

Snapshots

DISASTER REDUCTION PROGRAMME

Snapshot 71

September 2011



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

It's hard to believe that we've already turned the corner on the midpoint of 2011 and will shortly be participating in the first annual meeting of the SOPAC Division – the newest within the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. We will have some interesting feedback for you following that meeting but that is for next month's edition.

This month we provide you with coverage on community level DRM training in Lau and Kadavu, Fiji, Pacific Disaster Net training in Samoa, support to Pitcairn Islands and initiatives. There is an article on aviation safety training that SOPAC/SPC supported in collaboration with the Association of South Pacific Airlines. This particular initiative has been on the cards since 2005 and we're pleased to be able to finally bring it to fruition.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Snapshots

Mosese Sikivou

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Initial Damage Assessment Training for Community Leaders in Lau and Kadavu

The SOPAC-based Pacific Disaster Risk Management (Training) Program (PDRMP) in collaboration with the Fiji National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) delivered Initial Damage Assessment (IDA) training for community leaders for two of Fiji's remote maritime provinces in Lau and Kadavu on July 27th and August 12th respectively. The training is part of an initiative by the Fiji NDMO to actively involve community leaders in post disaster assessments.

The participants were taken through the recently adopted IDA reporting format which covers the impacts of the disaster on people, dwelling houses, health and sanitation, food, access, communication and overall coping mechanisms.

For the Lau province a total of 80 participants from 13 islands in the province attended the training while for Kadavu a total of 45 participants from 6 districts and 19 government officials who are based in the province attended.

The outcomes of the training were:

- greater awareness of the Fiji disaster management system
- articulated the different levels of assessment
- confirmed the community leaders roles and responsibilities in damage assessment
- identified the hazards, impacts of disasters and potential mitigation measures for the two provinces ;
- walk through of the Initial Damage Assessment (IDA) assessment forms
- confirmed the collation process of the completed forms

The Fiji NDMO plans to continue the IDA training for community leaders in villages throughout Fiji later in the year.



Pacific Disaster Net country mission in Samoa

A 3 day “Pacific Disaster Net (PDN) - hands on” training was held from 30th August to 1st September, 2011 at the USP Alafua Campus in Apia. This was the second PDN country mission undertaken.

The training enabled participants to get a better understanding of PDN’s different functionalities and how to use the PDN content and the DRM information available. The training showed how participants can stay informed on disaster risk management issues using PDN and how to share relevant information within their departments and ministries.

For more images from the training in Samoa, please see:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/pacificdisasternet/SamoaPacificDisasterNetUserTraining300801092011>

With the support of the Samoa Disaster Management Office, the PDN team used the opportunity to meet with other Government agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders to brief them on PDN as well as to collect further content and information about Disaster Risk Management in Samoa for PDN.

Further discussions were held about the information management structure in the Disaster Management Office (DMO) and the new “Alerts! Information system”.



Samoa PDN User Training group photo.



Participant accessing Pacific Disaster Net during the training.

South Pacific Airlines participate in aviation safety workshop

SOPAC/SPC with funding made available by Emergency Management Australia supported the Association of South Pacific Airlines to organise an aviation safety workshop from 4th – 6th July 2011 for representatives from 9 regional carriers operating in 14 independent island states.

There are 21 International and over 400 domestic airports located in those island states. Fourteen (14) of these airports are directly linked to Australia, New Zealand, Asia and North America thus receiving international passengers either as visitors or on business trips.

The workshop was principally facilitated by Kenyon Emergency International a reputable privately owned business focusing on supporting airplane crash victims and their relatives. The firm possess comprehensive resources and experience for every type of aviation emergency. They were well supported by representatives from the Brisbane International Airport and South California University.

The Programme consisted of two days of theoretical training and sharing of experiences in terms of coping with actual events. These were experiences from the Airline industry as well as those managing airports and how they responded aviation emergencies. The third day involved a “live crash exercise” jointly organised by Airports Fiji Limited, Air Pacific and Air Terminal Services. As a result of the training the participants are better prepared to deal with aviation emergencies.



Aviation safety workshop group photo, Nadi.

Enhancing Tsunami Warning and Response in Vanuatu

In 2008, SOPAC in collaboration with the Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology conducted a capacity assessment of warning and mitigation systems in Vanuatu, which had identified the development of a Tsunami response plan as well as building strong capabilities as major priorities to respond to tsunami threats.

UNESCO-Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) and the SOPAC Division of SPC, with support from the International Tsunami Information Centre (ITIC) and Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre (PTWC), organised a Tsunami workshop and training course in Vanuatu from 12th - 16th September 2011, hosted by the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geohazards Department (VMGD) and National Disaster Management Office (NDMO).

The workshop for the preparation of a National Tsunami Support Plan was held on 12th September followed by training to “Strengthen Tsunami Early Warning and Response” from 13th - 15th September, which also covered the preparation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The overall aim was to strengthen the capacity of key stakeholders to respond to Tsunami hazard in a collaborative and coordinated way. The agencies that participated during the week included the NDMO, the VMGD, the Ministry Education, the Ministry of Internal Affairs – Provincial Affairs Department, the Ministry of Health, the Vanuatu Telecom Regulator, the Civil Aviation Authority of Vanuatu, Vanuatu Police Force, Vanuatu Radio, Radio FM107 and a faith based organisation (Holy Church of All Nations)

The workshop concluded with the preparation of a draft Vanuatu National Tsunami Support Plan which was presented to the participants on 16 September. Furthermore, a National Tsunami Working Group was established to take leadership on tsunami preparedness in Vanuatu including the finalization of the National Tsunami Support Plan in the next few months.



Participants of the workshop.

SPC and Pitcairn Islands join hands to secure reliable water supplies for Pitcairn Islanders

Pitcairn Islanders are experiencing longer, more severe periods of drought, as illustrated below. The effects can be devastating on many fronts, from crop production to drinking water consumption or fighting fires. Highly dependent on local water resources, the 48-strong population is fighting back, with the support of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).



School grounds – severe drought .



School grounds – normal conditions.

SOPAC/SPC's assistance follows a 10-day scoping mission to the island by SPC water and sanitation experts and falls under a comprehensive strategy to improve food and water security for the Pitcairn population. For the next 12 months, SOPAC/SPC will provide technical expertise and funding to support the Pitcairn Islands government to mitigate the risk of drought.



Governor of the Pitcairn Islands Victoria Treadell (right) signs the agreement as SPC representative Frédérique Lehoux looks on.

The objectives of this partnership are three-fold: (1) closely monitor the climate, the weather and water resources on the island; (2) utilise this knowledge to bolster the island's water catchment, storage, treatment and distribution capacity; and (3) enhance the island's water and meteorology governance arrangements.

This initiative falls under a larger regional project aimed at reducing disaster risk in Pacific overseas countries and territories, targeting Pitcairn Islands, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, and Wallis and Futuna. The project is managed by SPC's Applied Geoscience and Technology Division (SOPAC) and supported by the 9th European Development fund.



Workshop on Early Warning Communication Equipment in Papua New Guinea

A workshop focusing on strengthening early warning communication in Papua New Guinea (PNG) was held at the Lamana Hotel, Port Moresby on 31st August 2011. The workshop was well attended by key stakeholders involved in disaster management such as National Weather Service (NWS), Port Moresby Geophysical Observatory, National Disaster Centre, Police, Telecom PNG and others. Participants discussed important priority needs to enhance the capacity of the National Disaster Centre to disseminate early warnings to communities and receive information.

The Disaster Risk Reduction project (B-Envelope) funded by the European Union and implemented by the SOPAC Division, Secretariat of the Pacific Community has allocated approximately €900,000 to strengthen early warning communication in PNG. In their opening remarks Mr. Kay Beese of the Delegation of the European Commission in PNG and Mr. Martin Mose, Acting Director, National Disaster Centre, stressed the importance of disseminating timely and accurate warnings to the vulnerable remote communities to reduce the risk of damage to property and loss of human life. Project resources will focus on strengthening existing communication networks and link the National Disaster Centre with their Provincial Offices as well as support communication between key institutions such as Police, Provincial Officers, Fire Service, NWS etc. within the Provinces.

The Project Manager, George Beck, stated that a mix of technologies were recommended that included HF and VHF radios, VSAT and mobile phone SMS texting, chatty beetle, etc. Finalising and prioritising the communication list at the workshop was a big step forward which will now allow SOPAC to move ahead with procurement and installation. "It is important that the equipment is compatible with existing communication networks so we can extend coverage of PNG" said George Beck. The workshop was organised by the National Disaster Centre and facilitated by two consultants, Mr. Atunaisa Kaloumaira and Mr. Colin Schulz, who had undertaken a review of PNG's early warnings systems earlier this year which guided discussions.



Upcoming Events

- 28 – 30 September: MCDEM visit and consultations with Fiji based partners re: development of Competency Framework for the Pacific, Fiji
- 29 September: Training and Capacity Building (TCB) Working Group Meeting, Fiji
- 3 – 6 October: Grant Management Workshop for SOPAC with The Asia Foundation, Fiji
- 3 – 5 October: Introduction to Disaster Management course - PSC, Labasa, Fiji
- 12 – 14 October: Introduction to Disaster Management course, Port Vila, Vanuatu
- 17 – 28 October: The 7th International training Course on GIS for Disaster Risk Management (GIS4DRM-7), Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Bangkok, Thailand
- 24 – 28 October: Disaster Management workshop (incl aspects of damage assessment, emergency operations and exercises), Cook Islands
- 8 – 11 November: Introduction to Disaster Management course, Nauru
- 21 – 25 November: Disaster Risk Reduction training course development workshop, Fiji
- 28 November – 9 December: Introduction to Disaster Management and Emergency Operations Centres courses, Federated States of Micronesia



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