

Item 6

## Statement from the Cook Islands Minister of Health

*Excellencies,*

*Distinguished delegates,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen*

The Cook Islands are committed to the importance of CRVS for governance and planning. In recognising the multi-sectoral nature of the work, the Cook Islands has a national CRVS committee, has conducted a comprehensive assessment and has an informal national improvement plan. This plan is currently being reviewed and will be updated and formalised as part of the Cook Islands National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS).

This work has been undertaken over the last few years under the framework of the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan, with support from the Pacific Vital Statistics Action Plan

Activities have been undertaken in a range of areas under the plan –and some of these key achievements will be presented in the side event on the progress in the Pacific Islands on Friday.

For the small islands of the Pacific Islands – one of the key challenges in improving CRVS is ongoing access to technical support in specialised areas for training and capacity building such as certification of deaths and data analysis and report writing, we also face challenges in sharing information with neighbouring countries in order to obtain a complete picture of the vital events for the Cook Islands given that many births and deaths may occur off-island.

Coordinated support, both in country and at the regional level, provided through the Pacific Vital Statistics Action plan has been very important to the Cook Islands, and will continue to be critical as we move forward.

The Cook Islands has been pleased to be part of the political commitments already made in the Pacific to CRVS assessment, plan development and action through the declarations from the Pacific Ministers of Health (in 2011, 2013, and 2014), and the Heads of Planning and Statistics meeting (2013)

The Regional Action Framework provides an important means to elevate the political commitment that Pacific countries have already made, and builds on this progress by committing countries to set tangible targets/ goals for improvement through their national committee. The Cook Islands national CRVS committee has discussed these goals and will set targets as part of a review of a national CRVS improvement strategy.