

Action reported against commitments made during the 13th Pacific Health Ministers Meeting

Commitments made	Progress status	Progress reported
1. Universal health coverage and primary health care		
We, the Pacific Health Ministers at this Thirteenth Pacific Health Ministers Meeting, committed to:		
1.1	Strengthening primary health care as the key delivery strategy for universal health coverage in the Pacific;	Implementation started - behind schedule Work is underway to strengthen primary health care with a focus on improved service delivery . Pacific island countries and areas (PICs) including Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Nauru, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu have expanded services to provide care for, and preventive support to, those with NCDs. The use of telehealth/telemedicine for virtual care delivery and maintenance of essential health services during the pandemic has gained grounds across the Pacific.
1.2	Continued efforts to define and implement the right service model for universal health coverage at the national level;	Implementation started - on track Fiji, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands have initiated the development of role delineation policies .
1.3	Advocating for strengthened leadership by ensuring that we work beyond the health sector to strengthen primary health care;	Implementation started - behind schedule Five countries developed national health strategic plans : Kiribati (NHSP 2020-23), Nauru (NHSP 2021-24), Papua New Guinea (NHSP 2021-2030), Tuvalu (NHSP 2020-24) and Vanuatu (Health Sector Strategy 2021-2030).
1.4	Raising awareness of and increasing the health literacy of institutional and political partners, as well as individuals and communities;	Implementation started - behind schedule The COVID-19 pandemic has been used as an opportunity to boost health literacy , with risk communication and community engagement activities helping to increase understanding of how diseases spread and how to protect against them.
1.5	Active reporting against the Healthy Islands Monitoring Framework every two years;	Implementation started - on track Countries have continued to provide data against the Healthy Islands Monitoring Framework . Work is underway to review the indicators and to align them with indicators reporting against the Sustainable Development Goals. WHO is arranging a webinar series focusing on data quality in September-November 2021.
1.6	Championing a Pacific-specific approach to advancing the safe and affordable surgery agenda as a critical part of our efforts to achieve universal health coverage and the Healthy Islands vision, including the development and implementation of national surgical, obstetric and anaesthesia plans with the support of technical and development partners.	Implementation started - on track Five PICs have developed national surgical obstetrics and anaesthesia plans - Cook Islands, Fiji, Palau, Tonga, Vanuatu -- with support from SPC, Harvard and WHO.



1.7	Strengthening regional and country level coordination mechanisms to achieve better outcomes and cost-effectiveness for overseas medical referral scheme (OMRS) and visiting specialist medical teams (VSMT);	Implementation started - behind schedule	SPC has completed a regional analysis of overseas medical referral schemes and visiting specialist medical teams . Planning is now underway for the work to be taken forward in partnership with WHO and the World Bank.
1.8	Establishing a sub-regional platform for Pacific pharmaceutical governance that supports countries to develop comprehensive medicines regulations with appropriate legislative frameworks.	Implementation started - behind schedule	<p>Ongoing discussion with countries and focal points is being used to continuously strengthen the governance and operational plan for the sub-regional platform for Pacific pharmaceutical governance. While the platform is yet to fully launch, the platform's existing capacity is being utilized during the pandemic to support countries with the regulatory aspects of medical products including COVID-19 vaccines. The platform has also supported safety surveillance, especially in the case of serious adverse events following immunization related to COVID-19 vaccines such as Thrombotic Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS) and the procurement of treatments and medical equipment for potential TTS cases. In addition, the platform has provided technical support in the review of pharmaceutical legislation in Tonga (February 2021), in the drafting of Vanuatu's Industrial Hemp and Medical Cannabis Bill (April 2021), Nauru's Pharmacy Bill 2021 (May 2021) and in the revision of FSM's Pharmaceutical Bill (September 2021). The platform is supporting Fiji to build its own pharmacovigilance system and increase reporting of adverse events and to develop guidelines for medical product registration.</p> <p>Meetings with partners including the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), Australian Expert Technical Assistance Program (AETAP), National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) and International Vaccine Institute (IVI) are taking place to discuss potential support for the work of the platform going forward. The platform has also built links with the Caribbean Regulatory System (CRS) and is in discussions for potential activities in 2022.</p>
2. Climate change and health			
We, the Pacific Health Ministers at this Thirteenth Pacific Health Ministers Meeting, committed to:			
2.1	Ensuring that health is a central component of each country's National Climate Adaptation Plans and improving communication on climate change both within and outside the health sector;	Implementation started - behind schedule	Health has been included in the draft or finalized National Climate Adaptation Plans for Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa and Tuvalu. In Fiji, the Health National Adaptation Plan has been revised to strengthen inter-ministerial collaboration, gathering evidence across sectors of the health impacts of climate change. Fiji has also developed a guideline for Climate Resilient and Environmentally Sustainable Healthcare Facilities, launched in March 2021.



2.2	Continuing to advocate for climate-friendly policies throughout the health and other sectors;	Implementation started - on track	Ministers continued to advocate for climate-friendly policies throughout both the health and non-health sectors. For example, during the SIDS Summit, the Ministers of Health of Fiji, Kiribati and RMI spoke of the urgent need to address the health impacts of climate change and to use COP26 as an opportunity to put health at the centre of the climate change discussion.
2.3	Investigating how the Green Climate Fund and other relevant mechanisms can be leveraged to support health-related climate change activities in the Pacific;	Implementation started - behind schedule	RMI has leveraged the Green Climate Fund to support health-related climate change activities. This is being used to support the country's efforts to prepare for the enhancement of the country's climate change and health programme, including the preparation of the National Climate Adaptation Plan and capacity-building for climate-related diseases. FSM has also secured funding from GCF for a project called "Increasing resilience to the health risks of climate change in the Federated States of Micronesia".
2.4	Supporting WHO in becoming an accredited entity of the Green Climate Fund.	Implementation started - behind schedule	Ministers of health have actively pushed for WHO to be an accredited entity of the Green Climate Fund. While WHO is not yet an accredited entity, the Organization has been approved as a " readiness partner ".

3. Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs)

We, the Pacific Health Ministers at this Thirteenth Pacific Health Ministers Meeting, committed to:

3.1	Ensuring that each country has an up to date, multisectoral, national strategic plan for NCDs, with clearly defined priorities, indicators and timelines, which incorporates actions on childhood obesity and cancer control;	Implementation started - behind schedule	In 2019-2020, four additional PICs (Nauru, New Caledonia, Solomon Islands and Tokelau) have developed a national multi-sectoral NCD strategy with target indicators, which brings the total to 17 PICs having a national multi-sectoral NCD strategic plan in place. Fiji has initiated work on the development of a digital health roadmap for NCD management.
3.2	Ensuring that our country has a national multisectoral NCD task force that supports the implementation of the plan;	Implementation started - on track	In 2019-2020, seven additional PICs (CNMI, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, RMI and Tokelau) have established a multi-sectoral NCD taskforce to support the implementation of their national NCD plan, resulting in a total of 12 PICs establishing such a mechanism. There has been increased interest and participation of non-health sectors, civil society and community groups in the implementation of NCD strategies and plans.

3.3	Utilizing the Pacific NCD Dashboard to prioritize our key national NCD actions for the next 12 months, with particular consideration for those actions with current regional-level gaps (for example, setting controls on marketing of unhealthy foods and sugar-sweetened beverages to children, restricting trans-fats in the food supply, prohibiting tobacco industry interference, and further raising taxes on unhealthy products);	Implementation started - on track	<p>PICs have been utilizing the Pacific MANA Dashboard to prioritize key NCD actions.</p> <p>Six additional PICs (American Samoa, CNMI, Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tuvalu) have put policy measures in place to limit trans-fat in the food supply (from none to six PICs in total). Two additional PICs (Palau and Tuvalu) have food based dietary guidelines (13 PICs in total); one additional country (Tonga) put in place a policy to reduce salt consumption (16 PICs in total).</p> <p>Two PICs (Niue and Samoa) have prohibited tobacco industry interference in public health (from none to now two). Two additional PICs (FSM-Kosrae and Niue) have legislation to create smoke free public places (total 20 PICs), and two additional PICs (American Samoa and Niue) have legislation for health warnings on tobacco packaging (total 17 PICs). Two additional PICs (Niue and Tokelau) have legislation to restrict tobacco advertising (total 19 PICs); and five additional countries (FSM, Niue, RMI, Samoa and Tokelau) restrict tobacco sales and licensing (total 18 PICs).</p> <p>One additional PIC (FSM-Pohnpei) has initiated a licensing system to restrict sales of alcohol (total 21 PICTs), two additional PICs (FSM-Pohnpei and PNG) have regulations in place to control drink driving (total 20 PICs), and two additional PICs (FSM and Nauru) restricted alcohol advertising (total 8 PICs).</p>
3.4	Supporting the identified regional priorities of physical activity, fiscal measures and restriction of marketing of foods and sugar-sweetened beverages to children as per the Pacific Ending Childhood Obesity (ECHO) Network action plan;	Implementation started - on track	<p>Three countries (Cook Islands, Niue and Samoa) have put in place policies to restrict marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children (five PICs in total to date). New Caledonia adopted a taxation measure to discourage unhealthy food/beverage choices, bringing the total to 14 PICTs to date. Several PICs are implementing physical activity promotion and campaigns with two additional PICs (CNMI and Palau) making physical education in schools compulsory (total 15 PICs). Four more PICs (Nauru, Palau, PNG and Tonga) put policies in place to encourage provision and promotion of healthy food choices in schools (bringing the total to 14 PICs).</p>
3.5	Utilizing tax impact assessment studies to support further the effective use of taxation, pursuing the exclusion of tobacco and alcohol from future trade agreements and taking actions to prevent the undermining of the impacts of taxation approaches;	Implementation started - on track	<p>Three additional PICs (RMI, Solomon Islands and Tokelau) have implemented tobacco taxation measures, taking the total to 20 PICs that have maintained and/or implemented tobacco taxation measures. One additional PIC (RMI) has implemented alcohol taxation measures (total 21 PICs). To date, six PICs (American Samoa, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Palau, Tonga and Wallis & Futuna) have reached the recommended tobacco taxation target.</p>



3.6	Advocating for appropriate collaborative approaches for cancer control at the regional, sub-regional and country levels and striving to improve cancer surveillance, screening, diagnostic, treatment and palliative care capacity;	Implementation started - behind schedule	<p>The Pacific Regional Central Cancer Registry continues to provide support to reporting pathways, analysis and training, while the Pacific Health Information Network, with support from WHO, has planned a webinar series starting in October to strengthen health information systems for cancer management.</p> <p>Meanwhile, individual PICs are moving towards establishing or strengthening cancer registration systems (Cook Islands, Fiji, Nauru, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu). A cost-effectiveness analysis is being conducted in Fiji for cervical cancer screening improvements. Solomon Islands is rolling out their screening programme despite some delays. Tuvalu has an emerging cervical cancer screening programme and policy in development. Cook Islands also has a national cancer control programme in draft stages formed since 2020.</p>
3.7	Leading by example as a role model of good health by advocating for tobacco free islands, adopting healthy practices and insisting that future Pacific Health Minister Meetings are tobacco, alcohol and sugar free.	Implementation started - on track	The 14th Pacific Health Ministers Meeting aims to be a tobacco, alcohol and sugar-free event.
4. Health workforce			
We, the Pacific Health Ministers at this Thirteenth Pacific Health Ministers Meeting, committed to:			
4.1	Expanding the medical workforce survey already undertaken by the Secretariat to include the whole health workforce in all Pacific island countries and areas;	Implementation started - behind schedule	Eight countries (Cook Island, FSM, Fiji, RMI, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga and Vanuatu) were able to share the most recently updated data in preparation for the State of the World Midwifery Report 2021 through the National Health Workforce Accounts (NHWA) platform . FSM, Palau and RMI completed the initial profiling and mapping of the health workforce and continue to strengthen the use of this data to inform human resources for health policy and planning. A number of PICs shared information on trained medical professionals as part of the monitoring of high dependency unit/intensive care unit resources in Pacific countries.
4.2	Developing training programmes targeted at isolated medical practitioners and implementing effective health workforce retention strategies;	Implementation started - behind schedule	Numerous trainings on IPC, clinical management, ICD classification, surveillance, outbreak data management, AMR, laboratory, digital health and telehealth were conducted for all the PICs as part of COVID-19 preparedness and response.
4.3	Identifying the health workforce indicators needed for decision-making for the issues of development, shortages, retention and regulations of the health workforce across primary health care and specialized services in the Pacific;	Planning underway	Support for the identification of health workforce indicators will be provided along with support for strengthening health workforce information and its use for planning, policy and reporting.

4.4	Exploring the creation of a Pacific human resources for health entity to manage the medical workforce survey, coordinate training programmes targeted at isolated medical practitioners and implement effective health workforce retention strategies;	Implementation started - behind schedule	Implementation of National Health Workforce Accounts (NHWA) started in 2021 with the identification of NHWA focal persons for 16 PICs (Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Marshall Islands, FSM, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Wallis & Futuna). The focal persons attended a virtual orientation on the NHWA platform and global HRH reporting processes. The respective countries and areas will be using the NHWA platform to collate health workforce information for planning, policy and reporting.
4.5	Supporting linkages with the education sector to increase the number of students both entering and completing health professional education;	Implementation started - behind schedule	Linkages with the education sector has been made in a number of PICs.
4.6	Working with medical training institutions in the region to review the entry requirements of their undergraduate programmes and ensure they take into consideration the variation in education systems and assessment processes in Pacific island countries and areas.	Implementation started - on track	Chief nursing officers worked together towards the establishment of a sub-regional Quality Improvement Program for nursing in the PICs aiming to address the shortage of nurses. WHO and the University of Technology Sydney conducted a scoping review in 2020 to guide the 'roadmap' towards the establishment of the Program, starting with the identification and mapping of stakeholders and establishment of the Programme's governance structure. Implementation of the roadmap is being initiated in 2021.



5. Health information

We, the Pacific Health Ministers at this Thirteenth Pacific Health Ministers Meeting, committed to:

5.1	Strengthening national health information systems, e-health strategies and civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) in line with our national health priorities;	Implementation started - on track	<p>Seventeen PICs participated in digital health country profiles and maturity assessments. Fiji, Vanuatu, Samoa and Tonga were the first countries to develop and implement digital health strategies in the Pacific, with Fiji already having completed a mid-term review with plans to develop a second iteration of the strategy based on the review's findings. Kiribati has developed a digital health strategy focused specifically on primary health care. The Cook Islands and Solomon Islands are in the process of developing their digital health strategies.</p> <p>Support has been provided to PICs in the classification and coding of diseases and other health issues. A free licence was granted to countries to use the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth Revision, Australian Modification (ICD10-AM). Ministry staff in Fiji, Samoa and Tonga are undergoing a 7-month training course on ICD 10-AM coding.</p> <p>PICs now have access to guidelines for the maintenance of operational continuity of civil registration and vital statistics systems during the COVID-19 pandemic. A series of webinars was also held on the guidelines. Niue is being supported to pilot implementation of an open source CRVS platform which will include electronic linkages with existing health platforms that collect birth and death information. The pilot project is assessing the feasibility of such an e-platform to improve reporting of vital events including exchange of data with relevant offices in New Zealand. The objective of the project is to test scalability of the OpenCRVS software in the Pacific.</p> <p>Telehealth platforms were also expanded to meet demand during the pandemic. Fiji has scaled up emergency telemedicine projects and started developing more advanced virtual care for diabetic patients. FSM has worked to improve telemedicine between hospital and health centres while Tuvalu and Fiji have taken steps to strengthen their national telehealth programs. WHO has provided regional training on telehealth and developed two guidance document on strengthening emergency and routine telehealth programmes.</p>
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5.2	Supporting regional mechanisms for improving the availability of quality and timely data, for example, the Pacific Health Information Network (PHIN) and the Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network (PPHSN).	Implementation started - on track	<p>Through the Strengthening Health Interventions in the Pacific – Data for Decision Making (SHIP-DDM) programme of the Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network (PPHSN), training on COVID-19 surveillance, contact tracing, and investigation and management of disease outbreaks were provided to five countries in the Pacific: Kiribati, Tonga, Tuvalu, Nauru and Vanuatu.</p> <p>The Public Health Information Network (PHIN) webpage was launched to facilitate knowledge sharing, including on COVID-19. PHIN also runs a webinar program. The surveillance cell under the Pacific COVID-19 Joint Incident Management Team has also provided technical guidance and materials related to surveillance and outbreak management, including webinars and direct country support. SPC's Pacific Data Hub has been used for visualization of COVID-19 data.</p> <p>Implementation of the Postgraduate Certificate in Field Epidemiology (PGCFE) course has been ongoing. Participants from Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands and Tokelau have completed all five modules of the PGCFE course.</p>
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6. Health security

We, the Pacific Health Ministers at this Thirteenth Pacific Health Ministers Meeting, committed to:

6.1	Working further on the adaption of the Joint External Evaluation (JEE) and State Party Self-Assessment Annual Reporting (SPAR) processes to be fit for purpose for small island states and using collective approaches to provide access to capacities, where appropriate;	Implementation started - on track	All 13 eligible PICs completed the State Party Self-Assessment Annual Reporting process. The focus has not been on the assessment itself, but on using the results to deliver progress in the areas that require strengthening. COVID-19 has provided further impetus to deliver this progress.
6.2	Moving towards a more country-led and multisectoral approach to the self assessment of core capacities and capabilities;	Implementation started - on track	
6.3	Contributing to the PPHSN review and advocating for their work in strengthening the regional laboratory network and epidemiology capacity building programmes.	Implementation started - on track	PPHSN partners have contributed to the strengthening of regional laboratory networks throughout the COVID-19 response and are part of the Pacific Joint Incident Management Team. The laboratory mentorship programme has continued to provide support to Pacific-based lab staff.



7. Immunization

We, the Pacific Health Ministers at this Thirteenth Pacific Health Ministers Meeting, committed to:

7.1	Prioritizing efforts to increase vaccination coverage towards achieving the regional coverage target of 95% for all vaccines in national immunization schedules and to fully implement the other Global Vaccine Action Plan (GVAP) immunization programme components, over efforts to harmonize childhood immunization schedules across the Pacific;	Implementation started - behind schedule	<p>PICs participated in a review of their national vaccination schedules as part of efforts to consider changing the timing of the second dose of measles- and rubella-containing vaccine. Currently, there are several countries where the second dose is given at school entry -- there is ongoing discussion about bringing this second dose forward to two years of age in order to provide children with more rapid protection.</p> <p>The countries have worked towards introducing enhanced vaccination data management strategies and related software solutions. Vanuatu and Solomon Island have introduced DHIS2 COVID-19 modules, and Tonga, Fiji and Kiribati have applied interim methods such as mSupply to manage COVID-19 vaccination campaigns among others. USAPIs have used existing electronic immunization systems for immunization data management.</p> <p>A Pacific Immunization Data Model was developed to standardize datasets and data models for software solutions.</p>
7.2	Implementing human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programmes as a priority;	Implementation started - on track	<p>Four additional PICs are in process of introducing HPV vaccines. The four countries (Samoa, Tuvalu, Kiribati and Tonga) are being supported through a partnership between ADB, UNICEF and WHO centred on the introduction of new vaccines. With this, a total of 15 PICs would be administering HPV vaccine in their routine immunization programmes. The initial plan was to introduce the HPV vaccines in the four countries by 2020/early 2021. Following a slight delay due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this is now moving ahead.</p>
7.3	Improving the monitoring of and data collection on vaccine hesitancy and implementing evidence-based interventions to overcome the uncertainty causing this hesitancy.	Implementation started - on track	<p>PICs improved the monitoring of, and response to, vaccine hesitancy during the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines. Vaccine hesitancy data collected through the WHO/UNICEF annual reporting form on immunization as well as through social listening systems is being used to inform community engagement and communication. A <i>Regional guide for programme managers in the Western Pacific on strategies for assessing and addressing hesitancy, building acceptance, and sustaining vaccination uptake</i> has been shared with countries for local adaptation.</p>

8. Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

We, the Pacific Health Ministers at this Thirteenth Pacific Health Ministers Meeting, committed to:



8.1	Supporting the development of a Pacific Strategy on WASH for Health to be presented at the next Pacific Health Ministers Meeting.	Implementation started - behind schedule	<p>Baseline data on WASH and waste management in healthcare facilities is currently being gathered to help Member States and partners understand where to focus efforts in future. Once this data is gathered, efforts will be prioritized towards countries with less than 80% access to water and sanitation. A document outlining "why not yet?" is also under development, analyzing why WASH has not yet been adequately addressed. The guidance being drafted on Climate Resilient and Environmentally Sustainable Healthcare Facilities (CRESHCF) includes WASH as its first action area. Fiji has already developed a national guideline on CRESCHF and a CRESCHF assessment has been completed in PNG.</p>
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