

Samoa's DRM priorities should guide funding

Written by Naomi Jackson

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Matching Samoa's priorities with the interests of funding agencies is an important aspect of the country's plans for emergency preparedness said the Principal Disaster Management Officer, Ms Filomena Nelson, during the 3rd Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management (DRM) held in Auckland New Zealand in early August.

Two hundred delegates from 22 island countries and territories in the Pacific region, who met with experts from around the world 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.

Ms Nelson, who made a presentation at the week-long Platform meeting on the Needs Assessment that took place in Samoa after the 2009 tsunami, pointed out that there is an increasing awareness that preparedness and disaster risk reduction measures are a part of the development process within a country.

Ms Nelson said that funding assistance needed to be "based on our vulnerabilities, our financial and technical resources where Government has already made an investment."

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She explained that Samoa's post-tsunami Needs Assessment demonstrated the impact that the disaster had had on Samoa's development, and was undertaken using information and interviews with key stakeholders in Government, the private sector and affected villages.

"The effect of the disaster was SAT\$310.11 million (USD\$124.04) or about 22% of Samoa's Gross Domestic Product, the total effect of the disaster is the value of the damage plus the value of the losses. Damage is the monetary value of replacing buildings and infrastructure to the same condition before the calamity took place, and loss being the changes in goods and services that were no longer available, the reduction of economic activity, and in personal and household income."

Ms Nelson said that meeting gave delegates the opportunity to learn from other countries and experts, "and to see how aspects of those systems and mechanisms could be used to strengthen what we have, or are in the process of planning to do."

She said that the Platform meeting provided "the opportunity to meet with all the donor agencies, to hear where their interests lie and what they are planning. In this way we can gear up our proposals and implementation plans to make good use of the funding and resources available."

Photo captions:

Tsunami damage on Samoa's South Upolu Coast