



## Eleventh Pacific Health Ministers Meeting

April 15-17, 2015



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Media Release

### The 20 Years of the Healthy Island Journey

The Eleventh Pacific Health Ministers meeting commenced in Yanuca Island, Fiji, today. The Pacific Ministers will review progress over the last 20 years in health and chart the course for the years to come.

The first Pacific Health Ministers meeting in 1995 was also held in Yanuca Island, where ministers created a unifying Healthy Islands vision for Pacific island countries and areas. The meeting articulated a response to the specific needs of the region.

“This meeting will review the progress and development made over the past 20 years. It will also set a future strategic direction in health leadership and development in the Pacific. Especially, with the health sector being a challenge in developing Pacific Island countries”, said the Hon. Minister for Health & Medical Services Mr Jone Usamate.

Health has improved in the Pacific in the last 20 years, but progress has been slower than in other parts of the world, and there is a risk of the Pacific falling behind.

Challenges include: the implementation gap at country level; social, economic and environmental issues; sustainable resources for the health sector; and collaboration with partners.

“The Pacific today is a different place than it was 20 years ago, and our region faces a multitude of challenges. We have an opportunity to build on the progress already achieved in Pacific health through increased cooperation between governments, non-governmental organisations, civil society and the private sector, to work together to improve the lives of all Pacific people,” said Secretariat of the South Pacific's Director-General, Dr Colin Tukuitonga.

Proposed future directions include reinforcing the Healthy Islands vision and operationalizing at the national level. Developing a monitoring and reporting mechanism will improve accountability and tracking of achievements. Finally, investing in Pacific leadership with increased coordination among development partners and other sectors will ensure greater accountability and commitment among countries.

“The Healthy Islands vision continues to be a beautiful and pure expression of where we need to be heading. These meetings have become a golden opportunity to collaborate in charting

the course of health and development for the next generation. Working together, we can make the Healthy Islands vision a reality for our children.” remarked WHO’s Regional Director for the Western Pacific Region, Dr Shin Young-soo.

\*This meeting is jointly staged by the Fiji Government, World Health Organization Western Pacific Region and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

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