



India – Pacific Islands Sustainable Development Conference

‘Furthering the FIPIC Agenda through Sustainability Initiatives’

May 25 – 26, 2017 | Grand Pacific Hotel, Suva, Fiji

Thematic Track Concept Note: Roundtable on Pacific Islands Medical Collaboration

Background on India’s Engagement with Pacific Island Countries (PICs) in Healthcare

India has embarked on a concerted plan to reach out to Pacific Island Countries to ensure the holistic development of the region. As a first step the Forum for India – Pacific Islands Co-operation (FIPIC) was developed in 2014 between India and 14 Pacific Island nations which include Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu .

As per India’s extended Act East Policy, India is actively promoting stronger ties with smaller island nations of the South Pacific, along with co-operating on multiple issues including healthcare, blue economy, oil and natural gas, mining, IT, fishing and marine research and Space collaboration.

Healthcare in Pacific Islands¹

The health systems in the Pacific Island Countries (PIC) represent great diversity and different stages of development related to their past and current affiliations to the Commonwealth, France and USA.

Some major challenges faced by PIC include:

Inequitable provision of healthcare services to populations scattered over many islands. There are challenges of logistical problems to ensure reliable, uninterrupted and good quality primary health care on remote outer islands infrequent transport links, costly communication and high operational cost.

Inadequate coverage of secondary and tertiary care services that make medical evacuations a common feature of the health systems in all Pacific countries.

¹ http://www.wpro.who.int/southpacific/programmes/health_sector/health_systems/page/en/

Lack of standards or guidelines for best practices in Quality of Healthcare Services Delivery. There is a need for PICs to expand the objectives of the health system from coverage of services to quality of care.

Need to optimise and augment existing health systems to make them independent of external/donor funding - Most PICs provide free health care to all citizens financed by government. The level of health spending in PICs in general is insufficient to address the health challenges.

Opportunities for Partnerships and Collaborations with Indian Healthcare Sector

There are possibilities of agreements and other interventions in some of the following areas in Healthcare with the objective to strengthen Primary and Tertiary level healthcare delivery and overcome barriers to access, awareness and quality.

- I. Capacity Building - for existing projects and plan for capacity enhancements under new project.
- II. Knowledge Building – Through partnerships undertake skilling and knowledge missions for current and prospective health workers belonging to PICs. Indian providers have developed wide-ranging capabilities for up-skilling of the workforce and can leverage its expertise to create an enabling workforce for the health systems of Pacific Island countries.
- III. Exporting Make in India- The Indian pharmaceuticals, medical technology manufacturing and medical equipment industry has also witnessed stellar growth over the past few years. With increasing investment in India, more international manufacturers are setting up units or augmenting capacity to meet the country's future needs and also create India as an export hub.
 - a) Agreements maybe developed to create a demand for Indian products in PICs through tie-ups with health systems and providers. The opportunity to enter into Preferred Provider Agreements for PICs is immense and this will help in boosting exports for the pharmaceutical, device manufacturers and medical technology providers.

Thematic Session on Healthcare

This Thematic discussion focusing on Healthcare scheduled for 25 May 2017 at Suva, Fiji is envisaged to act as a critical adjunct to the Government's Look East Engagement policy through deep integration and support to the health systems of the Pacific Island Countries (PICs). It will aim to catalyse discussions on enhancing current capabilities of the health systems, development of new capabilities and enabling access through new technologies and initiatives through partnerships, B2Bs & B2Gs.

India has a cost advantage which makes India an attractive destination for patients from all across the world including countries like US, Europe, South East Asia, Japan, Middle East, Africa.

India has world-class hospitals and skilled medical professionals and treatment for major surgeries in India costs approximately 10% of the cost in most of the developed countries. Keeping these facts in mind, India can host patients from PIC .

India can also help in skilling of their nurses , technical staff to take care of basic needs at the first touch point .

This closed-door Roundtable deliberation will look to attract patients in India for treatment. Also, there will be discussion on how to strengthen healthcare delivery systems by opening dialogue channels with health systems of PICs and leveraging the expertise of Indian healthcare providers – including healthcare providers, pharmaceutical industry, device manufacturers and health technology companies. Also there can be a discussion on use of technology for healthcare delivery in remote corners

This will be done through the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII).