INTRODUCTION

The first set of Demographic Tables: 2000-2005 was published in 2002. It provided national population projections for the years 2000 through 2005 by selected age-sex segments and for selected topics of demographic and health interest. These served as denominator datasets for computing health indicators such as Millennium Development Goals, and for other specific programmes of the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific (WPRO). Individual countries could also use the data when national data was unavailable.

The projections were based on medium assumptions of fertility as determined by the UN tracking system on population dynamics. In general, the United Nations derives national projections by quinary age-sex populations for every five-year period of 2000-2050, and revises these projections every two years. The WPRO projections were based on the 2001 UN revision, and were interpolated annually for 2000-2005 for WPRO units and the Region. The projections had to be revised, as the UN Population Prospects Revision 2002 has just been published. In addition, some changes had to be made in line with feedback and other observable changing demographic dynamics since 2001.

The current Demographic Tables: 2005-2010 replaces the first issue. It utilizes national projections where they are reliable and readily available. It uses the 2002 UN revision, but also selects the fertility assumption according to the magnitudes of Total Fertility Rate (TFR) relevant to each country. This would add some realism to the projections and avoid the use of the medium projection as the sole dynamic. Both mortality and international migration also are factored in from the extensive UN demographic database.

The UN revision does not offer projections for the South Pacific island countries, except for groupings such as Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. Earlier, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community had provided the population projections for 2000 and 2005, but these are not available currently. Other techniques were tested and checked for consistency with group figures. The final product is a useful set of national projections that are closer to reality. Countries are grouped into three TFR levels, and corresponding projection paths are derived.

On request, WPRO will provide single age data by sex from its archives.

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The Demographic Tables for the Western Pacific 2005-2010 as a whole is also accessible from the website of the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific [http://www.wpro.who.int].

We invite your suggestions and feedback on these tables for further improvement and development. Exact concurrence between national and UN estimates is not expected. But where wide disparities exist, you may wish to inform WPRO.

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