

## Disaster Meeting Shows "Way Forward"

Written by Administrator

Friday, 12 August 2011 11:12 - Last Updated Friday, 12 August 2011 11:23

---



Two hundred delegates from 22 island countries and territories in the Pacific region met with experts from around the world at the 3rd Session Pacific Platform for Disaster Management to examine “a way forward” to reduce the risks of disasters including the impacts of climate change that are affecting development in the Pacific Region.

It was the largest gathering to have ever participated in the Pacific Platform, reflecting the growing concern within the region of the “constant reminders” of the vulnerability of the island countries following recent events citing cyclones, flooding, earthquakes, tsunamis and droughts.

Mr. Mosese Sikivou, Deputy Director of the SOPAC Disaster Reduction Programme, of the SPC said “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, if not more so, we need plans and programmes so we can reduce the risks posed by natural hazards. We need to do things to reduce vulnerability and increase the resilience of our communities,” said Mr. Sikivou.

As the foremost gathering of disaster risk management expertise in the region, results from the meeting will go far in determining Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change policies into the future.

The results from the week long meeting have now been issued as the Pacific Platform Outcomes and cover a wide range of the issues discussed.

The Platform noted the lessons learned from the New Zealand response efforts following the Christchurch earthquakes, in particular:

- Encouraging research in readiness, response and recovery;
- Investment in building codes and their enforcement;
- Community resilience backed by preparedness, and
- Impact and need assessments must be systematic.

It also noted the increased vulnerability of Pacific island countries and territories and recognized the importance of addressing risks leading to effective prevention investments, and the

## Disaster Meeting Shows "Way Forward"

Written by Administrator

Friday, 12 August 2011 11:12 - Last Updated Friday, 12 August 2011 11:23

---

strengthening of disaster risk management.

It recognized the success in recent years in reducing the number of fatalities resulting from extreme events in Pacific island region, but the challenges remain to reduce economic and social costs.

There has been significant progress in providing Pacific Island Countries and Territories with detailed information on hazards relating to the implementation of early warning systems, the planning for integrated responses to the threats of disasters and climate change, as well as progress in reducing community vulnerabilities and enhancing resilience.

There is a need, highlighted, to evaluate cost effective risk financing options to minimize financial and economic risk, including disaster reserve or trust funds to facilitate post-disaster response.

And, it reported, the need to increase financial allocation to civil society in support of more comprehensive community based disaster risk management programmes in the long term.

The Platform confirms that there should be more emphasis and recognition of best practice in sustainable natural resource and land use management for increased cost effectiveness of disaster risk reduction options, including the documentation of traditional production practices in disaster risk management

Furthermore it emphasized the need to improve economic evaluations and scientific studies for understanding of risk to strengthen policy and evidence- based decision-making.

The Pacific Platform, established 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 Partnership Network, and a biennial meeting of Pacific CEOs for DRM and Finance/Planning from within Pacific governments.

At the closing of the meeting one delegate remarked, "We wish to emphasise that the 3rd Platform Meeting is about stakeholders engaging in an ongoing interactive dialogue to better inform, and focus our perspectives for the benefit of the island communities that we serve."

**Caption:** The high level of interest in the meeting is reflected in members of the Vanuatu delegation (l-r) Ms Esline Garabeti (NDMO), Anthonneth Amhambat (Finance/Planning), Jean-Francois Methmetsan (Prime Ministers Office) and Mr. Salesa Kaniaha (Acting DirectorMet Office)