

Thursday 4 September 2014, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Suva, Fiji – The Pacific will be the first region in the world to fully integrate climate change and disaster risk management in a single regional strategy focused on resilient development.

Regional efforts on integrating climate change and disaster risk management featured at the side event, Building Pacific Resilience – the Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific, held during the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Samoa. The Government of Tonga led the event with support from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).

Discussions around resilient development for Pacific Island nations highlighted how countries and organisations have advanced or are planning the integration of strategies for climate change and disasters.

In his keynote address, the Prime Minister of Tonga, Lord Tu'ivakanō, said: ‘The Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific highlights the importance of partnerships and this is certainly what this SIDS meeting is all about. A new mechanism to bring together climate change and disaster risk management practitioners at the regional level is being advocated.’

The new regional coordinating mechanism, the Pacific Resilience Partnership, will oversee the implementation of the regional strategy. It will build on existing structures and partnerships, such as the Technical Working Group established for the development of the strategy, which has been a positive example of collaboration between various organisations and development partners in the region.

The event highlighted the need for all stakeholders to recommit to addressing the impacts of climate change and disasters in the Pacific region, and reaffirmed that assistance for implementation of the strategy will require considerable and ongoing support from the international community.

The session was moderated by Margareta Wahlström, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction. The discussion panel included the Hon. Faamoetauloa Ulaitino Faale Tumaalii, Samoa's Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Mr Jacob Werksman, Principal Adviser for DG CLIMA European Union, Mrs Emele Duituturaga, Executive Director for the Pacific Islands Alliance of NGOs and Mr Howard Politini, Vice Chair of the Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation.

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