

Major Meeting On Disaster Reduction For The Pacific Region

Written by Administrator

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In one of the most important regional meetings of the year, top officials from 22 Pacific island countries and territories will meet with experts from around the world to address growing concerns relating to reducing the risks of disasters and the impacts of climate change that are affecting development in the Pacific Region.

The meeting, the 3rd Session of the Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management (DRM) will be held in New Zealand at the Auckland Airport Holiday Inn from August 1 thur 5.

Mr. Mosese Sikivou, Deputy Director of the SPC/SOPAC Disaster Reduction Programme, said “essentially the meeting is to provide Pacific island countries and territories with a way forward in terms of developing an integrated regional strategy for DRM and Climate Change by 2015.

“It will allow the opportunity for sharing of experiences to date and for using the lessons learned to help shape how the Pacific moves forward.

“A range of serious challenges face Pacific island countries and territories. We need to be prepared to respond to and recover from disasters. And just as important, we need plans and programmes so we can reduce the risks posed by natural hazard. We need to do things to reduce vulnerability and increase the resilience of our communities,” said Mr. Sikivou.

He said that there are constant reminders of how vulnerable the region is citing cyclones, flooding, earthquakes, tsunamis and droughts, all recent events that are constant reminders of the urgent need to be prepared.

Mr. Sikivou said that the meeting will allow for better risk management training and capacity building programmes that target the heads of disaster offices and the disaster management support structures in the Pacific.

“In addition to the heads of national disaster officers, CEOs of Finance and Planning are once again joining the Platform to help raise the profile of disaster risk within our Pacific government systems and in particular to take the lead role in the mainstreaming efforts that are already underway.

“It is important that there is a clear picture by decision makers of the linkages between disasters

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and development; that they understand the urgency of mainstreaming disaster and climate risk considerations into national plans and budgets.”

The Pacific Platform, launched in 2008, is comprised of three major components, an annual meeting of Pacific Regional Disaster Managers, an annual meeting of the Pacific Disaster Risk Management Partnerships Network, and a biennial meeting of Pacific CEOs for DRM and Finance/Planning from within Pacific governments.

The Platform has proven to be “invaluable” as a forum in exchanging information on disaster risk reduction and related issues across the region.

A major objective of this years Platform is to endorse a “roadmap” for the integration of a regional policy framework for disaster risk management and climate change adaptation.

“Pacific Island countries are at various stages of introducing National Action Plans as policy to address Disaster Risk Management issues, but they have also become aware of the threat posed by climate change and have begun the process of integrating their efforts on these issues.”

Tonga is the first island nation to develop a Joint National Action Plan for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management.

The Pacific Platform is being organized by the SOPAC Division of the SPC and a number of development partner and donors organisations: UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, NZ Ministry of Civil Defense & Emergency Management, The Asia Foundation/USAID Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNDP Pacific Centre, International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies, World Bank Global Facility for Disaster Reduction & Recovery, AusAID, European Union and French Pacific Fund.

Caption: Mr. Mosese Sikivou, Deputy Director of the SPC/SOPAC Disaster Reduction Programme,

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