Public health measures at Points of Entry (POE)

Nam Nguyen
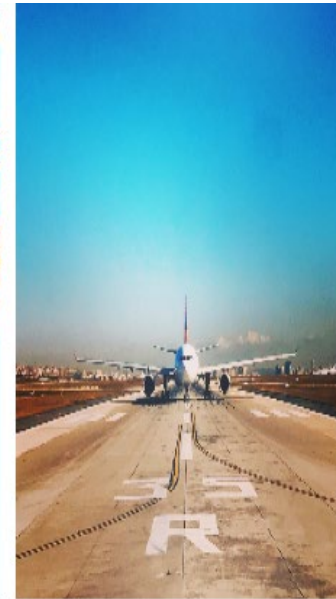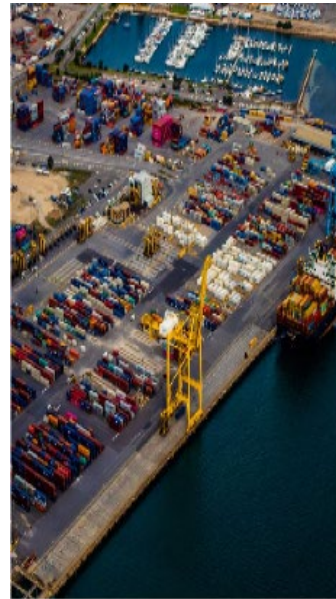
Technical Officer, Pandemic Influenza Preparedness
WHO Health Emergencies Programme
WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific

Public health measures at POE are important for infectious diseases response

POE are one of the most important intervention points for infectious disease response

- IHR (2005): POE is defined as *"... a passage for international entry or exit of travellers, baggage, cargo, containers, conveyances, goods and postal parcels as well as agencies and areas providing services to them on entry or exit".* POE includes ports, airports and land crossings.
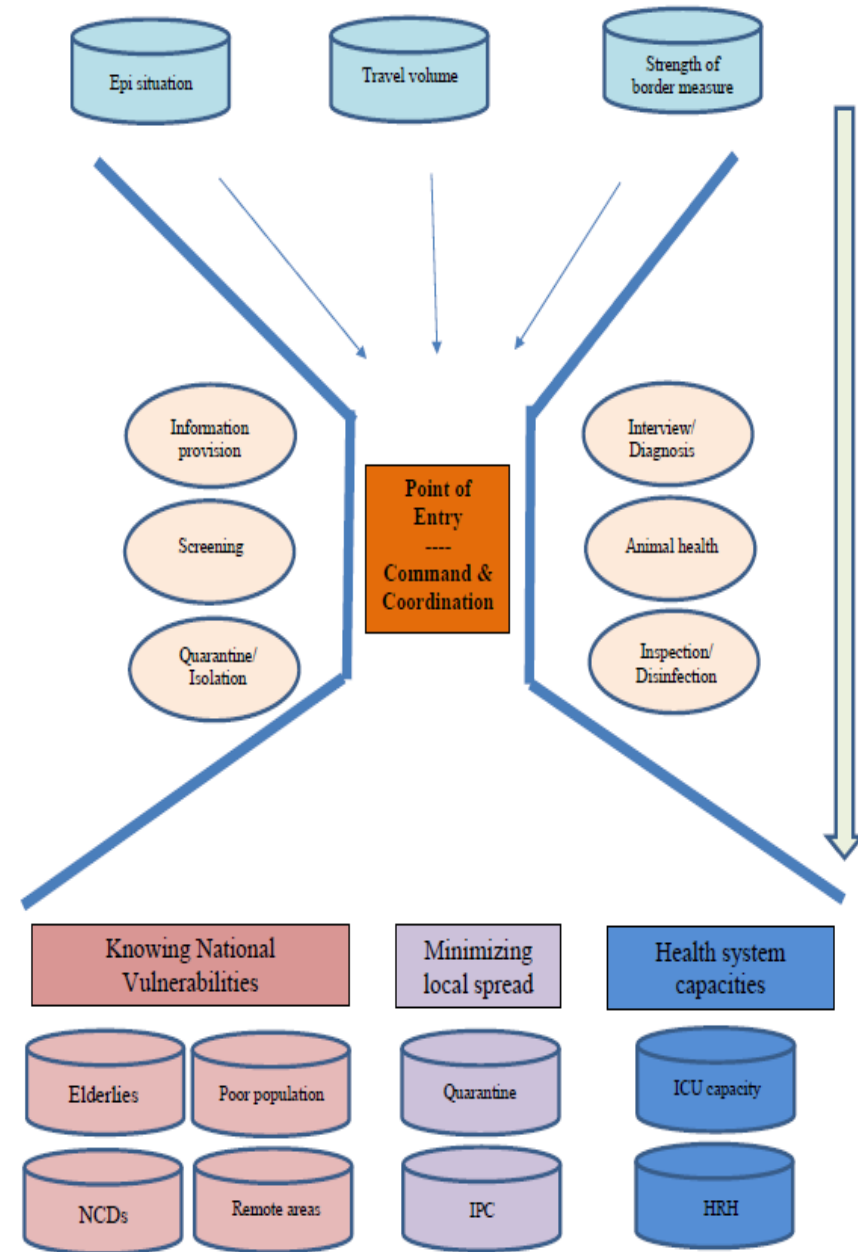
Points of entry as part of national and international systems

- POE interfaces between national and international systems.
- Linking local and global response.
- POE measures when implemented with post-border surveillance and containment measures can slow down the introduction of virus.
- Exit measures can minimize risk of exportation of virus.

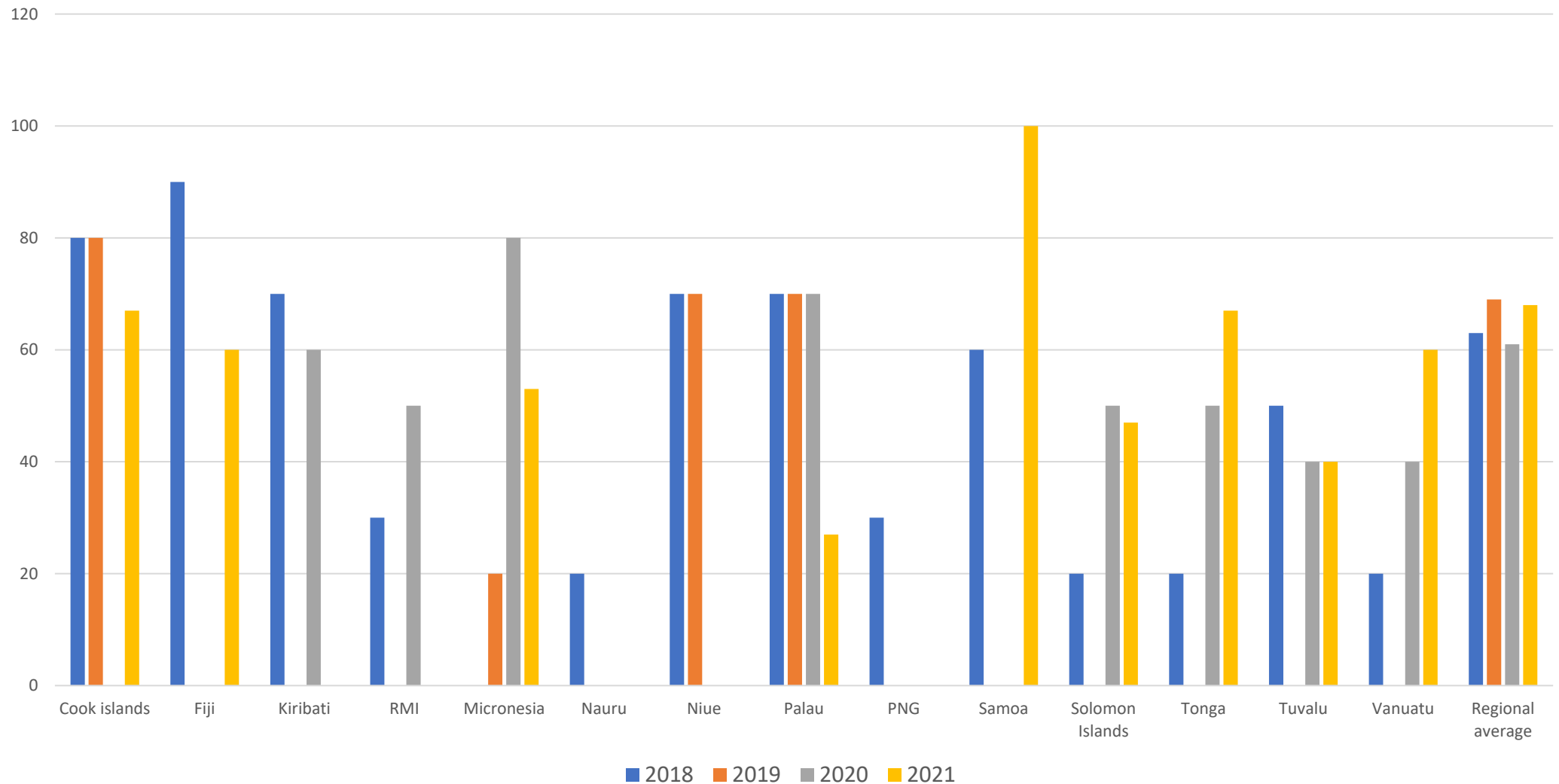GLOBAL INFORMATION SHARING AND COMMUNICATION

- Sharing of information to National IHR Focal Points to support contact tracing.
- Coordinated measures at POE.

Capacity requirements for response at POEs (emergency)

Capacities at POE in selected PICs (%)

Challenges

- **Collaboration & sharing of information** across borders on POE measures as well as travellers to support risk assessment and calibration of border policies is still limited

- **Exit measures** not implemented early to prevent export

- **Coordination** of relevant authorities at POE for management of large movement of travellers is still sub-optimal, i.e.:
  - Dedicated place for temporary isolation of suspected cases
  - Measures to ensure adequate distancing
  - Transportation to quarantine facilities
  - Infection prevention and control (IPC)
  - Logistics to support public health actions at POE

Issues identified at POE during COVID-19 response

Public health measures at POE can **slow down the introduction of virus**, providing additional time for the health system to prepare.

Potential high costs and negative consequences associated with POE measures:

- Loss of economic benefits
- Costs for screening of travellers
- Costs for maintaining quarantine/isolation facilities

Issues identified at POE during COVID-19 response

Command & control
- Interagency coordination is essential to mount effective border measures

Cross border collaboration
- Working with transport operators and countries for management of cross border movement
- Sharing of information is critical to inform risk assessment and coordinate POE measures with other countries
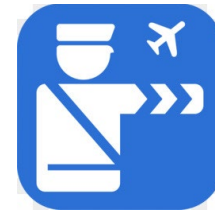
POE as part of national surveillance system

Multisectoral response in Fiji

Suggested systems approach for POE

Transform command & control structure at POE to improve intra-agency coordination and support response

Empower POE with added capacities to prevent export and spread through implementation of exit measures

Establish regional platform for enhancing cross border collaboration & information sharing to support decision-making

Strengthen public health role & integrate POE to national surveillance system to support early detection, contact tracing, decision-making

Thank you for your attention