

## **Director of Statistics for Development Division at Pacific Community (SPC)**

### **Intervention on the First Session of the Committee of Statistics Sixth Session – Day 1.**

Firstly, let me congratulate the new Director of the UNESCAP, Ms. Gemma, for your recent appointment and resuming your responsibilities with great confidence and organise this meeting - bringing us together to meet at a time when demand for timely, accurate and disaggregated statistics are at its highest. The Pacific Region and its 22 member countries are very proud to have you represent us in UNESCAP and we trust that you will continue to advocate for the challenges (but also the opportunities) faced by the Pacific region.

As the system leader for regional statistics development in the Pacific, SPC wishes to acknowledge ESCAP as one of the key partners providing technical support to the Pacific statistics community. Thank you.

The **Collective Vision and Framework for Action** has set some very ambitious objectives that has given both opportunities and challenges that all of us around this room have to deal with daily.

Let me briefly provide additional background information complementing what the Government of Samoa has presented on work being done in the Pacific. The SDG era have generated a number of opportunities (as well as challenges) for the Pacific:

#### **Opportunities:**

- Pacific has identified 132 SDG Indicators approved by our Pacific Leaders and a Pacific Roadmap identifying way forward in meeting reporting requirement under 2030 Agenda;
- Most Government have integrate SDG indicators into their national development priorities;
- Pacific member governments to realise the importance of producing timely, accurate and disaggregated statistics; some Pacific government have finally increased their budget allocation to NSOs above 1% threshold;
- Pacific leaders accept the urgent need to update some of the national core statistics such as Population Census; Agriculture; Labour Force; Disability; Health; Education; CRVS and Economic statistics;

- Pacific National Statistics System realise the importance of disseminating Pacific statistics and data in a timely manner; ensuring that users have access to these data; and not merely consider itself as producer of statistics;
- Allow the Pacific to look beyond the official statistics and explore the use of administrative data and other sources to complement official statistics;
- The use of technologies in data collection especially tablets and survey solutions;
- Development partners in the Pacific accept the need to work together and this has led to the development and endorsement of what we call the Pacific Statistics Partnership Program

### **Challenges:**

- Capacity and capability constraint in the Pacific cannot be underestimate. The burden of SDG reporting can be overwhelming in some small NSOs, with only 2-3 staff;
- The lack of coordination among development partners and donors put additional pressures on Pacific NSOs; for example last month – there were 3 UN-related meetings in one hotel and all the Government Statisticians of the Pacific were in one or the other meetings;
- There are number of SDG indicators that are still in Tier 3; and for the Pacific SDGs 13&14 are quite important for the Pacific;
- There is a need for stronger and relevant (fit-for-purpose) long-term capacity building and training program for the Pacific as a region and not an extension of what's work in other region;
- Financial resources required to produce accurate; timely and disaggregated Pacific statistics is substantial. A crude estimates shows that the region will require over 250million USD to fund the collection of core official statistics over the next five years.

Thank you.