

Speech at the International Day for Disaster Reduction Exhibition

Written by Administrator

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by **Mr Amena Yauvoli**

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October 13th 2011

Traditional Leaders of Pohnpei State

Governor of Pohnpei State Government- Honourable John Ehser

Assistant Secretary, FSM Department of Foreign Affairs- Mr. Ricky Cantero

Director FSM-OEEM- Mr. Andrew Yatilman

Members of the Diplomatic Corp

Invited Guests

Boys and Girls

Kaselehlie Maingko and a very good day to you all.

I am happy to stand before you this morning representing the SPC Director General in this year's International Day and Disaster Reduction exhibition in Pohnpei, FSM. May I commend the organisers, my colleagues and members of the Disaster Risk Management Network, for putting together a program as such, to help us realise that Disaster Does Happens and we – all of us - have a major role to play in ensuring the safety of our people, friends and loves ones.

This year's celebration is centred on the theme – “Making Communities resilient, My Community is Ready.” Our communities, towns and cities are homes to our people- driving development, prosperity and innovation. Covering only 1% of the earth's surface, community areas are home to half and soon to be two thirds of the global population. Communities are also home to a billion urban poor in informal settlements that are bound to face disasters in one form or another. Today, many of our people in Micronesia are living in earthquake prone communities and many more live in communities at risk from cyclones and other extreme weather events. The United Nations Secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction has estimated that by 2050, these numbers may double or triple.

Our local governments and communities are the first institutional levels to respond to disasters and are best placed to reduce disaster risk and build resilience. Local communities matter and are the places where disasters and the immediate and real effects are most intimately felt. Our

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communities both in the urban and rural areas are already at risk.

The question is – are our communities ready? The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) feels that it is essential that we continue to work together, that national government involves and work with the state governments and community leaders in building strategies for risk reduction and for the implementation of these strategies. Disaster risk reduction and adaption strategies – making communities resilient – must support local sustainable development initiatives to improve the quality of lives in our people, in particular those that are most vulnerable like women, children and those being handicapped.

We at SPC- will continue to work with our elected leaders, state legislatures, mayors, development partners here in FSM to respond to the expectations of our citizens to better prepare themselves before disasters occurs. On this note, it is important to make disaster risk reduction an integral part of our development planning efforts. SPC- through our SOPAC Division- will soon start working with the FSM-OEEM to integrate DRR measures into a Joint National Action Plan (JNAP) that would provide a sustainable platform for the FSM to effectively address challenges imposed due to climate change, disaster, and other threats. This must include at a minimum, a consultative and participatory approach to development, involving all sectors of society including political leaders and development partners, an advocacy and awareness approach that captures all members of our society.

The presence of many school children here this morning is a vivid reminder that they need to be included in the awareness programme as they prepare themselves for the future.

It is no denial that the threat from Natural Disasters is urgent and needs immediate attention. Our response to this challenge will ensure the protection and well being of our future generations- who are present in big numbers here this morning. This is building resilience on a sustainable platform.

With those few words, may I wish you all a blessed International Day for Disaster Reduction Exhibition Day!

Kalagahn en kupwuromual!