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PAPP
Pacific Agriculture Policy Project



Better Pacific fisheries and agriculture statistics to help improve livelihoods of millions

5 October, 2015

Nadi, Fiji – Planners, statisticians and policy makers from 13 Pacific Island countries are gathering in Nadi, Fiji, today to improve the collection and use of agricultural and fisheries statistics in the Pacific.

Timely and accurate statistics will help governments make evidence-based policy decisions and monitor the successful implementation of policy objectives.

The workshop on "Strategic Planning for Agriculture and Fisheries Statistics for Pacific Island Countries" is organised by the European Union supported Pacific Agriculture Policy Project (PAPP) which is implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, through its Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics (GSARS) initiative, are also lending their technical expertise to the event which concludes on 9 October.

The Pacific has approximately 11 million people, of which nearly eight million live in rural areas (73%) and largely rely on agriculture and fisheries for their livelihoods but long-term exposure to the adverse effects of climate change and frequent natural disasters make Pacific rural populations particularly vulnerable.

Improved statistics systems enable countries to better understand the impact of demographic changes, such as changing demand for natural resources, as well as the effects of extreme weather conditions and climate change on their food security and well-being.

"I am a strong advocate for better use of statistics and data within the agriculture sector and look forward to hearing our combined recommendations from this meeting on how best to develop a regional plan for our approach to statistics," said Fiji's Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Inia Seruiratu, in his opening address.

"The effective use of data will be critical in meeting the objectives in our new Fiji 2020 Agriculture Policy Agenda, which promotes sustainable community livelihoods," added Seruiratu.

Addressing the audience during the workshop opening, the Head of the European Union Delegation for the Pacific, H.E. Ambassador Andrew Jacobs, said "Strengthening agriculture statistics in this region is challenging, given the limited resources and the informal nature of agriculture. However, I believe this workshop has the potential to make a difference by bringing together representatives from both agriculture ministries, fisheries ministries and statistics offices, which often work in isolation. Strengthening cooperation between both will be a key to the development of sustainable statistics and development in the region, more generally."

Coordinator for the FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific Islands, Gavin Wall, said the FAO's Global Strategy is a ground breaking effort to improve agricultural, rural and fishery statistics systems.

"The availability of these statistics is crucial to monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and to inform national policies and programs," said Wall.

"This meeting will result in the initiation of a comprehensive long-term plan for building capacities of statistical systems for monitoring the attainment of these goals for the people and communities of the Pacific."

The meeting will feature recent innovations in agricultural and fisheries statistics developed by Pacific countries, recommendations for countries' long-term agricultural and rural statistics collection requirements and how they can best be supported by a regional plan.

Background:

The Pacific Agriculture Policy Project (PAPP) is part of the Intra-ACP Agricultural Policy Programme, supported by the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States, under the Intra-ACP cooperation framework.

For more information on the workshop proceedings, please visit: www.spc.int/pafpnet and www.fao.org

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