INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE PACIFIC STATISTICS METHODS BOARD
3-4TH MAY 2018

SUMMARY AND DECISIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

The inaugural meeting of the Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB) was held at the Auckland office of Stats NZ, 3–4 May 2018. The decision to establish the Board was made at the 5th Regional Conference of Heads of Planning and Statistics (November 2017) to ensure that relevant best practice standards (methods, systems and procedures) are developed and are 'fit for purpose' for use in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) for core censuses and surveys.

2. PARTICIPANTS

The meeting was attended by Board members including the Chairperson, Mr Vince Galvin, Stats NZ; the Government Statisticians of Fiji, Guam, Tonga and Niue (representing Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia and small island states (SIS) respectively); and representatives of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Pacific Community (SPC), United Nations and the World Bank. Professor David Gordon from Bristol University also attended to present the paper on Consensual. SPC provides the secretariat for the Board.

3. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON

a. Fiji's Government Statistician, Mr Epeli Waqavonovono, was elected Deputy Chairperson of the Pacific Statistical Methods Board (nominated by Tonga and seconded by Guam).

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

b. The Board endorsed the draft TOR in principle pending the incorporation of amendments relating to the scope of work, consistent terms for the posts of Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, and representation of subregions.

5. IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES FOR PSMB

c. The Board agreed its priorities are to:

i. **Optimize the programme of household collections for countries** noting the potential for a programme of surveys that leverage off each other, and to use models, such as continuous collection, to address collection constraints and reduce costs.

ii. Identify issues of concern and emerging issues that are strategically significant for the Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia and SIS groups *to be collated by their representatives through dialogue with Government Statisticians and presented to the Board to inform development of its work plan, noting that the issues of appropriate survey design/sampling for small populations, poverty measurement, and collection of tourism data were raised.*

iii. Increase transparency through documentation of data processing and cleaning processes *noting that good documentation provides a reusable resource.*

Pacific Community (SPC) Headquarters: Noumea, New Caledonia. Regional Offices: Suva, Fiji;
Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia; Port Vila, Vanuatu. Country Office: Honiara, Solomon Islands.
www.spc.int   spc@spc.int

Siège de la Communauté du Pacifique (CPS) : Nouméa (Nouvelle-Calédonie). Antennes régionales : Suva (Fidji) ;
Pohnpei (États fédérés de Micronésie) ; Port-Vila (Vanuatu). Bureau de pays : Honiara (Îles Salomon).
www.spc.int   spc@spc.int

The Board also agreed:

i.   the Chair will provide a covering letter as a starting point for representatives' dialogue with NSOs in their group on their issues of concern;

ii. before the next meeting, the Chair, Deputy Chair and Secretariat will develop a draft work plan based on the agreed priorities and the concerns identified by NSOs; and

iii. the Chair/Secretariat will produce a summary paper on similar boards in other regions.

6.   RESOURCING PSMB'S WORK

d.   The Board recognised:

i.   the importance of defining PSMB's role and funding needs;

ii. the presentation by the World Bank of potential avenues for funding the PSMB's work, and the criteria for such funding (meetings and commissioned work);

iii. the need to raise PSMB's visibility and liaise with other agencies that may provide support (e.g. Global Challenges Research Fund, Paris 21) (Chair will lead this task);

iv. New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) for funding the attendance of Pacific representatives at the inaugural meeting; and

v.   the desirability of enabling video communication so that ease of effective communication could be enhanced.

7.   MULTIPLE INDICATOR CLUSTER SURVEYS (MICS) (UNICEF)

e.   The Board

i.   endorsed the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) programme of support for PICTs, noting:

- the structured approach to conducting surveys, including 24 steps, and noting that other core survey methods can learn from the MICS approach and documentation framework
- the flexibility of the module approach, which allows PICTs to incorporate content and collect data relevant to national data needs and gaps
- sampling challenges for SIS

ii. requested UNICEF to report back in one year on lessons learned from conducting MICS in SIS.

8.   UPDATE ON 5-YEAR COLLECTION PLAN AND ECONOMIC STATISTICS ACTIVITIES (SPC)

f.   The Board

i.   endorsed the partnership approach to provision of technical assistance to countries;

ii. noted that South-South support is another resource for provision of technical assistance; and

iii. noted its October meeting will include discussion of Household Income and Expenditure Surveys (HIES) and the April 2019 meeting will include discussion on population and housing census (PHC); and the needs of the forthcoming round of Censuses to be considered in subsequent meetings.

9.   CONSENSUAL DEPRIVATION APPROACH TO POVERTY MEASUREMENT (BRISTOL UNIVERSITY)

g.   The Board

i.   noted the presentation and explanation of the consensual deprivation approach to measuring poverty;

ii. agreed that Tonga's Government Statistician, Mr Viliami Fifita, will draft a summary (based on his existing literature review) of the different approaches to measuring multi-dimensional poverty

(e.g. consensual approach and methods based on the MICS) and their advantages and disadvantages. The particular focus is on the measurement of indicators under SDG indicator 1.2.2;

iii. agreed that Tonga Government Statistician will work with the Secretariat on this summary. ABS representative agreed to review the summary before submission to the Board for final consideration; and

iv. agreed that one objective of the Board is to provide NSOs with the relevant information to facilitate them to configure their national poverty statistics and report against various national, regional and international frameworks (including the SDGs), and that this summary will contribute to that objective.