

# Snapshots

## DISASTER REDUCTION PROGRAMME

Snapshot 82

January – February 2013



The Applied Geoscience and Technology Division (SOPAC) through the Disaster Reduction Programme is committed to working with officials and communities around the Pacific to strengthen the ability of countries to protect people as much as possible from the impact of natural and manmade disasters

# From the Managers Desk



Mosese Sikivou

Welcome to the first edition of Snapshots for 2013!

It's taken us a while but we've finally been able to get something together to give you some understanding of the work being undertaken by the SPC/SOPAC Disaster Reduction Programme. These are just tidbits of a wider range of initiatives, the developments of which, we hope to share with our readers over the course of 2013.

The year has gotten off to a bang but unfortunately not the kind that we would have wanted. The disasters that affected both Samoa and Fiji as a result of Tropical Cyclone Evan in December required some immediate attention early in January. Through a collaborative effort with the SPC/SOPAC Water and Sanitation Programme, we deployed two staff to assist Samoa's post disaster needs assessment. In February, we provided similar assistance to Fiji (just coming to completion as this goes to print so watch this space for news on the Fiji post disaster needs assessment). We also, per the tireless contribution of Litea Biukoto, were able to support post disaster assessment work in the Solomon Islands which was impacted by an earthquake and tsunami in early February.

So, there's been no let up this - made even more interesting since other activities continue as scheduled. Alas, such is the life of those of us in this line of work.

We have a number of interesting stories in this edition. The Pacific Disaster Net has reached a significant milestone; our work in French Polynesia is making significant progress; the B Envelope project continues to add another success to its portfolio of activities, and more.

I hope you enjoy reading our stories and please 'stay tuned' for more as we progress in the coming months.

*Mosese Sikivou*

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# SPC builds internal Disaster Risk Reduction capacity

A group of 18 staff from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in Suva participated in a three-day training course to build their knowledge and understanding of risk reduction. This was the first in-house training in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) offered to SPC employees aimed at providing an opportunity for staff to develop greater understanding of DRR and how it can be integrated into work programmes across SPC's Suva-based divisions. Participants came from the Strategic Engagement, Policy and Planning Division, Applied Geoscience and Technology Division, Land Resources Division, Public Health Division, Human Development Division, the SPC Library, and Human Resources.

For many of the course participants this was the first time for them to have the opportunity to become familiar with the concepts and practice of disaster risk reduction. Many remarked that although DRR was not considered a core part of their work, they could see how it was a cross-cutting issue and their attendance at the course has put them in a better position to integrate DRR into their work. Participants commented that they found the course "very informative and relevant" and there were "definitely strong links to my work".

Everyone recognised the benefits of attending the course, describing it as an "eye-opening experience" and one that provided them with "greater understanding of DRR and its elements". Participants also suggested the training "should be undertaken by all SPC staff as risk reduction is a cross-cutting issue" for all programmes. Following the success of this in-house training there may also be opportunity for offering the course to SPC's Noumea-based staff.

During 2013, the Disaster Risk Reduction course will be conducted for the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu.





# An economic analysis to inform solutions to the risks posed by cyclonic swells in French Polynesia

Cyclones and storm surges frequently cause damage and destruction in the Tuamotu Archipelago of French Polynesia. Their low lying land masses offer inhabitants almost no protection from these hazards and they have had devastating consequences in the past, for example Cyclone Oli in 2010.

In order to reduce the risk of disasters occurring in the future, the SOPAC Division of SPC, using EU funding, is working alongside French Polynesia to increase protection to people and infrastructure in coastal areas. The work is comprised of two parts: (1) a scientific investigation of the inundation risk posed to the Tuamotus through data collection and risk mapping, and (2) an economic analysis of the risk reduction options available to the government, such as sea walls or building restrictions along the coast.



How effective and cost-efficient are solutions to protect the coast and inhabitants against cyclonic swells? (Rangiroa Atoll, French Polynesia, courtesy of Frédérique Lehoux, SPC)

To collect data required for the economic analysis, SPC's Economist, Anna Rios Wilks, and Project Manager, Frédérique Lehoux, travelled to French Polynesia in December 2012. Their mission consisted of meetings with representatives from many sectors of the French Polynesian government including the Statistics Institute, the Equipment Department, the Fund for the Development of French Polynesia archipelagos, and at a more local level, with the Secretary General of the main town of Rangiroa atoll. Data on the costs of past disasters, the identification of various solutions such as higher, more resilient housing, building restrictions along the coast or sea walls, and their costs and benefits over time was collected. This data is now being reviewed and will be compiled into a cost-benefit analysis.

It is hoped that the successful completion of this project will not only provide detailed information and modeling of the storm surges that are likely to hit the Tuamotus, but will also allow the government to make an informed decision on how best to proceed in protecting their population and infrastructure.



How to best protect coastal infrastructure and people against the risk of cyclonic swells? (Rangiroa Atoll, French Polynesia, courtesy of Anna Rios Wilks, SPC).



# New National Emergency Operation Center opened in the Federated States of Micronesia

The National Emergency Operation Center at Palikir, National Capital, in Pohnpei was officially opened on Wednesday 13th February 2013. Construction has only recently been completed, at a cost of about US\$320,000 with funding made available from the European Union through the Disaster Risk Reduction Project (B-Envelope) implemented by the SOPAC Division, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

Honourable Lorin S. Robert, Secretary to the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Director of the Office of Environment and Emergency Management (OEEM), Mr. Andrew Yatilman and SPC Deputy Director, Disaster Reduction Programme, Mr. Mosese Sikivou, unveiled the plaque officially opening the building. In his opening statement Mr. Sikivou stated “FSM is vulnerable to a range of hazards and the new Emergency Operation Center will strengthen the capacity of OEEM to better prepare for and respond to disasters. Through a number of SPC initiatives in addressing planning and the national policy environment including capacity building we hope to build resilient communities and to reduce the loss of human life and property.”

In expressing FSM Government and people’s gratitude for the new National Emergency Operation Center, Secretary to the Department of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Lorin S. Robert thanked the European Union for funding construction of the new National Emergency Operation Center and other interventions in disaster management. He further stated that for Micronesians climate change is a real issue and the new facility will improve coordination of all aspects of disaster management.

The other major project intervention is the supply and installation 92 VHF and HF radios in the outer islands that is currently on-going. The EU has made available a total of €1.2 million to support the Government in disaster management through this project.



# Strengthening Early Warning Communications in Papua New Guinea

Installation of 180 VHF and HF radios to improve early warning communications has commenced in Papua New Guinea (PNG). This has been made possible through the Disaster Risk Reduction Project (B-Envelope) funded by the European Union and implemented by SOPAC Division, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).



Newly installed VHF radio at Konedobu.

Working in partnership with the PNG National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) the focus is on improving communications between the NDMO and the Provincial Disaster Management Offices. The targeted beneficiaries are members of the Provincial Disaster Committees in each province receiving new VHF/HF radios. This support is also extended to Provincial Fire Services as part of the strategic alliance initiatives with the NDMO including Police as an additional first responder to disasters. The Project Manager, George Beck, stated that “it’s important that there are various options in communicating with Provincial Governments and their respective Disaster Committees as the phone system may not always work in the event of a hazard due to congested traffic or breakdowns. There is already a very extensive radio network throughout PNG through the health, education and police networks. The NDMO radio network with strengthen this linkage and allow for wider dissemination of information”.

The project has also supported the PNG Government in a number of areas including strengthening weather monitoring capabilities with new automatic weather stations and seismic monitoring with ten new seismic stations in selected provinces. Through a partnership with BeeMobile the National and Provincial Disaster

Managers also have access to free unlimited calls and SMS service over a twelve month period.

The support given to PNG through this project totals € 3.3 million focusing on improving disaster management particularly in strengthening early warning communications. SPC is also assisting PNG in other areas in disaster management with initiatives that include strengthening the policy and planning environment ultimately aimed at reducing risks and preventing loss to property and human lives.



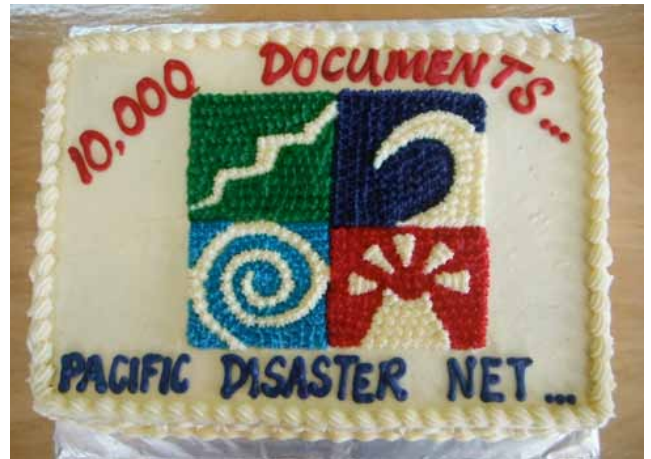
# The Pacific Disaster Net (PDN) celebrates a new milestone - 10,000 documents

The achievement brings the PDN a step closer to being the leading information portal for disaster risk management in the Pacific.

The success to date of the PDN is due in a large part to the value it has gained as a very credible source of information to assist the Pacific islands region to make more informed decisions to increase its safety and strengthen resilience.

Key to the success of the PDN have been a number of supporting partner organisations– the United Nations Development Programme Pacific Centre, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the United Nations Office for Disaster Reduction.

Some of PDN’s milestones of note:



## PDN Launch

PDN was launched in 2008 and its Strategic Plan 2012 – 2014 defines its mission to

- support disaster risk management activities by national and regional governments and organisations at all levels, inspired by the Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action 2005 – 2015 and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 – 2015 in terms of the vision of building communities and nations resilient to disasters;
- form a solid knowledge foundation on which the safe and secure future of Pacific nations can be built, by bringing together the widest selection of information sources available and supplying tools that the DRM community needs.

Download Strategic Plan 2012 – 2014:

[http://www.pacificdisaster.net/pdnadmin/data/original/PDN\\_2012\\_Strategic\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.pacificdisaster.net/pdnadmin/data/original/PDN_2012_Strategic_Plan.pdf)



## First PDN User Training

The first PDN User Training took place in July, 2010, at the USP Japan ICT Center, USP Laucala Campus, Fiji. Other trainings have since followed in the Solomon Islands (2010) and Samoa (2011).

## Joe Barr Library

A comprehensive digital collection of historical DRM documents kindly donated by a long serving DRM stalwart and advocate, Mr. Joe Barr of Melbourne, Australia is currently being prepared for upload into the portal.

## Future PDN features

Future PDN features will include information about DRR projects and improved access to damage and loss details.

The PDN team with four dedicated staff is looking at more improvements and making the portal even bigger and richer to support the DRM information needs for the region besides the current content management for documents, alerts, disasters details, calendar for training, meetings and conferences, videos and contact details.



Participants at the first PDN User Training, Fiji, July 2010



# Kiribati Integrates Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management

The Kiribati Joint Implementation Plan (KJIP) for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management is being developed following the endorsement of two key strategic frameworks; the Disaster Risk Reduction Management Plan; and the National Framework for Climate Change and Climate Change Adaptation. The KJIP will prioritise actions on climate change and disaster risk management to improve coordination and attract appropriate support.

The process of developing the plan is being led by the Kiribati National Expert Group (KNEG) which comprises various development sectors such as Health, Energy, Water, Agriculture, Infrastructure and Education and supported by a Regional Support Team from SPREP, SPC, and UNDP.

Mr Terieta Mwemwenikeaki the Deputy Secretary at the President's Office and also team leader of the Kiribati National Expert Group stated he was "pleased that the partners had responded positively to the request by the Government of Kiribati and that they pledged to provide full support so that the KJIP is fully developed before the end of 2013".

Hon Pinto Katia, the Minister for Commerce and Industry while opening the High Level Advocacy workshop with Parliamentarians stated "the joint implementation plan is timely as the government is keen to enhance the resilience of all communities from the threats of climate change and disasters". He further stated that "the impacts of climate change and disaster risk is evident in Kiribati due to the nature of the islands".

The process and timeframe of the development of the KJIP was agreed at a national workshop and will guide all stakeholders in the coming months.

# Federated States of Micronesia takes a strategic integrated approach to disaster and climate risk management

In June 2012, the Federated States of Micronesia Presidential Task Force for Disaster Management decided that a Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Climate Change (CC) Policy should be developed for the FSM, building on the Climate Change Policy 2009, and the Disaster Relief Act 1989 to provide overarching policy guidance for joint DRM and Climate Change Action Plans at state level. This decision emanated from discussions on the subject going back to 2009 and reinforced by the findings of the 2012 FSM national progress reviews of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action (RFA).

The Office of Environment and Emergency Management (OEEM), is the national agency responsible for the coordination of DRM and Climate Change (CC) capacity building and institutional strengthening in the FSM. In order to progress preparations for the development of the new policy and actions plans, OEEM requested the assistance of the SPC to coordinate support from regional and national development partners. A mission to scope the requirements for policy and state level action plan development was undertaken 14-18 February, 2013.

The SPC in undertaking the mission acted on behalf of a range of regional development partners committed to assisting Pacific island countries and territories to reduce vulnerability and increase their safety and resilience to natural hazards. Development partners that indicated commitment to support the FSM in addressing its DRM and Climate Change capacity building requirements, include the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), International Office for Migration (IOM) funded by the US Government and AusAID, and The Asia Foundation/US Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (TAF/OFDA).

A two day meeting in Pohnpei focused on obtaining the contributions of national and state-level government agencies to the development of a DRM and CC Policy and the process for the development of State-level



Joint DRM and CC Action Plans. A second meeting was held on the 18 February involving representatives of development partner organisations based in the FSM including regional, international and national organisations. The purpose of this meeting was to identify the range of development partners that could provide support for the development of the new DRM and CCA policy and as well State action plans. The meeting also focused on determining the nature and scope of support that could be provided at national and state level.

The mission has derived very useful results and the OEEM feels strongly encouraged to lead the process moving forward. All stakeholders are aware of the significant challenge that such an exercise will pose and have agreed to work together to ensure the successful development and implementation of the new DRM and CCA policy for the FSM and state level DRM and CCA action plans.

# Upcoming Events

- 19 – 22 February: Checking on installation of rainwater catchments, Marshall Islands.
- 23 – 26 February: Final inspection of new Emergency Operation Centre, FSM.
- 27 February – 1 March: Inspection of Emergency Operation Centre, Palau.
- 27 February – 6 March: Review of National Early Warning System for ocean and coastal hazards and evaluation of observation, detection and threat assessment capability, Samoa.
- 28 February – 1 March Initial Damage Assessment training, FSM.
- 4 – 8 March: Emergency Operation Centre training at the National EOC in Palikir, FSM.
- 5 – 9 March: Preparation Meeting with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) for the Joint Meeting of the Pacific Platform for DRM and Pacific Climate Change Roundtable, Samoa.
- 8 – 12 March: Workshop on tsunami risk signage in French Pacific territories (New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna), New Caledonia.
- 15 – 22 March: Solomon Islands Joint NAP for DRM and CC consultations and establishment of strategic alliance for emergency services, Solomon Islands.
- 9 – 16 March: Follow up on tsunami siren pilot project for Nuku'alofa and implementation of the Tonga JNAP, Tonga.
- 18 – 29 March: Installation of seismic stations in Papua New Guinea.
- 22 – 26 April: Emergency Operations Centre training, Apia, Samoa.



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