



## ANNEX 1 – CSO Briefing Note on Sport, Physical Activity and Physical Education and Non – Communicable Disease

### Tackling Sustainable Development through Sport and Physical Activity

Sport is a powerful vehicle to connect, unite and transform people across the Blue Pacific, especially those most marginalized, and a low-cost tool to strengthen the framework for resilient development and contribute to the regional vision of building stronger people, stronger nations and stronger will.

Leaders have recognised the importance of sport in the overall development of Forum countries and the important role of sport as a potential tool for development and peace, within the broader social, political and economic wellbeing of the people of the Pacific. In 2015, Forum Leaders also included references to sport in the Hiri Declaration on “Strengthening connections to enhance Pacific Regionalism” in relation to building people-to-people connectivity and the promotion of sporting activities as a way to strengthen connections to enhance Pacific regionalism.

Sport is recognized as an important enabler of sustainable development. The contribution of sport, physical activity and physical education can be observed in various areas including good health and well-being (SDG3), education (SDG4), gender equality (SDG5), decent work and economic growth (SDG8), reduced inequalities (SDG10), and social inclusion and peace (SDG11 and 16). Sport, physical activity and physical education attribute to the regional efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, address the Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) epidemic and engage youth in meaningful and productive activities.

Sport is a critical and cross-cutting component of social, economic and political development of Pacific Islands Countries for our most valuable assets, our people. Sport contributes to economic growth through investments from government, private sector, development partners, international sport federations and remittances. In 2016 for example, the sport sector contributed approximately 1.7% of GDP in Fiji and 1.4% of GDP in Samoa<sup>1</sup>. Hosting sport events can also induce favourable shocks to national economy through remittances, number of international visitors and impact on other sectors such as hotels and transport. The potential of sport and physical activity to contribute to sustainable development is largely untapped and the Pacific region lacks the necessary systems and processes for rigorous data collection and analysis necessary to inform policy making and maximize the contribution of sport, physical activity and physical education to national and regional development.

Physical inactivity is one of the four main risk factors attributing to the prevalence of NCDs in the Pacific which account for 75% of adult deaths in the region. Despite previous commitments from Leaders, Ministers, key donors and development partners, the tide is not turning and NCDs continue to remain the biggest source of premature death of Pacific people. In 2011, Leaders expressed their deep concern that NCDs has reached epidemic proportions in Pacific Island Countries and Territories and had become a human, social and economic crisis requiring an urgent and comprehensive response.



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Fast forward to 2017 and Pacific Health Ministers again noted that NCDs remain one of the biggest challenges across the region due to its impact on future generations. NCDs are still the leading cause of death with childhood obesity posing a grave challenge to the populations of the Pacific. Many of our children are raised in environments that encourage weight gain and obesity, leading to adult onset diabetes in school-aged children. Statistics from the World Health Organization demonstrate the prominent increases in the prevalence of obesity among children and adolescents aged between 5 – 19 years in Forum Countries with particularly alarming rates in Nauru, Cook Islands, Niue, Palau, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Federate States of Micronesia, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu of over 20% prevalence of obesity in children and adolescents<sup>ii</sup>. The data also indicates these statistics are climbing which poses a critical threat to children, families and nations across the Pacific.

Civil Society Organizations and their communities stand at the forefront of this issue and have the will to reach and protect our most vulnerable Pacific communities from the growing threat of NCDs to health, livelihoods and sustainable development. CSOs recognize and support the recommendation of the SSCR on the issue of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) put forward by the Pacific Community (SPC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) noting the increasing prevalence of childhood obesity in the Pacific.

A 'whole of government' approach is critical to create an enabling environment to engage relevant national stakeholders towards clearly defined national targets to enhance the contribution of sport and physical activity to sustainable development in the Pacific and address the escalating crisis of NCDs that threatens health, well-being and quality of life.

Recognising the endorsement of Pacific Sports Ministers and Forum Economic Ministers, regional civil society stakeholders call on Pacific Islands Forum Leaders to:

1. Endorse the development of a Pacific Sport, Physical Activity and Physical Education (PSPAPE) Action Plan 2018 – 2030 to maximize the contribution of sport, physical activity and physical education to sustainable development in Pacific Island Forum Countries; and a regional coordination mechanism to: i) provide technical assistance to Pacific Island Countries and Territories and ii) develop integrated systems for data collection, analysis, policy development and implementation.
2. Task the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to coordinate a Pacific Regional Sports Taskforce and Pacific Regional Sports Reference Group to develop and implement the Pacific Sport, Physical Activity and Physical Education (PSPAPE) Action Plan 2018 – 2030.
3. Urgently consider innovative strategies that can inject impetus and elevate a coordinated response to address NCDs, including a strong *action statement* to galvanise allocation of requisite resources at the national, and where relevant, regional level. CSOs further call on Forum Leaders to take ownership and responsibility for driving the necessary momentum and coordinated multi-sectoral action required to 'turn the tide' against NCDs and in doing so, task relevant inter-governmental organizations, CSOs and private sector organizations to collaborate in order to reduce the burden of NCDs.

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<sup>i</sup> The University of the South Pacific. (2018). Maximizing the Contribution of Sport to Economic and Social Development of Pacific Island Countries: The case of Fiji and Samoa. Printed in Fiji, August 2018.

<sup>ii</sup> World Health Organization. (2018). Global Health Observatory (GHO) data – Non communicable Diseases: Obesity among children and adolescents. Retrieved from:

[http://www.who.int/gho/ncd/risk\\_factors/overweight\\_obesity/obesity\\_adolescents/en/](http://www.who.int/gho/ncd/risk_factors/overweight_obesity/obesity_adolescents/en/)

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