



**Joint Forum Economic and Pacific Health Ministers Meeting  
Outcomes Statement  
Honiara, Solomon Islands  
11 July 2014**

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**Preamble**

Pacific Island countries are in the midst of a Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) crisis. Pacific Leaders recognised this in September 2011. The statistics for the Pacific speak for themselves.

- i. NCDs account for around 75% of all deaths in the Pacific.
  - ii. Most countries in the Pacific now have much higher rates of premature (below age 60) deaths than the comparable global average.
  - iii. The top 10 countries with the highest overweight and obesity rates in the world are Pacific Island Countries and Territories.
  - iv. Three of the top ten worst rates of tobacco use in the world are in the Pacific region.
2. The Forum Economic Ministers Meeting in 2013 considered the economic costs of NCDs in the Pacific. Economic Ministers requested that the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) consult with Forum Members to develop a Roadmap for strengthening NCD prevention and control in the Pacific region, and present the finalised NCD Roadmap to Economic Ministers in 2014 outlining their specific role and contribution.
3. The Economic and Health Ministers acknowledged that NCDs already undermine social and economic development in the Pacific, and are financially unsustainable. NCDs impose increasingly large, yet often preventable financial costs on national budgets and the economy more broadly. Without decisive action, NCDs can undo the development gains of the last 20 years.
4. The Economic and Health Ministers expressed appreciation for the preparatory work spearheaded by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and Secretariat of the Pacific Community, strongly supported by the World Bank, New Zealand Aid programme, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and World Health Organisation. The Economic and Health Ministers:
- i. underscored the gravity of the NCD situation in the Pacific, with significant and long-term negative effects on both the health and the economies of our Pacific nations; and

- ii. Agreed urgent action is needed to control and reverse the negative impacts of NCDs. This action needs to be based on evidence, tailored to each country's specific situation.

### Agreed Actions

5. We, the Economic and Health Ministers commit to these five actions to develop together country-specific roadmaps:

- i. **Strengthening** tobacco control by an incremental increase in excise duties to 70% of the retail price of cigarettes over the medium term;
- ii. **Considering** an increase in taxation of alcohol products as a way of reducing harmful alcohol consumption;
- iii. **Considering** policies that reduce consumption of local and imported food and drink products that are high in sugar, salt and fat content and directly linked to obesity, diabetes, heart disease and other NCDs in the Pacific through targeted preventative measures, taxes and better regulation;
- iv. **Improving** the efficiency and impact of the existing health budget by reallocating scarce health resources to targeted primary and secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, including through the Package of Essential Non Communicable Disease Interventions of 'best buys'; and
- v. **Strengthening** the evidence base for better investment planning and programme effectiveness to ensure interventions work as intended and provide value for money.

6. The Economic and Health Ministers also commit to:

- i. Facilitate other strategies, as described in the NCD Roadmap, as appropriate. The recommended interventions are deliberately multi-sectoral, involving Ministries such as the Prime Minister's Office, Ministries of Agriculture, Education, Health and Trade, and also agencies such as the Police Force and National Statistics Office;
- ii. A joint strategy to urge exporting countries to introduce policies and regulations that promote healthy food and drink products and restricting export and 'dumping' of such sub-standard and unhealthy products in the Pacific;
- iii. Establish a high-level multi-sectoral mechanism to oversee and drive the NCD work in our countries; and
- iv. Report back to our respective ministerial meetings in 2015 on the progress in implementing these country-specific roadmaps.