

## **World Cancer Congress 2014: IARC/WHO announces a new Regional Hub to improve cancer registration in the Pacific Islands.**

**Lyon, France, 4 December 2014** – The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the specialized cancer agency of the World Health Organization (WHO), together with several partners today announced plans to create a new IARC Regional Hub for cancer registration in the Pacific Islands. The plan, presented at the World Cancer Congress in Melbourne, aims to significantly improve the quality of population-based cancer registration in the region.

The Global Initiative for Cancer Registry Development (GICR, <http://gicr.iarc.fr>), led by IARC/WHO, is an international partnership that combines technical support, training, and advocacy to facilitate the development of cancer registry systems around the world to inform national cancer control. The Pacific Island Hub will collaborate with countries in the regions of Melanesia (Fiji, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu), Micronesia (Guam), and Polynesia (French Polynesia and Samoa). Activities include consultations, tailored education, and the fostering of research and networking capacity. The specifics of the hub will be developed in consultation with Oceania countries.

“The launch of this new Regional Hub will play a key role in improving cancer registration in the Pacific Islands,” says Dr Freddie Bray, Head of the Cancer Surveillance Unit at IARC, “Reliable data are critical to put in place effective national cancer control plans to reduce the societal and economic burden of cancer. The dilemma has been the absence in two thirds of the countries of the world of registries able to supply the information on which to base decisions.”

In Oceania, 155 000 new cases and 60 000 cancer deaths were estimated to occur in 2012, and the annual number of new cases is set to rise to 237 000 by 2030, a 53% increase.

There are striking disparities within in the region, and the profiles of cancer differ markedly from country to country.

In Australia and New Zealand, the overall mortality rates in both sexes have been declining in recent decades, in part due to the declining mortality rates of female breast cancer and male lung cancer. Yet Australia and New Zealand have the highest melanoma incidence rates in the world.

Apart from Australia and New Zealand, there is limited information available for most countries in Oceania, which emphasizes the need to develop quality cancer registries the region.

The new Regional Hub is part of a larger network of IARC Regional Hubs in Asia, Africa, and South America, which aim to improve data availability and quality in order to inform national cancer control policies in all countries worldwide.

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“In Oceania, we observe important disparities in terms of cancer,” says Professor Sanchia Aranda, the Cancer Institute NSW representative to the Oceania collaboration and a Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) board member, “Australian representatives from several organizations, in partnership with IARC are committed to the development of a collaboration to enhance the role of cancer registries in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) in the Oceania region. We seek to draw on the many skills of our island neighbours in establishing and sustaining best-practice cancer registration systems. Through improving cancer registration we can proactively ensure that the health systems of all countries are geared to treating the specific cancers that are important to them.”

Currently, only 68 of the world’s countries (mainly high-income countries) are covered by high-quality population-based cancer registry data, while 62 countries (largely low- and middle-income countries) have no reliable data at all.

The global cancer burden is projected to increase from 14.1 million new cases in 2012 to 21.6 million by 2030, with increases of 60–70% predicted in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. “Strong and decisive leadership is needed to ensure adequate funding for a cancer control policy in every country of the world,” says Dr Christopher Wild, Director of IARC, “The Regional Hubs provide precious information to help governments in LMICs direct funds to where they are most needed.”

### Notes to the Editors:

Partners involved in this project include:

The NSW Government’s cancer control agency, the Cancer Institute NSW, Cancer Council Victoria, Cancer Council Queensland, and the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute.

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The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) is part of the World Health Organization (WHO). Its mission is to coordinate and conduct research on the causes of human cancer and the mechanisms of carcinogenesis, and to develop scientific strategies for cancer control. The Agency is involved in both epidemiological and laboratory research and disseminates scientific information through publications, meetings, courses, and fellowships. If you wish your name to be removed from our press release emailing list, please write to [com@iarc.fr](mailto:com@iarc.fr).