



Eleventh Pacific Health Ministers Meeting



2015 Yanuca Island Declaration on health in Pacific island countries and territories

15–17 April 2015

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Introduction

We are pleased to present the 2015 Yanuca Island Declaration, detailing the decisions and agreements made by the Pacific ministers of health in 2015 at the Eleventh Pacific Health Ministers Meeting on Yanuca Island, Fiji.

Twenty years ago, the first Ministerial Conference on Health for the Pacific Island Countries was also convened on Yanuca Island. The meeting was held in response to rapidly changing social and economic conditions affecting the quality of life and health in the Pacific.

At that first meeting, ministers adopted the vision of Healthy Islands as the unifying theme for health promotion and health protection.

Since that time, nine biennial meetings of Pacific health ministers have been held, most recently in July 2013 in Apia, Samoa. In addition, an ad hoc meeting of the Pacific health ministers was also convened in July 2014 in Honiara, Solomon Islands, in conjunction with the Joint Economic and Health Ministers Meeting.

The Government of the Republic of Fiji graciously hosted the Eleventh Pacific Health Ministers Meeting with support from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and WHO. The meeting has provided an opportunity to reflect on the Healthy Islands journey and examine achievements, challenges and the way forward.

The vision remains as relevant and powerful now as it was during that first meeting of ministers on Yanuca Island in March 1995.



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WHO Regional Director
for the Western Pacific



Honourable Jone Usamate
Minister of Health
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Dr Colin Tukuitonga
Director-General of
the Secretariat of the
Pacific Community



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We, the Ministers and representatives of 19 Pacific island governments, assembled on Yanuca Island, Fiji, from 15 to 17 April 2015, reaffirmed our commitment to the Healthy Islands vision as a unifying theme to guide health development and to chart the way forward towards the realization of the vision.

Healthy Islands are places where:

- children are nurtured in body and mind;
- environments invite learning and leisure;
- people work and age with dignity;
- ecological balance is a source of pride; and
- the ocean which sustains us is protected.¹

The vision provides a rallying point that speaks to our Pacific spirit. Family and community values, the foundation of the Pacific culture, are our strength and should be nurtured.

1. The first four statements were agreed at the 1995 Health Ministers meeting at Yanuca Island, Fiji; the last statement concerning the ocean was added after the 1999 Health Ministers meeting in Palau.



We, Ministers:

Confirm that over the past 20 years the Healthy Islands vision has served the Pacific, having been adapted and applied to different country contexts. New approaches were introduced, such as health-promoting villages and schools, and working with other sectors. Progress has been observed in infectious disease control, with reductions in chronic hepatitis B infection rates, especially among children, and the maintenance of polio-free status despite threats of its importation. This progress has contributed to significant improvements in child survival across the region. Many countries have also reported improvements in life expectancy. However these gains have not been consistent across all countries. In addition, a significant gap persists between the Pacific and the rest of the world.

Recognize that the Pacific is facing mounting health challenges. An increasing population and ageing populations will further increase demands on our health systems. New diseases, such as chikungunya, are emerging, while tuberculosis, malaria, measles and diarrhoea continue to threaten health. There are further gains in child survival and life expectancy to be made. Noncommunicable diseases, such as diabetes, are rising to levels higher than in the rest of the world, shortening the lives of the adult population. The real and potential impacts of climate variability on health and health systems represent an immediate challenge in the Pacific.

Stress that factors outside of the health sector also impact health. The fre-

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