

## **13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Pacific Statistics Steering Committee (PSSC – 13)**

**16-17 November 2016, Nadi, Fiji**

### **Agenda Item 4b – Regional Statistics Governance Framework**

#### **Introduction**

As in many other development areas, there is a need to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of current governance arrangements in the field of statistics in the framework of the generally accepted need to rationalise regional meetings together with the number of regional coordination and governance mechanisms.

The objective of this rationalisation process is to help avoid duplication, reduce transaction costs and increase harmonisation and alignment between donors, beneficiaries and implementing agencies in the Pacific region.

As such, this paper makes a series of proposals to the Pacific Statistics Steering Committee (PSSC) for consideration and proposal for adoption to the next Heads of Planning and Statistics (HOPS) meeting.

#### **Proposal**

The role of the PSSC has focused more on creating a space for members to share updates on progress in various statistics related activities, monitoring implementation of the TYPSS and identifying priorities for NSOs and development partner attention. It has thus not had a strong strategic, oversight and guidance role.

It is also suggested that the role of the PSSC as an interface between NSOs, development partners and the central coordinating agency (the Pacific Community (SPC)) has not been sufficiently exploited to help build the relationship with governments which is crucial to the successful implementation of the TYPSS.

In light of the above, it is proposed that the role of PSSC evolve in the framework of a modified governance structure for statistics in the Pacific region. Under this new framework, PSSC would become a subsidiary body of HOPS with delegated authority to play a leadership and decision-making role in years between HOPS meetings. Given the importance of statistics for the region as a whole, it is also proposed to hold the HOPS meeting every two years, instead of the current triennial basis. SPC would serve as the coordinating agency for

both HOPS and PSSC, including convening and providing secretariat services to these meetings.

The third element of this proposal is to create a development partner group, along the lines of the Quintilateral Group which plays a key role in the public health space. This would ensure that all relevant development partners were provided with a means to provide concrete input into statistic governance in the Pacific, better coordinate their action and resources. This development partner group would be closely associated with the work and discussions at HOPS and PSSC, thus also providing a platform for greater and more consistent engagement with Pacific Island Countries (PICs). SPC, as an intermediary between its Member States and development partners would, again, be responsible for convening the development partner group.

Joint sessions of the HOPS/PSSC and Development Partner Group at each annual meeting would create genuine scope for bringing PIC NSOs to the table alongside development partners and implementing agencies, thus encouraging a culture of debate and shared prioritisation.

The final aspect of this revised governance structure would be to create, under the auspices of SPC, a triennial meeting of Ministers responsible for Statistics in the Pacific. In interim years, it is suggested that a formal communication from the Chairs of HOPS and PSSC be made to these Ministers in each Member country in order to ensure awareness of state of statistics in the region, the issues, challenges and stakes at play. This Ministerial meeting would provide the highest level of statistics-dedicated country participation in the governance process and would also provide a conduit for any major decisions or issues to be placed on the agenda of Pacific Leaders, whether by internal country means or via an institutional communication from the Chair of the Ministerial to the Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum.

SPC considers that this revised governance model would allow all parties to have far greater and more regular strategic engagement around statistics issues, that it would foster deeper understanding and cooperation between the development partner group and the beneficiaries of development assistance in the statistics field and that it would create a platform where the statistics agenda in the Pacific is driven by the countries themselves, with input and support from the development partners and regional agencies.

This proposal does not reduce the necessity for relevant technical working groups to continue or be created in order to address specific issues or work through issues before feeding back to HOPS or PSSC. It also does not ignore the need to build the NSO leadership cohort and a regional cadre of statisticians that can help in leading statistical development and in ensuring long-term statistics governance understanding and capacity at national level.

Furthermore, it may well be that there needs to be a body created to ensure better quality assurance processes for censuses and major surveys. SPC considers, however, that this is not strictly a governance issue but that it deserves attention in future discussions.

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- i) PSSC 13 consider the proposal for a revised governance structure for Pacific statistics;
- ii) PSSC 13 task SPC, in consultation with countries and development partners, with finalising a proposal for adoption at the next HoPS meeting in 2017.