Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum remain concerned about the pace of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – steady but uneven. The increasing vulnerability of Pacific Island Countries (PICs) to threats and challenges, as emphasised by the effects of the global financial, fuel and food crises, are compounded by the impact of climate change, as well as the inherent limited capacity to cope.

Forum Leaders’ commitment to the achievement of the MDGs was reinforced in August 2010 through their adoption of the Port Vila Declaration on Accelerating Progress on the Achievement of the MDGs. Forum Leaders committed to accelerate progress towards achieving the MDGs by localizing the development goals, advocating for the special needs of the Pacific Small Island Development States (SIDS) and through better coordination efforts.

At a global level, Leaders concluded the United Nations (UN) Summit on MDGs on 22 September 2010 with the adoption of a global action plan to achieve the eight development goals by 2015. The outcome document sets out a concrete action agenda. Based on examples of success and lessons learned over the last ten years, the document spells out specific steps such as targeted investments, greater investment in women and girls, effective use of trade and investment opportunities and country led development efforts backed by enabling international environments that can be taken by all stakeholders to accelerate progress on each of the eight goals.

Given the constraints PICs face and considering the global action plan and Port Vila Declaration, what do you think PICs and/or development partners could do to accelerate the achievement of the MDG targets by 2015? Specifically,

- How could achievement of the MDGs be better reflected in national plans and budgets in the PICs?
- What are the lessons learned and good practice from your country or worldwide that could be applicable for PICs?
- How could technology be used to accelerate the implementation and achievement of MDGs in the Pacific?
Your contributions to this e-discussion will help to inform ongoing efforts to accelerate the implementation of the MDGs in view of the Port Villa Declaration on Accelerating Progress towards Achievement of the MDGs and the Outcomes of the UN High Level Summit on the MDGs.

Responses were received, with thanks, from

1. Keith Leonard, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Suva, Fiji (Response 1; Response 2; Response 3)
2. Chris Andrew, Greenlight Technology Group Pty Ltd., NSW, Australia
3. Samuel Wara, Ministry of Planning and Aid Coordination, Honiara, Solomon Islands
4. Alex L. Ginet, Department of National Planning & Monitoring, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea
5. Resina Katafono, Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Suva, Fiji
6. Litia Mawi, United Nations Volunteers (UNV), Funafuti, Tuvalu
7. Noumea Simi, Ministry of Finance, Apia, Samoa
9. Garry Wiseman, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Suva, Fiji
10. Toily Kurbanov, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Suva, Fiji
11. Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, femLINKPACIFIC, Suva, Fiji
12. Mahezabeen Khan, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Suva, Fiji
13. Floyd Robinson, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Suva, Fiji
14. Marea Itaia, Kiribati Chamber of Commerce, Tarawa, Kiribati
15. Mike Reitz, Consultant, Hawaii, United States of America
16. Ian Thomson, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Noumea, New Caledonia
17. Mereseini Bower, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Suva, Fiji
18. Brian Lenga, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Suva, Fiji
19. Onetoto Anisi, Tonga MDG Project, Nukualofa, Tonga
20. Joeteshna Zenos, University of New Mexico, United States of America
21. Setareki Macanawai, Pacific Disability Forum, Suva, Fiji

Further contributions are welcome!

Summary of Responses
Comparative Experiences
Related Resources
Responses in Full

Summary of Responses

Responding to a series of questions on how to accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the Pacific region, members of the Development Effectiveness Community identified a number of practices that improve planning processes and lead to national plans and budgets better reflecting the MDGs.

Discussants outlined the following actions to enhance the planning process:

- **Focus on national level priorities:**
  - Determined based on good data - National planning should be based on assessment of the development needs of the country, using medium to long term development goals as well
as a bottom up approach that examines national and sectoral priorities. The priorities need to be based on evidence and good data is the foundation of this. Across Pacific Island Countries (PICs), there is a need to improve the quality of development data. Well-disaggregated data will define the inequities that exist and how wealth distribution, gender, geographical location or disability determines the condition of citizens so that resources are targeted properly. The eight MDGs can then be integrated within the countries national plans based on the countries needs and priorities resulting in localization of the MDGs.

- **Determined based on a consultative and inclusive approach** - The planning process should be inclusive and participatory to increase national ownership and ensure that the needs of the vulnerable, particularly persons with disabilities, women and children are addressed. In addition, “how” the political, economic, social and environmental benefits derived from the implementation of national priorities are equitably shared needs to be clearly articulated.

- **Integrating national level priorities with relevant commitments** such as the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

- **Monitoring and evaluation framework**: Whether it is private or public sector, transparent, measurable indicators to establish baselines and track performance is paramount to assess the effectiveness of actions. Monitoring ensures that plans are responsive to the changing environment and enables policy makers and planners to take into account new emerging development challenges that have implications on the MDGs - “You cannot manage what you cannot measure.”

- **Framework for nurturing, facilitating and promoting social demand/change/uptake** (the demand side of development): This includes focusing on communication across sectors, national governments, non-state actors, private sector, academia and development partners to take the opportunity to collaborate and partner for achievement of the MDGs. The demand for services should drive the supply of services to ensure maximum uptake or use.

- **Minimum Service Standards** (the supply side of development): Governments must define service standards in various thematic sectors. Governments could base standards on good practice case studies and lessons from other countries. The minimum standards do not need to be limited to the public sector but increasingly extended to private provision within the public-private partnership context. Private provision of services, whether publicly or privately funded, can often produce better results than focusing only on public funding/public provision.

- **Pay particular attention to vulnerable and at risk groups**

- **National plans serve as a bridge between policy and budgets in governments**: governments need to gear policies and plans towards the achievement of MDGs to guide expenditure and other decisions.

Discussants further highlighted that underpinning the achievement of the MDGs is the need for leadership at all levels. They argued leadership and good governance are needed to successfully translate plans into reality. Each PIC will need leaders across various sectors of the economy and at all levels including creating a leadership space for Pacific women and girls. Further, development partners need to lead by example and implement a consistent approach to addressing the MDGs in all their interventions.

**To better reflect MDGs in the budgets in the PICs**, members recommended the budgeting process employ the following:

- Governments could assess “social floors” in each country or, within a country, in main localities. This can be done by determining the absolute minimum package of social/public services that needs to be provided by central governments in order to bring countries closer to the MDG targets. Once
governments define the scope of the "social floor," then they could determine the optimal service delivery modalities, as well as domestic and international resource mobilization strategies. The concept of "social floors" could help governments to address the needs of vulnerable populations by further rationalizing and operationalising the budgetary discourse and set practical policy targets and, consequently, baseline and monitoring indicators.

- Governments could implement triple bottom line techniques that consider economic, environmental and social impacts and provide a starting point for the effective investment and management of MDG strategies.

- Governments could consider using gender budgets so national planning offices/ministries of finance have one checklist and are assisted in integrating MDG3 across all sectors. Monitoring indicators could also show how much of state "core" budget is allocated to advancing gender equality commitments.

Respondents also identified factors from within the region to enhance achievement of the MDGs, including:

- Need for private sector engagement: There is need for greater collaboration between the government and private sector and between government and the community to reach the MDGs. Reaching the MDGs is not just about public expenditure, increasing private sector expenditures also have an influence. Therefore, higher per capita income because of equitable economic growth has a very important contribution to make. An absence of equitable economic growth constrains both public and private expenditure.

- Need to communicate MDGs as an investment not expenditure: Improvements in MDGs are ultimately improvements in human capital, which is the true wealth of nations. Language for addressing MDGs must continually see the actions viewed as an investment that will provide a future yield to the nation. This is also key to attracting private sector involvement in MDGs. Actions must be motivated by environments that encourage involvement, and private funds are typically attracted by investments rather than expenditures.

- Need focus on change: It is not so important how the plan or budget looks or is presented but how governments, organizations and individuals use them – what changes have come about to ensure that the intended beneficiaries from development actually benefit. As development practitioners, we are good at writing plans and budgets that look good on paper. However, so far we have not been able to develop and maintain strong M&E processes that not only help monitor and measure progress against the MDGs (the WHAT) but also help identify process and behavior changes (or the HOW). The current plans often have too many indicators with no benchmarking and because many times it is concluded that there is a lack of data, so more qualitative measures are used.

- Determine why the services or products are being utilized: The studies being undertaken in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to determine the barriers to universal primary education enrolment are good examples. With such understanding, governments and partners can design messages, incentives and other approaches to ensure maximum uptake or use.

- Develop meaningful relationships with governance and institutions, to enhance collaboration between and among organizations

Along with suggesting actions that could support other PICs in their efforts to better reflect the MDGs in national plans and budgets, discussants shared a number of experiences highlighting good practices from within the region and internationally:
- Focusing on the relationship between planning and budgets as well as aligning the timing of reviews and reporting was considered a critical success factor for Tonga’s national planning process.
- Localizing the MDGs is important for creating ownership, for example in the Cook Islands, this was demonstrated through customizing the MDGs by adding a ninth goal, in Palau, the national targets of some goals were increased, and in Papua New Guinea, the Government is piloting a project that hosts consultations at the provincial level focused on localizing the MDGs.
- Integrating the MDGs and other international instruments such as MSI and principles of aid effectiveness in the national development strategy and having these linked to budgets makes clear the relationship between national plans and budgets and relevant global commitments, as has been done in Samoa.
- Identifying gaps based on available data and reports is important to guide decision-making and better identify and support vulnerable groups. The Samoan government is currently engaged in this process and investing in infrastructure towards reaching the related MDGs.
- Governments diligently and persistently implementing reforms, which in China, Vietnam, Samoa and Vanuatu has positively affected the achievement of the MDGs.

Members noted that **technology is playing an important role** in accelerating the implementation and achievement of the MDGs in the Pacific, and has the potential to be used in the following ways:

- Advances in technology provide an opportunity to accelerate poverty reduction, reduce the technology gap and accelerate the shift to innovative and low-cost development solutions. Improved telecommunication services, fast and convenient transportation services to hospitals, banks, schools, government institutions, offices, communities, all support achievement of the MDGs.
- Development of ICT policies to ensure sustainability and scaling up: The only way to ensure sustainability and scale is to incorporate ICTs into policy. Today in the Pacific, only 30% of countries have a national ICT policy. There is also a need for ICT policies in the various sectors such as health and education, which thus far no Pacific country has implemented.
- Effective facilitation and coordination of ICT related activities: In the Pacific, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) has been tasked to facilitate and coordinate ICTs activities under the Framework for Action on ICTs for Development in the Pacific (FAIDP). This document is structured around the seven Action Themes of Leadership, Policy, Human Capacity building, Infrastructure, Connectivity, Cyber security, Applications, Financing, and M&E. The thrust however is to improve economic and social development, which are, the same goals of the MDGs.
- Technology can help to form part of the solution including ICT increasing access to/ delivery of basic education, health and financial services to remote rural populations that are often neglected as well as improving responses as part of disaster risk management. This could help address the high cost of delivery mechanisms for basic public services and responses to natural disasters for the 80% of people living in isolated, and rural Pacific communities.

They also shared a number of **examples of technology helping to accelerate the implementation and achievement of the MDGs**:

- **Emergence of Mobile Banking**: Eighty percent of the population live in rural areas presents a big challenge however; mobile services have been rapidly growing. The improvement in mobile phone coverage as well as internet access has been facilitated by the parallel improvements in the regulatory environment that has seen increased competition among the service providers and has resulted in access to cost effective services. Increased mobile phone penetration is enabling various financial product innovations (e.g. M-Paisa in Fiji) to be introduced helping to bank the unbanked, often remote, populations. Technologically-enabled-financial-innovations can be leveraged to improve access to government services, such as payments of social benefits, while at the same time reducing service delivery transaction costs. This area provides good examples of public-private partnerships.
- **Improving education**: Providing ICT access to rural health centers and schools with appropriate training will make large improvements in the quality of health and education services.
The One-Laptop-Per-Child programme now being rolled-out in the Pacific and the School net program will boost internet access in the next few years and the use of the internet and CDs as learning media.

- **Improving Health:** In Vanuatu’s Torba province, immunization coverage was always low partly because they depended on the regular transportation of gas and gas cylinders to power the cold chain system, which must be well maintained to keep vaccines potent. Because of the remoteness of this province from the gas suppliers in Port Vila, the logistics demands were not always met. The supply of solar chills has addressed that challenge and immunization coverage is rising.

- **Supporting livelihoods:** Tractors, coconut pressing machines and solar power/sun energy/wind energy can improve productivity at the community level and hence contribute towards improving the livelihoods of villagers, which in turn trickles up to the achievement of the MDGs. The establishment of oil pressing machines in remote areas greatly reduces the labor, time and financial costs of production, reduces the cost of transportation, adds value to the product, increases returns and puts money in the pockets of a greater number of people.

Respondents also identified a number of opportunities presented by technology including investment in Green Technology. The acquisition of green technology for rural communities could have multiple benefits for the rural constituents that could further contribute to the achievement of the MDGs.

Finally, discussants identified that opportunity exists to making use of social networking tools such as Facebook to help engage constituencies in discussing public good, common causes as well as engaging a broader audience in the decision making processes. They also noted how the Pacific Development Effectiveness Community is an example of how leveraging technology can bring together the knowledge that already exists in the region to support the achievement of the MDGs.

Overall, members stressed the importance good national planning processes to identify national level priorities to accelerate achieving the MDGs across the Pacific. The planning process, they argued needs to be consultative and inclusive with the priorities based on good data, with particular attention paid to vulnerable and at risk groups. Technology provides opportunities to support achievement of the MDGs however; it is the national ownership and prioritization of needs that is critical to support achievement of the broader regional and global commitments to ensure that all the people of the Pacific have the opportunity to live without poverty.

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**Comparative Experiences**

**Tonga**

**The MDG Intervention Model Proves Successful** *(from Onetoto Anisi, Tonga MDG Project, Tonga)*
The MDG project worked to align Government’s priorities and budgetary framework to the MDGs. They used the Model to align national processes to support achieving the MDGs, starting with integrating the MDG principles into the preparation of the National Strategic Plan. Next, they developed Ministry Corporate Plans (CPs), Annual Management Plans (AMPs) and budgets to operationalise the strategy. Key to their success was aligning the timing of reviews and reporting within the CPs and AMPs timeframes.

**Papua New Guinea**

**Pilot Project “Localizes” the MDGs at Providence Level** *(from Alex L. Ginet, Department of National Planning & Monitoring, Papua New Guinea)*
In 2005, the government realized the need for national plans to guide priority areas of spending and spending levels, and for national plans, strategies and mechanisms to drive the budgets. The government is now piloting a project to “localize the MDGs” at the provincial level. Depending on the outcome of the
pilots, localization of MDGs will be expanded to all provincial centers. So far, positive feedback suggests
the need to also align provincial, districts, and ward plans to the MDGs and the national plan.

Samoa

From Noumea Simi, Ministry of Finance, Samoa

Applying Aid Effectiveness Principles in National Planning
Samoa is using the MDG indicators as a measure of aid effectiveness with systems and processes for aid
coordination and implementation of financial management reform plans initiated. The government is
planning to complete the sector planning process and developing sector programs by the end of 2010. These
processes and plans will include identified resources to provide further impetus to meet sector
specific goals e.g. "MDG3: 2010 is 1st year of a school fee scheme providing ‘free’ primary education."

Identifying Gaps to Support MDG Achievement
The 2010 progress report on the MDGs highlighted gaps in MDG achievement. With support from UNDP,
the government is reviewing its policy framework and looking at options to address the gaps, especially
the increasing proportion of the population living below the Basic Needs Poverty Line (BNPL). Further
based on the recent Household Expenditure Survey, the government has started characterizing
households to assist in clearly defining ‘vulnerable groups’ to better focus on meeting their needs.

Focusing on Traditional Institutions and Women Results in Greater Community Participation
Samoa promoted greater community participation to address various issues, such as falling immunization
coverage rates and unmet reproductive health needs. For example, the government worked with village
women’s committees to expand immunization coverage. This effort has empowered women and it trying
to increase their participation in parliament, a long-term objective for Samoa. Now the focus is on
enhancing awareness, particularly among women, on the importance of engaging in public life.

Investing in Infrastructure Development to Improve Lives
The Samoan government has been focusing on developing infrastructure, especially basic infrastructure
to ensure people can live secure and healthy lives. The government is working to ensure that related
infrastructure provides protection from natural disasters. The government has also focused on protecting
communities from problems such as environmental degradation, un-affordability and inaccessibility.

From Toily Kurbanov, United Nations Development Programme, Fiji

The Cook Islands

Customizing the MDGs to Meet Local Needs
The government of the Cook Islands customized the MDGs to meet local needs and embed them in
national priorities. The government decided to introduce a ninth goal that focuses on governance as the
main enabling factor to improve human development and people’s choices.

Palau

Increasing the Scope of MDG2 to Improve National Development
National stakeholders looked at MDG 2, which seeks to achieve universal primary education, and decided
raise the bar, making the goal higher than global standards. They added an emphasis on increasing the
number of students in tertiary education, instead of just focusing on primary school enrollment.

Related Resources
**Recommended Documentation**

**Framework for Action on ICT for Development in the Pacific (FAIDP): Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Development, Governance and Sustainable Livelihoods**
(from Ian Thomson, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Noumea, New Caledonia)
Policy framework; Secretariat of the Pacific Community; 2 June 2010

- Policy outlines how to use seven ICTD themes across the region as a key tool for achieving economic and social development goals, including the MDGs, at the national and regional level

From Resina Katafono, Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, Suva, Fiji

**Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island States (MSI)**
Strategy; United Nations General Assembly; New York; 2005

- Describes the overarching issues concerning the implementation of the "Barbados Programme of Action" and South-South/SIDS-SIDS cooperation, culture, the role of youth, and gender equality.

**Port Vila Declaration on Accelerating Progress on the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals**
Declaration; Pacific Forum Leaders; Port Vila, Vanuatu; August 2010

- Reaffirms commitment of Forum Island countries to achieving the MDGs through localizing MDGs, advocating for special needs of SIDS and improving coordination with global/regional promises

**Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**
(from Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, femLINKPACIFIC, Suva, Fiji)
Convention; Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations; 1979

- International human rights treaty on gender equality, suggested integrating the Convention into national development priorities as a method for achieving the MDGs

From Brian Lenga, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Suva, Fiji

**Unleashing Entrepreneurship: Making Business Work for the Poor**
Report; United Nations Development Programme; 2004

- Describes how businesses can create domestic employment and wealth, free local entrepreneurial energies, and help achieve the MDGs through sharing international lessons and best practices

Paper; by Adrian T. P. Panggabean; ERD, Economics and Research Department, Asian Development Bank; The Philippines; November 2006

- Argues the public–private partnership financing modality can help the poor & reduce poverty, towards reaching MDG1, if governments create an enabling environment & provide infrastructure
Recommended Organizations and Programmes

The Growing Inclusive Markets Initiative, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New York, United States of America (from Brian Lenga, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Suva, Fiji)

UNDP, Private Sector Division, One United Nations Plaza, 23rd floor, New York, NY 10017, USA; Fax: 1-212-906-5152; gim@undp.org; http://www.growinginclusivemarkets.org/about/approach/

A global multi-stakeholder research and advocacy initiative to support development of more inclusive business models to support human development and the MDGs.

Recommended Portals and Information Bases

Mauritius Strategy for Implementation Five Year Review (MSI+5) (from Resina Katafono, Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, Suva, Fiji)

http://www.sidsnet.org/msi_5/

Website provides related documents to the recent MSI+5 Review, the process provides a comprehensive assessment of the issues affecting SIDS that could threaten achieving the MDGs.

Responses in Full

Keith Leonard, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Suva, Fiji (response 1)

I'd like to offer four thoughts on "big picture” factors that might influence the rate of progress by Pacific countries towards achieving the MDGs.

- Reaching the MDGs is not just about public expenditure but will also be influenced by increased private expenditure. Therefore, higher per capita income as a result of equitable economic growth has a very important contribution to make. An absence of equitable economic growth constraints both public and private expenditure.
- Private provision of services, whether publicly or privately funded, can produce better results than focusing only on public funding/public provision.
- Leadership by leaders at various levels has a very important role to play. Without good leadership, it will be hard to achieve the MDGs.
- Management, particularly public sector management, is critical to ensure limited resources are used efficiently and effectively and that staff are motivated and empowered to deliver excellent service.

Chris Andrew, Greenlight Technology Group Pty Ltd., NSW, Australia

It is certainly commendable that Keith Leonard has tabled his four thoughts for mobilizing greater activity in the Pacific towards achieving MDGs. By way of stimulating debate in this area, I would like to propose the ideas posed actually reflect many of the fundamental reasons the Pacific nations have been hampered in improving the rate of progress on MDG.

I challenge the four thoughts with three comments:

MDG is an investment not an expenditure:

Improvements in MDGs, whether it is HIV/AIDS, Gender equality, or any of the eight goals, have a direct return on the national fabric. The language for addressing MDGs must continually see the actions viewed as an investment that will provide a future yield to the nation. This is also key to attracting private and private sector involvement in MDGs. Actions must be motivated by environments that encourage involvement, and private funds are typically attracted by investments rather than expenditures.
Lead by example, consistently:
Without challenging development partners’ considerable efforts in support of MDG improvements, they must be consistent in addressing MDGs in all their interventions. By way of example, consider the Tonga Energy Roadmap initiative. There is no doubt the investment in affordable energy for Tonga's population will enhance the rate of improvements in MDGs. Yet for all the international stakeholders that are offering support to the project, the Roadmap document itself makes no mention of MDGs.

You cannot manage what you cannot measure:
There is a great deal of synergy in addressing MDGs and tackling sustainability. Both demand long term solutions that require a whole system perspective. They are complex, multifaceted, non-linear. Whether it be private or public, an investment or management of services, a measurement framework is paramount to assess the effectiveness of actions. Triple Bottom Line techniques, taking in economic, environmental and social impacts, have been in use for some time now and certainly provide a starting point for the effective investment and management of MDG strategies.

Samuel Wara, Ministry of Planning and Aid Coordination, Honiara, Solomon Islands
I’d like to offer my response to the 3 questions below:
1. The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) should be better reflected in national plans and budgets of Pacific Island Countries (PICs) when the Governments of the day in the PICs are putting priority on the eight MDGs. The Government, Private Sector and Civil Society should be working together to achieve these goals. All need to work together with all donor partners to achieve the MDGs.

2. The work and the way in which the Polynesian and Micronesian countries have been addressing the MDGs could be adopted by the Melanesian countries. Studies have shown that the Polynesian and Micronesian countries are moving forward in addressing the MDGs. If they can do it, why not we, the Melanesian brothers and sisters, move forward in addressing the eight goals. Melanesian countries are diverse in cultures and customs. However, if people can work together, respect each other, care for each other, and better organize themselves as is happening in the Polynesian and Micronesian countries, then this is a way forward for Melanesian countries to seriously think about and move into.

3. Technology plays an important factor in accelerating the implementation and achievement of the MDGs in the Pacific. It makes work in country accessible and convenient. Improved telecommunication services, fast and convenient transportation services to hospitals, banks, schools, government institutions, offices, communities, can make a difference to achieve the MDGs.

Alex L. Ginet, Department of National Planning & Monitoring, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea
I would like to share my responses to each of the three questions:

Question 1
The MDGs could be better reflected when the eight goals are aligned with a country’s national plan. A country’s national plan is where the Government of the day focuses its resources on therefore in doing so, the Government is also addressing the MDG goals. In that way, the eight goals could form part of a set of indicators for the implementation of a country's national plan and budget. All the eight goals are somewhat dependant on each other so if success is achieved for one goal, say MDG 2, then progress/changes could also be seen in other MDGs.

Question 2
For PNG, I think one of the areas which the Government has realized that needs improving is spending on an ad hoc basis. We do not have proper plans that will guide the country for development. Until 2005,
the Government has realized that the need to come up with national plans that would guide priority areas of spending and levels of spending. We have realized the need for national plans, strategies and mechanisms to drive the budgets and not vice versa. On that note, I believe, localizing the MDGs is one good practice to address the MDGs. In PNG, localizing the MDGs has started through pilots at provincial level. Depending on the outcome of the pilots, localization of MDGs will then be expanded to all other provincial centers. Positive feedback from the pilot provinces suggests the need to align provincial, districts, and ward plans to the MDGs and the national plan.

Questions 3
To use technology to create awareness and disseminate information will be a good way to accelerate the implementation and achievement of the MDGs. Most of our Pacific Island Countries (PIC) are perhaps too isolated from each other. People live in isolated communities such as high in the mountains, fairly distant small islands, etc., making it hard to disseminate information. The use of or enhancing technologies, such as telecommunication, internet services, access by planes, boats, and roads to the isolated areas will help a lot.

Resina Katafono, Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, Suva, Fiji

Response to Question 1
I would like to highlight the inextricable link between the achievement of the MDGs and progress on the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (MSI) for Pacific Small Island developing states (SIDS). The Port Vila Declaration highlighted the importance of mainstreaming the implementation of the MSI to spur the achievement of the MDGs and address the inherent vulnerabilities of Pacific SIDS.

One of the key issues shared between the achievement of MDGs and implementation of the MSI is the call for better national development planning, including the development of effective national sustainable development strategies. Given the strong linkages between the two, most Pacific island countries have integrated both MDGs and the implementation of the MSI in their national plans. There is still work to be done in some countries on this, which should be fast-tracked.

However, having MDGs and implementation of the MSI fully and cohesively integrated into national priorities is only the first step. More crucially, effective and timely implementation of these plans on the ground should ensure accelerated progress towards the achievement of the MDGs by 2015.

How can effective implementation be ensured? Keith Leonard alludes to this point on the importance of good leadership. Combined with good governance practices, good leadership will ensure the achievement of the MDGs.

Litia Mawi, United Nations Volunteers (UNV), Tuvalu

Q1. How could achievement of the MDGs be better reflected in national plans and budgets in the PICs?

1. I would have replaced the word "achievement" above with "pursuit" to motivate all Government Departments to implement Plans and Budgets in PICs to the quest for specific, quantifiable results over the remaining five years to 2015. The Vision and Mission of each Government Department Plan - both Strategic and Management Plans - must capture a sense of the urgency that only five years remain. As a starting point, efforts should be made within the remaining three months of 2010 to capture such an urgency in the 2011 Plans and Budgets. It is no longer enough to just have a Mission Statement. All PICs Governments must mobilize all their Department teams to embark on a Mission - to get up and go in MDGs Pursuit for their achievement by 2015.
2. Only when the Government Departments themselves are well aligned, mobilized and genuinely enthused towards the MDGs pursuit would it be easier for them to then align their respective players from their national private sector and civil society (and especially in PICS, the Churches, the Mosques and the Temples) and their international development partners for results-based collaboration in MDGs achievement by 2015.

3. All PICs Governments could self impose a compulsory and serious mission of impact monitoring and evaluation into their annual plans and budgets beginning from 2011, as we undertake plans and budget preparations over the remaining 3 months of 2010. We have no other choice but to do so for the purpose of MDGs achievement by 2015.

Q3. How could technology be used to accelerate the achievement of MDGs in the Pacific?
All PICS could immediately self impose a compulsory and serious mission of improved communication for better results and communicating results for MDGs achievement by 2015. Greater effort must be focused on recording success stories, however seemingly small, if there is to be greater evidence-based decision making over the remaining five years to 2015. I stress this last point in full acknowledgement of there being some general sense of reservation in Pacific cultures to "sing about successes".

The best way to pursue this Mission is through the internet:
- within and amongst Government Departments themselves,
- at a whole of government approach, and
- in collaboration with other public service providers.

These Government Departments could make use of social medias such as Facebook and Twitter to gain consensus and engagement of the younger generations of PICs citizens in discussing public good and common causes such as the MDGs Achievement by 2015.

**Noumea Simi, Ministry of Finance, Apia, Samoa**

On the questions raised on acceleration of the MDGs we provide the following responses based on our country experiences:

1. MDGs and all other international instruments such as MSI are integrated in our national development strategy and linked to the budget process. We are also using MDG indicators as a measure of aid effectiveness and this is brought out in our recently completed draft report on the Paris Declaration Evaluation. Our systems and processes for aid coordination are in place, implementation of financial management reform plans are well under way. It is anticipated that by the end of the year we will have completed the sector planning process nationally and the development of sector programs with the identified allocative resources will provide further impetus to meeting the targets under the sector specific goals. 2010 is the first year of our school fee scheme providing ‘free’ primary school education in support of Goal 3.

2. Our second progress report on MDGs 2010 highlights the gap areas and we are now focused on meeting such. While the country has been demonstrating positive economic growth rates post global crises and tsunami, there is an increasing proportion of the population living below Basic needs poverty line (BNPL). With the support of UNDP we are reviewing our policy framework and looking at the potential options to address this issue if not agriculture. Furthermore work is in progress in the characterization of households involved in the recent Household Expenditure Survey so as to assist us in clearly defining what are ‘vulnerable groups’ if not those that constitute the percentage under the BNPL. We are also looking at greater community participation to address issues such as falling immunization coverage rates and low rates of unmet needs in terms of reproductive health to capture the strengths of traditional social institutions such as the village women’s committees to enhance coverage of programs such as...
expanded immunization. The issue of empowerment of women through increased participation in parliament is a long term objective for Samoa. The focus now is in enhanced awareness particularly among women themselves, on the importance of engaging in such avenues of public life.

3. We are also focused on the development of infrastructure in particular basic infrastructure to ensure the rights to live secure and healthy lives as well as ensure that such infrastructure provides protection from natural disasters; in doing so we are mindful of the fact that we need to consider potential adverse effects such as environmental degradation, un-affordability and inaccessibility.

4. Enhanced leadership: following the presentation of Samoa’s MDG report at the recent General Assembly summit, the Government has emphasized commitment to ensure that the gap areas are addressed by 2015.

5. Advances in technology provide an opportunity to accelerate poverty reduction and reducing the technology gap can accelerate the shift to innovative and low-cost development solutions. Such technology facilitates communication and information exchange. Considerable progress had been made in access to information and communications technologies, especially in mobile phone coverage and use of the internet over the last decade. This has been facilitated by the parallel improvements in the regulatory environment which has seen increased competition among the service providers and has resulted in facilitative access to cost effective services. The One-Laptop-Per-Child programme now being rolled-out and the School net program running in alignment with the establishment of 14 community telecentres nationally and schoolnet units in all secondary schools will give a major boost to internet access in the next few years and the use of the internet and CDs as learning media. Telecommunications development in Samoa has increased rapidly with the corporatization of the Samoa Telecommunication and the introduction of a foreign mobile phone service provider (Digicel) which resulted in a more competitive market. Connectivity has been greatly enhanced via the submarine ASH cable.

6. Private sector led growth remains the focus of the national strategic plan. FDIs are not encouraging so there is a shift to promote an enabling environment for the SMEs so that they can be in a position to generate employment.

Isiye Ndombi, Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Pacific, Fiji

I thank the facilitation team for posting questions of great relevance in the aftermath of clear commitments made by Pacific and global leaders at the Leaders’ Forum in Port Vila (in August) and the MDG High-Level Summit in New York (in September), respectively.

In contributing to the discussion on the three questions, may I:

First, insist that use of national plans and budgets as well as the application of good practice lessons and technology must be situated within a ‘winning conceptual frame’. I believe that such a frame has four key interlinked parts each of which is critical but not sufficient: data integrity; agreed minimum service standards (the supply side of development); a framework for effectively nurturing, facilitating and promoting social demand/change/uptake (the demand side of development); and paying special attention to those who remain unreached.

Opinions do not differ that a lot of work still needs to be done to improve the quality of development data in many PICs. It is also common knowledge that good data is the foundation for solid, evidence-informed plans. Most databases in the PICs have no standardized link to the indicators they measure, they are not
sufficiently disaggregated, they are not sufficiently analyzed, and they are not sufficiently used (whether for advocating with leaders or reaching out to communities for social change).

This must be the starting point. Well-disaggregated data will define the inequities that exist and how wealth distribution, gender, geographical location or disability determine the condition of citizens so that resources are targeted properly. In short, we need good plans; good plans need good indicators to establish baselines and track performance; good indicators need good data; and, an equity-focused approach will make plans more effective for accelerating development.

**Secondly**, governments need to define ‘minimum service standards’ in various thematic sectors. These can be derived from good practice case studies from other countries or even from within the same country. When I worked in Papua New Guinea, the Ministry of Health (MoH) documented and learned from the great health care work that was being led by the Nazarene Church in the country’s Western Highlands province. As someone said, ‘development is not always about what you dictate; it can mostly be about what you discover’. And, relating to Keith Leonard’s earlier contribution, minimum standards do not need to be limited to the public sector; indeed, they should be within the public-private partnership context.

**Thirdly**, we must determine why the services or products are being or not being utilized. The studies being undertaken in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to determine the barriers to universal primary education enrolment are good examples. With such understanding, governments and partners can design messages, incentives and other approaches to ensure maximum uptake or use.

**Finally**, governments and partners must understand that even with the best efforts there will be communities in the remote outer islands or persons with particular difficulties that cannot be reached through ‘ordinary’ approaches. For these groups we must re-configure our systems and apply innovative methods. Technology might be one of the answers for these groups.

In Vanuatu’s Torba province, immunization coverage was always low partly because they depended on the regular transportation of gas and gas cylinders to power the cold chain system, which must be well maintained to keep vaccines potent. And yet, because of the remoteness of this province from the gas suppliers in Port Vila, the logistics demands were challenging and not always met. The supply of solar chills has addressed that challenge and their coverage will hopefully continue to rise.

To conclude, good planning and budgeting for accelerated progress towards the MDG targets must start with good data and end with good data. These data must be communicated clearly to policy-makers (leaders), planners, development partners and communities. Plans must have transparently measurable indicators and obstacles limiting utilization or change must be measured. Attention must be paid to vulnerable and at risk groups.

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**Keith Leonard**, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Suva, Fiji *(response 2)*

Samoa is indeed making good progress to incorporating MDG attainment into the core processes of government. This is great to see. I also like the publicity given to the MDGs in Samoa with the "scoreboard" outside the government building.

The advances outlined on information sharing through technology were enabled by reform of the telecommunications sector. I believe a reinvigoration of state-owned enterprise reform more generally in Samoa would also lead to further gains through releasing resources for more productive use and/or improving the quality of service delivery.
**Garry Wiseman**, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Suva, Fiji

“How could achievement of the MDGs be better reflected in national plans and budgets in the PICs?:

I would like to make a couple of comments on this question.

Having sat through a number of regional meetings and listened to country presentations, I wonder whether this question should not be less about whether countries have or are “reflecting MDGs in plans and budgets” but why, after doing so, there is often limited evidence to show actual success in meeting targets based on established indicators. Where do things fall down – is it in the planning budgeting or implementation phases. Also how can we better ensure that there is greater collaboration between the government and private sector and between government and the community.

If others agree I wonder whether it would be better to:

- examine more closely the processes being used to design plans (national and sectoral);
- consider how the budget is linked to these plans and how the budget is derived and agreed between stakeholders;
- look at how budgets are monitored to ensure expenditure is made in the way described in the budget (do the inputs match the expected outputs or have funds been diverted during the course of the year etc.);
- determine, where expenditure is monitored, if the delivery of the services and achievement of the output benefited the intended target group as defined by the indicators.

This leads me to suggest that it is not so important how the plan or budget looks or is presented but how governments, organizations and individuals use them – what changes have come about to ensure that the intended beneficiaries from development actually benefit.

From my experience, we appear to have got rather good at writing plans and budgets that look good on paper. However, so far we have not been able to develop and maintain strong M&E processes that not only help us monitor and measure progress against the MDGs (the WHAT) but also help us identify process and behavior changes (or the HOW). Our plans often have too many indicators; there is often no benchmarking and because we often conclude that there is a lack of data we often end up with more qualitative that quantitative measures.

I would be interested to hear what others think.

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**Toily Kurbanov**, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Suva, Fiji

Q1: How could achievement of the MDGs be better reflected in national plans and budgets in the PICs?

As mentioned by Noumea (Samoa), Garry (UNDP) and few others, the issue is not so much about “reflecting MDGs” in the national plans and budgets, but about using plans and budgets as tools to achieve MDGs – provided, of course, that the achievement of MDGs directly responds to a particular country’s development needs.

One way of translating MDGs into budgetary priorities is through assessing “social floors” in each country or, within a country, in main localities. In other words: what is the absolute minimum package of social/public services that need to be provided by central governments in order to bring countries closer to the MDG targets? Once the scope of “social floor” has been defined, what would be the most optimal service delivery modalities, as well as domestic and international resource mobilization strategies? The concept of “social floors” might in particular help governments to address the needs of vulnerable populations by further rationalizing and operationalizing the budgetary discourse.
**Q2: What are the lessons learned and good practice from your country or worldwide that could be applicable for PICs?**

Best practices come when countries are prepared not only to “own” the MDGs, but also when they customize MDGs to local needs and embed them in national priorities. In that respect, one best example that we have seen in recent years is Cook Islands’ introduction of an additional MDG. Their MDG9 focuses on Governance as the main enabling factor to improve human development and people’s choices. Another interesting example is Palau. Although they did not go as far as to introduce a new MDG, for MDG2 (Education) national stakeholders considered raising the bar for their country much higher than global standards. If globally MDG2 is measured in terms of primary school enrollment, in Palau measurement as per their 2008 National MDG Report was based on tertiary education numbers.

**Q3: How could technology be used to accelerate the implementation and achievement of MDGs in the Pacific?**

When it comes to technologies, Pacific island countries can be cutting-edge. According to some statistics, since 2006 the mobile penetration in the region has increased ten-fold. Already this is enabling various financial product innovations (e.g. M-Paisa in Fiji). Echoing a previous point made by Keith (ADB) about public-private partnerships, some of these technologically-enabled-financial-innovations can be leveraged to improve access to government services, such as payments of social benefits, while at the same time reducing service delivery transaction costs.

Another example of “using modernity” to accelerate achievement of MDGs was mentioned by Litia (Tuvalu): social network sites can help to engage constituencies in discussing public good and common causes. Even this network, Pacific Solution Exchange: Development Effectiveness Community – if sustained and successful – can serve as another example of leveraging technologies to bring together tremendous knowledge that already exists in the region, even if it is diffused across countries and organizations.

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**Sharon Bhagwan Rolfs**, femLINKPACIFIC, Suva, Fiji

In addition to what Garry suggests, I would also like suggest that the processes examined also consider how to make linkages with CEDAW and state party compliance requirements such as Gender Budgets so that national planning offices/ministries of finance have one checklist and are assisted in integrating MDG3 across all sectors.

Monitoring indicators could also show how much of state "core" budget is allocated to advancing gender equality commitments or whether there is indeed reliance/requirements for bilateral support.

Within the whole process of monitoring is also the question or how "non-state actors" (community, private sector) are involved in the monitoring/reporting process - could there be reforms of current budget processes?

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**Keith Leonard**, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Suva, Fiji *(response 3)*

Garry raises some excellent points and I have a few observations.

It's obviously not sufficient to align budgets with plans. As someone once said to me, putting more water down the same leaky pipe does not produce more water out the other end! While this captures the risk of resources being diverted for unintended purposes, whether through corruption or more benign causes, also highlights that we often need to do different things, or do things differently.

More money by itself may not produce better results. Here, Garry's point about greater involvement by the private sector is highly relevant.
In getting a real shift in resources towards desired ends in the absence of significant new revenue means ceasing to fund some lower priority but often highly cherished areas of expenditure.

On monitoring funds flow and ensuring consistency with strategic objectives, development partners are often guilty of pushing funds for particular sectors, often dealing directly with the sector agency. This needs to stop.

Mahezabeen Khan, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Suva, Fiji

Here is my take on “Question 1: How could achievement of the MDGs be better reflected in national plans and budgets in the PICs.”

Broadly, three steps are required for MDGs to be better reflected in national plans and budgets:

1. Needs Assessment, Costing and Financial Strategies (National Plans and Budgets will justify MDG initiatives based on Needs Assessment). That is: “What is required?”, “What has been achieved or not achieved?” and “How much it will cost for the initiatives and financial strategies to be implemented with some indication of how funds will be sourced/mobilized from national budgets, donor funds, etc.

2. Planning Process (to ensure stakeholder consultation and national ownership)

3. Localizing of MDGs (to ensure Pacific solution and Pacific face by strengthening local institutions, ownership, capacity development and prioritization of national issues

As suggestions, PICs could embark on the following:

• A comprehensive MDG strategy articulated as a vision within the National Development Strategy (NDS)/Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) by Pacific governments through a country-driven process, including i) broad participation that promotes country ownership of the strategy and its implementation, and ii) partnerships among the government, national stakeholders and development partners; resulting in a NDS/PRSP having undergone a comprehensive and consultative diagnosis, has a long-term perspective and is results-orientated.

• Key national development targets and strategies that relate to the targets and strategies of the MDGs, and assesses the feasibility and costs of achieving the MDGs via the strategic sector plans aimed at realizing specific goals in the NDS/PRSP. Monitoring the progress and undertaking some form of MDG-costing will help in future planning and budgeting.

• National plans and budgets to utilize the MDGs as an effective tool and building block for participatory local development, empowerment of Community Based Organizations and Non State Actors, decentralization, accountability and priority setting for MDG-based socio-economic plans.

Floyd Robinson, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Suva, Fiji

Strong communication and collaboration are important aspects to ensure that MDGs are better reflected in PICs national plans and budgets.

Given that, several MDG’s are cross sector or interdisciplinary, it is important for national government ministries, which are often involved in planning, budgeting and implementation to communicate and partner regularly as achievements of MDG’s are only as good as internal teamwork.
I think this will lead to not only effective communication but also identification of lessons learnt which can be useful when planning for future national budgets and plans.

**Marea Itaia, Kiribati Chamber of Commerce, Kiribati**

Unlike other Pacific Island Countries (PICs), the inclusion of all private sector actors has not been seen as an important part of national plan and budget, for some time now. If there is considerate concern in terms of financial support to the private sector, then I hope it will be considered as part of the way forward to achieve the MDGs in the PICs.

Leaders and decision makers should not be corrupt or serve their own agenda for personal benefits. Instead leaders need to be concerned with the welfare of all their fellow country men and women today and the future generation.

The acceleration implementation and achievement of the MDGs in the Pacific depends on accurate and reliable data being made available to all stakeholders so that responses or policy measures to address MDGs are well targeted and monitored.

**Mike Reitz, Consultant, Kamuela, Hawaii, United States of America**

The top down approach has been a failure for over half a century. We might want to try bottoms up approach now.

**Ian Thomson, Economic Development Division, SPC, Fiji**

I would like to address the last question about the use of technology to accelerate the achievement of MDGs.

ICT is acknowledged by the UN Global Alliance for ICTs in Development (UN-GAID) with the following statement. If there is one enabler that can accelerate achievement of the MDGs, it is ICT. And if there is one Force needed to ensure that achievement, it is the patronage of the United Nations Secretary-General Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, Chairman, UN-GAID.

In the Pacific, SPC has been tasked to facilitate and coordinate ICTs activities under the Framework for Action on ICTs for Development in the Pacific (FAIDP). A copy of this regional ICT policy document is available at [http://www.spc.int/edd/images/stories/ictpapers/ICT%20Framework.pdf](http://www.spc.int/edd/images/stories/ictpapers/ICT%20Framework.pdf) (PDF, Size: 638 KB).

Although this document is structured around the seven Action Themes of Leadership, Policy, Human Capacity building, Infrastructure, Connectivity, Cyber security, Applications, Financing, and M&E, the basic thrust is to improve economic and social development, which are the same goals of the MDGs.

Reviewing the many ICT initiatives in the Pacific over the last 10 years gives a fairly mixed bag of successes and lessons to learn, however the two really big challenges facing the implementation of ICTs are sustainability and scale up.

I note the thrust of the question is about how to use the technology, but I would like to initially address the key issues above and then get down to the basics. The only way to ensure sustainability and scale is to incorporate ICTs into policy and the above Framework is a set of guidelines to help countries develop appropriate ICT policy statements. Today in the Pacific, only 30% of countries have a national ICT policy. But a National ICT policy is only a start. We also need ICT policies in the various sectors such health and education. So far, no Pacific country has an ICT policy in Education or Health, although some are working on this.
Now on how to use ICTs - the highest impact we can make is in the rural and remote areas of the islands. Providing ICT access to rural health centers and schools with appropriate training will make large improvements in the quality of health and education services, if for no other reason than we can then provide affordable training to these professionals. But there will be many other ways to use the technology to improve the quality of services as well as reducing the cost of providing them.

Many countries are beginning to look at the rural and remote access issue, but only from an infrastructure point of view. In some countries, 80% of the population live in rural areas, so this is a big challenge; however Mobile services have been rapidly growing and are available in 80-90% of some countries. We need to be looking at how we can use this technology to address MDGs. Of course, the key is training. Without this, the technology will not be used effectively.

I hope this is a useful contribution to this discussion and I would be happy to provide more detailed assistance.

Mereseini Bower, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Suva, Fiji

1. How could achievement of the MDGs be better reflected in national plans and budgets in the PICs?

Across the Pacific Island Countries (PICs), national plans and strategies of decent quality exist. They range from 3 year plans to 25 year plans with some explicitly including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and others only implicitly. In adopting the Millennium Declaration in 2000, a number of Pacific Island Countries (PICs) already had MDG related indicators that were above global averages. In some PIC national plans the MDG is in fact the Development Goal targeted in a particular sector. Achievement of MDGs need to be seen as investments and not expenditure as denoted by Chris Andrew. More importantly, they need to be seen as not just investments by Government but also the private sector including corporations, civil society, and households.

What will make a difference is if:

a) National plans contain medium-long term development Goals and MDGs are viewed as a minimum threshold for development, then where they are relevant in a national plan and form part of the development priorities, they should be what Toily Kurbanov referred to as ‘social floors’ in terms of budgeting for them.

b) Where a PIC has already achieved an MDG and has been maintaining that level of development, the national plan should really contain what a PIC intends to implement and achieve during the plan period. This could possibly be the medium/long term Goal itself or milestones in between an MDG and the ultimate Goal. A plan needs to clearly articulate how the political, economic, social and environmental benefits are equitably shared. Samoa’s experience shared by Noumea Simi exemplifies a case in point where the number of people living below BNPL is increasing despite economic growth, even post the global economic crisis and tsunami.

c) National plans actually contain what is achievable and measurable within the plan period. One way of ensuring this is to ensure that plans are accompanied by an implementation plan clearly outlining leadership/governance, roles, responsibilities and timelines; resource framework outlining the investments required that include, human resource, and financial resources to achieve the plan; and a strong M&E framework. A Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) that is then translated to annual budgets is necessary. Too often we have seen annual Budget Supplements repeatedly containing the same activities year in, year out which indicate that implementation is weak.

d) National plans are responsiveness: Capacity of policymakers and planners to quickly take into account new emerging development challenges that have implications on MDGs and are not captured in a
national plan but need to be addressed in a plan period. A number of existing national plans and strategies were developed prior to the global economic crisis and the emerging challenges of climate change, both of which have implications for MDGs. Where countries are reviewing their plans, these need to be taken into consideration.

Leadership and Good Governance appear to be the element needed to successfully translate plans into reality. The PICS cannot successfully do this with just one great leader or a few, each PIC will need leaders across various sectors of the economy and at all levels. Leadership space for Pacific women and girls need to be created and women have a role in positioning themselves to influence decisions around greater investments in women and girls espoused by the MDG global action plan.

2. What are the lessons learned and good practice from your country or worldwide that could be applicable for PICs?

Where countries have diligently and persistently implemented reforms, the benefits including those that are MDG related are clearly evident. Success is evident in reforms undertaken by China, Viet Nam, Samoa and Vanuatu. In countries where reforms have had a ‘start-stop-drop’ approach, the adversities are also clearly evident including slow progress in MDGs or even regressive trends.

Where PICs are interested in costing MDGs, Bangladesh is making significant progress where costing is now undertaken at the local level.

3. How could technology be used to accelerate the implementation and achievement of MDGs in the Pacific?

Technology can actually facilitate knowledge sharing, of what is highlighted in (2) above, both South-South and North-South cooperation.

With existing constraints faced by PICs and where existing delivery mechanisms for basic public services continue to prove costly and where disasters are a frequent occurrences, technology could form part of the solution. These include ICT increasing access to/ delivery of basic education, health and financial services to remote rural populations that are often neglected as well as improving responses as part of disaster risk management.

If the PICs are to make a shift from the conventional paradigm of ‘grow first and clean up later’ to one of ‘clean up as you grow’ then it cannot solely rely on the available technology developed by industrialized or developed countries, it has to invest in research & development on green technology supported by development partners, especially if further development of agriculture is an area identified by a number of PICs as potential for addressing poverty in the region. Where improvements are made in MDG1, flow-on effects are realized in the other 7 MDGs.

Brian Lenga, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Suva, Fiji

How could achievement of the MDGs be better reflected in national plans and budgets in the PICs?

Any plan is derived from public policy; in other words, national plan is a reflection public policy. It is therefore important that PICs develop sound public policies, which are based on credible assumptions and achievable ambitions. In governments, national plans are the bridge between policy and budgets. If policies and plans are not geared towards the achievement of MDGs, it will be a challenge to ensure that expenditures are geared towards its achievement. In addition, basic economics tell us that there is always scarcity of resources, which call for choices/prioritization of projects both recurrent and development expenditure/budgets.
Therefore, as other contributors mentioned, public policies and national plans should be made to achieve the MDGs. Whether or not MDGs is localized does not matter. It is the core function of any government (with support from development partners/IFIs) to deliver health care, education, grow the economy and reduce poverty (although not always automatic), eliminate corruption and ensuring good governance, ensure children and women’s issues are addressed, provide national security and be able to tap into the global community and benefit from its multilateral and bilateral relations etc.

When you look at it from a duty bearer (based on constitution, human rights) perspective, what become MDGs today is in fact what the state should provide to its citizens from the very time the concept of state was coined and a nation-state/state-nation was born. In fact the PICs should take advantage of the MDGs since it provides a framework for developing better policy, plans, to prioritize and to formulate budget to deliver results. However, what we also hear is the alleged abuse of public resources. As such there is a need to develop the capacity of accountability and integrity institution and also civil society (including women and children) to provide the institutional and civic oversight needed to ensure that authorities deliver on what they are mandated to do.

**What are the lessons learned and good practice from your country or worldwide that could be applicable for PICs?**

In the PICs, one of key challenges for achieving MDGs is to address hardships or what is referred to in the 2006 Pacific Poverty Report as the “poverty of opportunity”. In 2006 UNDP launched The Growing Inclusive Markets Initiative.

It represents UNDP’s strong conviction that the private sector is a great untapped resource for investment and innovation to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The initiative was inspired by 2004’s “Unleashing Entrepreneurship: Making Business Work for the Poor” (click here to download the report [http://www.undp.org/cpsd/report/index.html](http://www.undp.org/cpsd/report/index.html)), a report prepared by the UN Commission on the Private Sector and Development at the request of then-UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. PICs can learn from some of the best practice and from countries across the globe who participated in this initiative.

**How could technology be used to accelerate the implementation and achievement of MDGs in the Pacific?**

Technology can accelerate the achievement of MDGs in many ways. Since other contributors discussed ITC related technology I would like to discuss how the use of other modern inventions and simple technologies such as, tractors, coconut pressing machines and solar power/sun energy/wind energy can improve productivity at the community level and hence contribute towards improving the livelihoods of villagers which in turn trickles up to the achievement of the MDGs.

For example, in many remote communities in the PICs many villagers are still producing copra using the 19th and 20th century methods. They have to carry firewood from the forest, which not only destroys the environment, but the lumbers are normally heavy and it is often difficult to carry to a shed that houses the copra drier. At this day and age when coconut oil pressing machines have been invented, the establishment of oil pressing machines in remote areas will greatly reduce the labor, time and financial costs of production, reduce the cost of transportation, add value to the product, increase returns and put money in the pocket of a greater number of people.

Availability of electricity is important to provide power to the coconut pressing oil producing machines. The point is that, with the invention of technology PICs should acquire appropriate technologies and have them established in rural communities. This will certainly bring multi spin-off benefits to rural constituents and contribute towards the achievement of the MDGs.

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‘Onetoto Anisi, Tonga MDG Project, Nukualofa, Tonga
The MDG Intervention Model below shows how integrating MDGs into government’s priorities and budgetary framework, as the fundamental basis towards the achievement of the MDGs by 2015, can be improved.

At the national level the process starts with the preparation of the national strategic plan (NSPF), based on the MDGs, followed by the ministry’s corporate plans (CP) and finally the Annual Management Plan (AMP) and budget which operationalises the strategies of the government through MDG related line ministries, the leading/implementing agencies on each related goals and objectives. Again, the national resources could drive the progress of MDGs through budget program formulation to adhere to strategies highlighted in the national plan.

The model illustrates that planning and budgeting complements each other in contributing to the development agenda set by the MDG program. The model illustrates what will be used as a guideline for budget preparation and to enhance operational and financing of the MDGs. The corporate plan (CP) and annual management plan (AMP) also add value to address MDGI and targets on their various related areas. Tonga has integrated MDGs into its national planning, regional plan and corporate plans of various MDG-related sectors.

A key success factor in the progress of MDGs is to align the timing of the implementation review and reporting within the timeframes of the corporate plan CP and annual management Plan AMP.

The Tonga MDG project is currently recruiting someone to design a Total Quality Database system to capture information and activities that counter MDG data gaps and to reduce communication and delivery costs that can be done through e-discussions and e-commerce. The MDG stakeholders/implementer's resources planning software, which integrates all the data and information into a system, can be used by all.

Lastly, using electronic technology as a tool for sharing information and ideas on development issues including the MDGs should be encouraged both externally and internally. For example, other sectors will benefit from the internal sharing of MDGI and targets, which they can then use as basis for analysis, planning and decision-making.

Joeteshna Zenos, University of New Mexico, United States of America
I am a MPA student and I just wanted to say that I was excited to see some comments acknowledging the role of collaboration in MDG achievement. When I interview public sector employees and ask them “so what kind of collaboration and networks are you involved in?” the first response is always the same: there are no networks!

It is important to recognize that an agency’s capacity to achieve public outcomes depends upon its ability to establish meaningful, effective relationships with other institutions of governance. Collaboration between and among organizations is a step towards success, it should never be taken as a small step and certainly not with the assumption that the process is automatic.

**Setareki Macanawai, Pacific Disability Forum, Suva, Fiji**

The Millennium Development Goals established a unifying set of developmental objectives for the global community. Bringing together United Nations agencies, governments and civil society around eight key development issues, the MDGs foster collaborative action to reduce poverty, improve health and address educational and environmental concerns around the world’s most pressing development problems. The MDGs are specifically designed to address the needs of the world’s poorest citizens and the world’s most marginalized populations.

The MDGs will not be achieved however if their policies, programmes, monitoring and evaluation do not include persons with disabilities. While persons with disabilities make up ten per cent of the world’s population, disability is associated with twenty per cent of global poverty according to the World Bank’s findings. PICs urgently need to act to mainstream disability in the MDG processes. This requires policy makers and technical experts specifically tasked with the programming, monitoring and evaluation of current MDG programmes to begin to consider disability so that the next phase of the implementation of the MDGs will include disability as an important component of its core mission.

Many thanks to all who contributed to this discussion!

If you have further information to share on this topic, please send it to Solution Exchange for the Development Effectiveness Community in the Pacific at pse-dec@solutionexchange-un.net with the subject heading “Re: [se-pse] DISCUSSION: Accelerating MDGs Progress in the Pacific. Additional Reply.”

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