains, and translated these into seven strategic intervention areas. The UNDP Gender Equality Strategy (2008-2011) focuses on integrating a gender perspective across analysis, policy, programming, implementation and monitoring. The greatest barrier to progress on gender equality is the weak link between policies and required investments needed for implementation. Achieving gender equality therefore necessitates national provision from the budget.

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Mrs. Virisila Buadromo: *Civil Society perspective on MDG3* (FWRM)

The presentation reiterated that gender is not just in MDG3 but is integrated in all MDGs, and that women's rights are intergenerational and includes girls and boys and men.

Women's organizations are concerned that MDG3 does not follow human rights standards; it is deficient of gender equality and narrow (needs more education and participation); it is not reflective of gender relationships in society; and there is no specific indicator for VAW or infanticide. How can we make it work? One option is to use human rights frameworks (CEDAW); relate it to other international instruments such as the Beijing Platform of Action, etc which can then provide substantial analysis; and these actions must be supported by analysis and strategy. Ms Buadromo added that CSOs can play a major role in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

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There were recurrent themes in the three presentations in so far as all established that achieving gender equality required going beyond addressing MDG3 to mainstreaming gender in all MDGs. Several examples were provided to clarify concepts of empowerment and why this was so important. There was a lively debate on the tension between human rights and some cultural practices in the Pacific. It was noted that there are some aspects of both traditional and modern governance structures that have not always advanced the principles of gender equality or human rights, and discriminatory practices in both systems should be looked at to advance the principles of gender equality and global human rights norms.

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Panel on Women and Governance in the Pacific

Mrs. Rita Taphorn: *Advancing Gender Equality in Political Governance* (UNIFEM)

Women's representation in parliament is an internationally recognized indicator on progress towards gender equality and PICs rank last in world statistics, with the average percentage of women's representation at national level in 2008 at 3% (excluding New Zealand, Australia and the French territories). Clearly more efforts are required to make headway towards the world average of 18.2% and the internationally-recognised critical mass of 30%. Advancing Gender Equality in Political Governance (GEPG) program was recently launched by UNIFEM. This new regional initiative aims to contribute to the advancement of women's political participation and will support interventions at regional, national and local/community levels. The GEPG program will contribute significantly to the implementation of CEDAW, the Pacific Platform for Action and achievement of MDG3 in Pacific countries.

Mrs. Gayle Mision Yaki: *Making equality a reality for women in PNG* (PNG)

Papua New Guinea is signatory to several international and regional gender-related commitments but since 1978, only eight (8) women have been elected to the national parliament. This is attributed to cultural and social beliefs; childcare and other caring responsibilities; and limited resources including campaign financing. As revealed by the UN Economic and Social Survey for Asia and the Pacific 2007, the cost of a lack of gender balance is high, with discrimination against women costing the Asia/Pacific

region an estimated US\$80 billion. Discrimination is manifested through the low access of women and girls to education and health services, economic opportunities and political participation. In PNG, efforts are underway to utilize Constitutional Provisions 101 and 102 as part of an affirmative action to accelerate temporary practices which promote equality between men and women. After year 2012 the Constitutional Provisions will be used by another group. Suggested way forward to make equality a reality for women in Papua New Guinea comprise capacity-building for the three women candidates who will be in national Parliament; passing an organic law on gender equality; and the introduction of at least 20 reserved seats for women by 2012.

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Mr. Jackson Soram: *The FSM Experience* (FSM)

There are no women in the National Congress in the Federated States of Micronesia. While there are no provisions that prohibit women to run for office, the country is considering introducing temporary special measures to empower women to do so. Under consideration is government's attempt to reserve seats for women in the National Congress by introducing a Bill for four seats to be reserved for women in the National Congress. While the process has been initiated and is ongoing, there are divergent views on the issue of temporary special measures to promote women in parliament, highlighting the need to have further dialogue so the process and its purpose are better understood and supported.

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Active discussions reflected mixed views among workshop participants on the issue of temporary special measures. While some emphasized the need for affirmative action to redress a longstanding gap and accelerate women's representation in parliament, noting that the practice needs to be discontinued after it has achieved its goals, others felt that the advancement of women must be merit-based and not based on gender. The role which CSOs can play to raise awareness on affirmative action was also debated.

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Session 10 – Objective: Discuss findings of a recent UNDP PC-commissioned study on Gender and HIV in the Pacific Region, with a focus on gender implications.

Mr. Ferdinand Strobel: *Presentation of the findings of the regional study on Gender and HIV in the Pacific* (UNDP)

The overview of the key findings from a regional study on HIV and Gender in the Pacific Islands Region highlighted official statistics showing that women and girls are

increasingly being infected and affected by HIV and AIDS in the region, with record high new infections in teenage girls in PNG. To develop adequate responses, it is important to understand why and address the underlying social determinants of this heightened vulnerability. Although the Pacific is extremely diverse, there are commonalities across the region that put women, girls, transgender and sexual minorities at greater risk. These issues relate to the role they play in societies and communities, their unequal access to resources, denial of basic rights and violence against them. Generally, their lower social status confers them a lower ability to protect themselves. Because of physiological factors, women are twice likely to be infected than men if exposed to HIV; yet they depend almost entirely on choices made by men for their protection, be it in relation to abstinence, faithfulness or wearing a condom. Although the response in the Pacific is significant and is yielding results, there are still major challenges ahead, particularly in better adapting HIV responses to the local socio-cultural contexts and scaling up interventions. To move forward, there is a need for countries to better understand their HIV situation in gender terms, to ensure that the response being rolled out is informed by evidence from the country itself and not derived from elsewhere, and to ensure that policies, strategies and programmes are firmly grounded in human rights.

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Mr. Jone Vakalabure and Mrs. Ana Laqeretabua: *Dealing with Gender-based Violence and Women & HIV* (UNAIDS/UNIFEM)

The joint presentation UNAIDS/UNIFEM highlighted the linkages between gender-based violence (GBV) and HIV, how this impacts upon the achievement of the MDGs and encouraged countries to recognize and consider these linkages when implementing key policy and legislative interventions to address GBV. Violent acts committed against women and girls by men and boys are a means of exerting power and authority, and often intended to keep them ‘in their place’ through fear. GBV undermines poverty reduction and development efforts, and has been a silent driver of the rapid feminization of HIV/AIDS. The Pacific response to HIV is promising, with 10 PICs having signed the UNGASS Declaration, the existence of a Pacific Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS and Implementation Plan, National AIDS and National Strategic Plans. In addition, the response has shifted from a health sector to a multi-sectoral approach, with a better understanding of the epidemic, and commitment from Pacific leaders including traditional and religious leaders. It is important that human rights underpin HIV responses to guarantee basic rights such as consent, confidentiality, and protection from HIV related discrimination. This will also increase people’s willingness to take regular HIV tests and disclose their status. Given that women account for almost half of HIV infections worldwide (and now more than 50% in many countries including PNG), it is imperative to promote gender equality and address gender norms and relations to reduce the vulnerability of women and girls by involving men and boys in these efforts, and review legal frameworks to remove barriers to effective, evidence-based HIV prevention, combat stigma and discrimination and protect the rights of people living with HIV. Both UNIFEM and UNAIDS highlighted the support available to Pacific countries on these

issues. UNIFEM has established a Pacific Regional Facility Fund aimed at reducing the prevalence of violence against women and HIV/AIDS.

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During the plenary discussions, participants expressed differing views on the effectiveness of the ABC approach (Abstain, Be faithful, use Condoms). There was a general view that cultural taboos were an impediment to raising awareness on HIV/AIDS and STIs and that more research in this area is needed. It was advocated that both men and women have to be responsible when it comes to prevention.

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Mr. Michael Busai: *Country perspective on achieving gender equality: what will it take? (Vanuatu)*

Vanuatu offered an interesting perspective on gender equality in that a number of initiatives are ongoing which will step up improvements in this area. In line with its national and international commitments, such as CEDAW, CRC, CRPD and Vanuatu's Constitution, the Department of Women's Affairs is now estimating what it will take to implement CEDAW. This is complemented by the ongoing exercise on the MDG Needs Assessment and Costing tools which will support government in identifying required interventions and the cost estimate of achieving the MDGs in various sectors, in line with policy priorities established in the Prioritized Action Agenda (PAA). The costing tools present a two-tier approach to gender in that while gender is mainstreamed in many of them, additional specific interventions can be costed within the Gender Costing Tool. A number of challenges were identified, namely lack of sex disaggregated data to support CEDAW implementation, limited financial and human capacity within the Department of Women's Affairs (DWA), high rate of teenage pregnancy and STIs, and adverse cultural practices, among others. Nevertheless, the office of the Prime Minister is taking a lead role in supporting the implementation of the MDGs; the DWA is considering the development of a Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF); a stock-take of all work on gender equality is in the pipeline; and the next budget submission is being informed by the MDG Needs Assessment and Costing tools. All these present a coherent and comprehensive strategy to intensify efforts and progress towards gender equality.

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The presentation elicited interest on successful practices to promote the economic empowerment of women, including microfinance projects. There was much interest in understanding the process and benefits of the MDG Needs Assessment and costing work being undertaken as well. It was suggested that high-profile public figures such as decision-makers and Parliamentarians could be leveraged to increase awareness of CEDAW and MDGs.

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Group Work: To encourage participants to think through some practical and concrete steps to promote gender equality, they were tasked to identify three strategies, as follows: *Given current constraints, what 3 strategies can be implemented right away to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment?*

The group exercise had interesting findings in that the five groups commonly identified ‘Strengthening opportunities for girls’ post-primary education’ as a key area to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. Three groups selected ‘Equality in employment’, two groups singled out ‘Reducing violence against girls and women’, and one group selected ‘Access to sexual & reproductive health rights/services, and cultural values.’ This clearly illustrated the diverse contexts of Pacific Islands Countries and the need for flexibility in identifying strategies.

Group 1
Constraint 1: Cultural values that are not conducive to the empowerment of women
Constraint 2: Lack of effective service delivery that will encourage education for girls
Constraint 3: Insufficient awareness of and access to human rights mechanisms

Group 2
Strategy 1: Compulsory and education provision for all girls, until Year8; include further education for drop-outs (vocational).
Strategy 2: Increased awareness and services to ensure effective sexual and reproductive health-related programmes
Strategy 3: Ensure equal employment opportunities and equal remuneration structure (review and re-adjust salary structures)
Strategy 4: While some participants felt that special temporary measures did not need to be prioritized, participants from Melanesia were of the view that such deliberate policies were vital

Group 3	
Issue 1: Prioritise opportunities for girls for post-primary education	Long-term Strategy I: Education to change the mindset
Issue 2: Address gender disparity by ensuring that academic and vocational education are compulsory for both girls and boys	
Issue 3: Legal framework to support such actions as is practiced in the Cook Islands where everyone between 5 years and 16 years must be in school	
Issue 4: Empowerment by way of professional qualification through the availability of scholarships	Short-Term Strategy II: Empower women’s groups to advocate for these issues as they can have a lot of influence and can help push things through
Issue 5: Ensure equal employment opportunities that could be boosted with grants	

Session 11 – Objective: Consider how to move forward and explore the issue of financing and other support from development partners to enable countries to accelerate progress towards the MDGs by 2015

Mr. Garry Wiseman: *Global partnerships for development: Financing the MDGs*
(UNDP Pacific)

Building upon the extensive discussions on both challenges and opportunities to reach the MDGs, the presentation looked at how to bridge the policy, implementation and resource gaps. A critical step is for countries to undertake an assessment of the resources required to start formulating and implementing strategies to achieve the MDGs. In this regard, the MDG Team of the UNDP Pacific Centre, in partnership with RCC and Pacific UN Agencies, support countries to determine **what interventions** and **how much resources** are needed to achieve long term development goals. The support aims at strengthening linkages among policy, planning, costing and budgeting to reach the MDGs. Governance improvements are equally essential to ensure that scarce resources are not diverted away from social sectors where it is most needed. Participants were reminded that governments already have MDG-related programmes in place that are financed by public funds and that to reach the MDGs, the coverage of these services often needs to be scaled up to reach every one. The focus on what governments ought to be spending should recognise that, given the inter-relatedness of the MDGs, early investments in certain sectors which make good progress will mean less funding required achieving others, potentially resulting in significant savings in the long run, as well as early achievement of certain MDGs. In the current context of the global economic and financial crisis, governments need to consider a reprioritisation of expenditures, reorient public spending allocation towards the social sectors to protect disadvantaged communities, and a more efficient use of available resources. It was recognised that money alone will not lead to the achievement of the MDGs, which calls for pro-poor policies, strong governance institutions, partnerships among stakeholders, capacity building for governments and monitoring and evaluation.

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Mr. Rob Tranter: *Aid effectiveness in times of global recession: Donor perspectives*
(AusAID)

As an important development partner to Pacific countries, Australia's commitment to the MDGs is at the centre of its aid program, and is likely to intensify, given the global recession. In 2008-09, Australia will provide \$A3.7 billion in ODA, moving towards 0.5% ODA/GNI by 2015 and reflecting a significant investment in the region. A number of partnerships are being signed between Australia and Pacific partners to ensure more rapid progress towards the MDGs at national level. These partnerships are based on mutual respect, mutual responsibility for results, more predictable aid from Australia

through partner systems and against their priorities and leadership of development policy and resources by PICs. The partnerships are expected to result in better development results and attainment of the MDGs, prioritisation of key areas, a focus on costed and time-bound plans and an emphasis on monitoring results. While the immediate effects of the GEFC are already being seen in the Pacific, in the medium term a prolonged crisis could impact on PICs through a decline in remittances, tourism receipts, and loss of employment. Given the significant level of aid in the Pacific (Pacific aid inflows per capita are seven times the average for the developing world) and the fact that many countries are off-track to reach the MDGs, there are implications for both governments and development partners on improving aid effectiveness. Aid needs to be effectively managed by donors and strongly led by PICs in the current environment to produce better development results.

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Mr. Guanghai Wan: *Aid effectiveness in times of global recession: Donor perspectives (ADB)*

Given the current economic and financial outlook, ADB intends to increase its development aid this year predicated upon a result-based framework agreed upon with countries. PICs can avail themselves of ADB's resources, including knowledge products. Options based on institutional frameworks which ensure that benefits actually reach households were discussed. In this regard, the need for governments to consider conditional and unconditional cash transfers which specifically target poor households was also raised.

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In thinking ahead and considering the way forward, it was suggested that a 'Pacific Super Fund' be established, specifically to address growth, policy, strategy, resource and implementation gaps in achieving the MDGs.

CSOs who attended the meeting urged development partners, in particular, AusAID, to consider reviewing current practices of project-based funding for NGOs to capital-based funding.

There was keen interest to learn more about the MDG Needs Assessment and Costing Tools and how this can link to the planning and budgetary frameworks. There was concern on the issue of monitoring capacity at country level. Recognizing that there are opportunities to make headway on equitable access to basic social services, it was pointed out that countries need to seriously identify bottlenecks and practical ways of delivering quality services to those who are currently not being reached.

There was consensus that the elimination of corruption requires political will as well as awareness among ordinary citizens of what corruption is. CSOs can play an important role in demanding accountability.

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To identify areas where there are gaps and ascertain support needed in future, participants were given a group exercise to identify (a) MDG areas in which respective countries need to accelerate progress; (b) level of government commitment and adequacy of government resources; and (c) specific support needed from development partners.

To note that some participants felt that they were not in a position to identify areas where support is needed. Their responses are therefore not included below (RMI, FSM and Kiribati).

Pacific CSOs/NGOs	
Focus	Why use CSOs?
1) Capacity-building in all areas vital for institutional strengthening	1) CSOs have commitment, passion, independence and volunteerism
2) Critical self-assessment, ensure good governance and increase collaboration between CSOs, governments and donors	2) CSOs have expertise at local level
3) Donors and state need to recognise and utilise CSOs' set-up and networks	3) Presence at community level.
4) Strategic plans must be aligned to national plans	4) Very simple systems governments can utilise
5) Importance of M&E framework; also address issue of data collation	5) Boasts international and regional links
6) Shift in donor financing required – should be core funding-based to allow CSOs/NGOs time to both develop proposals and participate in project design.	6) CSOs are 'the voice of the vulnerable and marginalized, the voice of the people'
7) Complement the work of Ministry of Health (MOH) in HIV/AIDS	
<i>Note: CSOs would like to be more involved at the design level as opposed to only focusing on implementation. "States and donors, we the CSOs need you but you also need us; we all need each other."</i>	

Tonga		
<i>MDG Focus</i>	<i>Government commitment</i>	<i>Donor Support Required</i>
MDG 1	Policies implicit for poverty reduction are in-place; Rural Unit in the Central Planning	Continuous financial assistance

	Department targets those vulnerable to poverty; CSO work in communities focuses on infrastructural development	
MDG2	Education is a priority in national budget; Endorsement of first and comprehensive Tonga Education Sector Study. Improve equitable access to quality universal basic education	Technical and financial assistance for capacity building; Operational costs of primary school facilities
MDG3	Establishment of Women Affairs Unit within MEWAC as national women's machinery; Establishment of National Policy, Gender and Development; and Establishment of Centre for Women and Children Crisis Centre	Review 2001 National policy on Gender & Development; Continuation of technical & financial assistance.
MDG4, MDG5, MDG6	Priority in national budget; Strengthening sexual and reproductive health services; Strengthening of CD and NCD services; Ratification of Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); Building of new hospital; Establishment of Tonga Health Promotion Foundation	Continuous financial and technical support (on Tonga Health Foundation); Continuous financial support on CD, NCDs and RH
MDG7	Mainstreaming environmental issues into National Strategic Development Plan; Environmental Impact Assessment Act in-place; National Climate Change Policy in-place; National Biodiversity Action Plan in-place; Ozone Depleting Substance Bill in-place; Approval of septic plan for every new household (compulsory)	Continuous technical and financial assistance for capacity building (training, human resources, awareness)
MDG8	Member of OECD; Tonga's bilateral partners (most) are party to MDGs, thus development and assistance are already MDG-oriented.	Continuous financial and technical support (particularly for youth activities)
<i>Note: Would prioritise MDGs 1, 3 & 6</i>		

Niue		
<i>MDG Focus</i>	<i>Government commitment</i>	<i>Donor support required</i>
MDG1	Offers hardship allowance which is incorporated into national budget	Support for individual projects
MDG2	Provided in national budget	Improve infrastructure
MDG3	Provided in national budget	Village development activities
MDG4	Provided in national budget	Assist with immunization /MCH programmes
MDG5	Provided in national budget	Assist with reproductive health and family planning
MDG6	Provided in national budget	Support on-going awareness campaigns
MDG7	Provided in national budget	Support for waste management
MDG8	Provided in national budget	Data collection

Note: The MDGs are already in country systems but the challenge is to localize them. Niue supports the call for a Super Fund

Nauru		
<i>MDG Focus</i>	<i>Government commitment</i>	<i>Donor support required</i>
MDG3 MDG7 MDG8	Budgetary allocations are lopsided and tend to focus more on health and education. Women's and youth machineries are not given similar attention.	Donor support could inject funds into areas that are largely ignored particularly if they are MDG-related.
<i>Note: The present administration is new but the delegation intends, upon their return, to push for the MDGs. Need specific support from NGOs and need help in securing funds</i>	Funding processes need to be better coordinated and accessing donor funds needs to be more transparent	Establish a 'Regional Aid Management Unit for Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia. An in-country focal point could oversee needs analysis and fund allocation. A Needs Analysis Survey can ensure targeted responses. CSO funding, which is not reflected in national budgets, can be included in this fund basket (allowing a more transparent coordination).

Fiji		
<i>MDG Focus</i>	<i>Government Commitment</i>	<i>Donor support required</i>
MDG1	Poverty alleviation actions by government: e.g, lowering retirement age in civil service to 55 years and skilled personnel are contracted. The Ministry for Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Monitoring Unit developed an Integrated National Poverty Eradication Programme (INPEP) Framework. (Micro-Finance) An Integrated Human Resource Development Programme (IHRDP) established and works with private and public sector in generating incomes and aligning on-going funded projects between these sectors.	1. Assist in getting democratic institutions back on-track and strengthening them: for e.g., the Elections Office. 2. Capacity-building: training and funding to push progress in MDGs areas that are off-track;
MDG2	Establishment of a Poverty Relief Fund in education to address the poorest of the poor and promote the vision "Education for All".	3. Assist NGOs to access regional funding;
MDG3	Achieved	4. Reactivation of the MDG database and/or information system; and
MDG4	MOH Corporate Plan contains strategies to address childhood illnesses (IMCI)	
MDG5	MOH Corporate Plan contains strategies to address safe motherhood issues	

	(AMDD)	5. Assist sectors of government in implementation of the MDG Needs Assessment and Costing Tools.
MDG6	MOH continues to encourage a multi-sectoral approach through its HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan, the state has provided a budget of \$500,000; HIV/ AIDS Bill promulgated in March 2009	
MDG7	Recently enacted Environment Act being put in-place; Marine Protected Areas are addressed by NGOs; European Development Fund is working with Government to address issues of water and sanitation	
MDG8	State-established Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC); Working towards restoration of democratic governance	

Tuvalu		
<i>MDG Focus</i>	<i>Government commitment</i>	<i>Donor support required</i>
MDG1	Political will; Budget allocation; and work with CSOs	Capacity-building for analysis and data collection; Support CSO development
MDG2	Political will; Budget allocation; and work with CSOs	Increase education opportunities for post-secondary level
MDG3	Political will; Budget allocation; and work with CSOs	Create vocational training facilities for young women; Empowerment programmes
MDG4	Political will; Budget allocation; and work with CSOs	Improve outer islands medical facilities and supplies
MDG5	Political will; Budget allocation; and work with CSOs	Improve outer islands medical facilities and supplies
MDG6	Political will; Budget allocation; and work with CSOs	Ensure sufficient supply of drugs
MDG7	Political will; Budget allocation; and work with CSOs	Climate change (adaption) programmes
MDG8	Political will; Budget allocation; and work with CSOs	Donor harmonization; Alignment to national priorities; Enhance capacity of donor counterparts especially in the planning department (policy analysts); In-country training on MDG Needs Assessment and Costing Tools.
<i>Note: An increase in financial assistance to both governments and CSOs is required.</i>		

Papua New Guinea		
<i>MDG Focus</i>	<i>Government commitment</i>	<i>Donor support required</i>
MDG3	Very limited, need to improve	Technical and financial assistance support

MDG5	Low priority, government needs to increase funding	Technical assistance and other resource support
MDG6	Resources inadequate; government should improve its coordination	Donor support required

Solomon Islands		
<i>MDG Focus</i>	<i>Government commitment</i>	<i>Donor support required</i>
MDG1	Support for productive sectors but not appropriately distributed or utilised	Continuous support from donors
MDG2	Recently introduced free basic education policy but must be prepared to allocate more resources	Continuous support from donors
MDG3	Minimal government support	Continuous support from donors
MDG4	Minimal commitment: most projects in this area are heavily donor supported	Continuous support from donors perhaps as donors' Priority 1
MDG5	Commitment exists but government must up-scale funding to maintain progress	Continuous support from donors
MDG6	Programmes exists but heavily donor supported	Continuous support from donors
MDG7	Adequate assistance by government	Continuous support from donors
MDG8	Minimal	Require more assistance
<i>Note: Significant need to take stock and analyse budgetary allocations towards achieving MDGs since 2000</i>		

Cook Islands		
<i>MDG Focus</i>	<i>Government commitment</i>	<i>Donor support required</i>
MDG1	NZ\$97m p/a and Health \$11.5m. Progress is challenged by emigration of nationals to NZ /Australia. NSO is under resourced; subsequently this affects collection of appropriate data	Technical and financial support to strengthen NSOs/alternative measures of indicators
MDG2	Education,\$10m p/a; but policy gaps between MOE, NHRD (tertiary/vocational) and PSC	Technical assistance to develop capacity and skill gaps/training needs analysis of the public sector to inform planning and funding required.
MDG3	\$70k; Election 2010 - propose quota at political party level (12% versus target 30%) but heavy reliance on donor funding such as \$300k to implement gender-based activities, including CEDAW.	Technical assistance for law reform programme, training and governance
MDG4	Achieved	
MDG5	Achieved	

MDG6	\$200k p/a. But more than 40% of women have STIs and men's health is neglected. NCDs are prevalent and high-risk factors continue to rise significantly. 30% of population have diabetes and hypertension and Cook Island has the third highest rate of obesity in the world	NCDs - Funding support for NCD programmes, training of Health Promotion workforce, training of CSOs
MDG7	Donor-funded (Environment GEF-OFP); gaps in data collection	Technical assistance in developing capacity for environment economic valuation; Technical assistance to set up data collection and information management systems
MDG8	Aid Management Division of MFEM now capturing ODA funding, though not all, especially those that are through direct execution. Staff retention is an issue, and means that capacity building and training of new staff is always needed	Technical assistance to review, develop and articulate indicators for MDGs
<p><i>Note: The MDG report is currently being reviewed by OPM. Through this process, the Cook Islands may revise the indicators for the MDG targets and technical assistance and funding will be needed to support this. Integrating MDGs into national and sectoral planning processes will be important to strengthen programmes and improve data collection. Data collection and analysis is identified as a cross cutting issue. A National Statistics Plan is in the pipeline but requires donor input and involvement to strengthen our NSO and line ministries statistics divisions; and requests that each target and/or indicator are justified.</i></p>		

Vanuatu		
<i>MDG Focus</i>	<i>Government commitment</i>	<i>Donor support required</i>
MDG1	Improve agricultural production	Support for microfinance initiatives; Fund agriculture and nutrition programmes
MDG2	Free education by 2010	NZ Aid and AusAID continue support
MDG 3	Development of MTEF	Technical assistance to fund development of MTEF and programmes
MDG 4	Accelerated effort through MOH (National Strategic Plan)	UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, GF, AusAID (support to MTEF and NSP)
MDG 5	Accelerated effort through MOH (National Strategic Plan)	UNFPA, UNICEF – support to MTEF and NSP
MDG 6	Accelerated effort through MOH – National Strategic Plan	UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, GF, AusAID (support to MTEF and NSP)
MDG 7	Accelerated efforts through MOL –	NZ Aid, AusAID, EU –

	national strategies. Establishment of an Environment and Conservation Unit	support to NSP
MDG 8	Introduction of development budget	Training of the new system for line ministries (MDG Needs Assessment and costing tools)

Palau		
<i>MDG Focus</i>	<i>Government commitment</i>	<i>Donor support required</i>
MDG1	To deal with energy and food crisis; Govt proposing \$1.5M in the budget (not passed) as economic stimulus package to support low income households	Assistance needed to further monitor the impact of energy and food crisis on households in Palau: lack of action can further exacerbate crisis, reverse progress, and increase poverty
MDG2		
MDG3	Potential reduction in budget support – office likely to close	Financial support to fund study and analysis at the local level but donor support must acknowledge local context of MDGs
MDG4		
MDG5		
MDG6	Committed to mobilize existing resources	Assistance needed to localize indicators for better monitoring, noting progress of local issues
MDG7		
MDG8	Coordination efforts have begun but need more research, technical assistance in developing localized mechanism for national collaboration and cooperation – for ODA - to support transparency, accountability and efficiency in government	Donor support is required to localize indicators for better monitoring and noting progress - especially in light of sectoral authority for grant assistance (bilateral); and “clearing house” proposal of the national government (in terms of further study, technical assistance and even funding support)
<p><i>Note: Delegation notes that there is a varied interpretation of Palau’s progress in the MDGs Report; and the delegation believes there is a need to support a study of gender power dimensions - women play (state and/or policy) leadership roles but this is not reflected in social services and/or at community-level. Palau needs support to develop (localised) gender indicators.</i></p>		

Samoa		
<i>MDG Focus</i>	<i>Government commitment</i>	<i>Donor support required</i>
MDG1 - Reduce extreme poverty & hunger	Talomua Agro Program, T.A.L.A.V.O.U. Youth Development program, Micro financing	Capacity Building, Technical Assistance, Equipment
MDG2 - Achieve universal	Compulsory Education Legislation, National Teacher Development	Technical Assistance, Capacity Building,

primary education	Framework, Education Sector Programs	School Buildings, Equipment
MDG3 - Promote gender equality & empower women	Various policies and action plans in place on Women and Children, Disability – Taskforce to monitor	Capacity Building, skill & knowledge transfer, equipment, telecommunication centres, extensions on micro financing
MDG 4 - Reduce child mortality		
MDG5 - Improve maternal health		
MDG6 - Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases		
MDG7 – Ensure environmental sustainability	Samoa National Energy Plan, Sustainable Land Management Project, Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa, Agro Forestry	Sanitation, Sewerage and Waste Management – Capacity Building, Capital, Technical Assistance, Disaster Recovery
MDG8 – Develop a Global Partnership for Development	WTO accession efforts, Bilateral Trade Commitments, Coordination with development partners on several national priorities	Better communication and networking, data collection capacity building and technical assistance

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Closing remarks

Mr. David Smith, ESCAP, emphasized the struggle by some PICs to achieve the MDGs, with a particular reference to those that are regressing. Participants were urged to take back home the key messages from the meeting to hopefully motivate an acceleration of efforts, using awareness-raising among as many stakeholders as possible as a starting point. Countries were encouraged to strengthen the links between evidence-based policies and budgeting processes and to monitor the implementation of their plans and decisions. Pacific atolls were advised to raise the issue of climate change with the UNESCAP Commission and stress the need to find options to the possible disappearance of some islands.

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