

# Snapshots

## DISASTER REDUCTION PROGRAMME

Snapshot 72

October 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

We have just completed the first annual meeting of the SOPAC Division of the SPC. Now no longer a separate regional intergovernmental organisation the former membership of the SOPAC Council as it was known up to 2010 was 'reconstituted' as the SOPAC Division Meeting. The meeting included the reporting of work programme delivery by each of the three SOPAC technical programme areas. Importantly, the meeting endorsed a process for the development of an integrated regional strategy for Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation by 2015. Such a strategy would succeed the existing Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action 2005 - 2015 and the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change 2006 - 2015. Ahead of us now is the challenge to implement the process that has been endorsed and we look to the guidance of all Pacific island countries and territories and the support of our partners like SPREP, UNISDR and others to realise the new policy instrument.

We have a number of interesting articles on our DRM activities in this edition and hope you enjoy them.

*Mosese Sikivou*

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# Federated States of Micronesia celebrates the International Day for Disaster Reduction

The International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR) is celebrated on 13th October each year. The day forms part of the global awareness campaign of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) System to raise awareness of disaster risk reduction, spark public interest and ultimately help prevent, reduce and minimise loss and damage from disasters.

This year's theme for IDDR focused on children and youth as enablers of disaster risk reduction allowing discussions and activities during the day to promote the role of children and youth in DRR and to advocate for greater support and information they need to become participants, decision makers and implementers in the DRR process.

UNISDR and the Applied Geoscience and Technology Division (SOPAC) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community invited Pacific Island Countries and Territories to join the commemoration of this year's IDDR in the Pacific region. The observation of awareness events on IDDR or during national awareness weeks has a long standing tradition in many countries. Countries that have received financial support from SOPAC/ SPC after making their submission were the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Niue and Papua New Guinea. It was the first time for the Federated States of Micronesia to celebrate this event.

The theme for this year's International Day for Disaster Reduction in the Federated States of Micronesia was "Making Communities resilient; My community is ready". The celebration was organised by the Disaster Risk Management Network (a network of government and NGO agencies that are working on disaster risk management programmes in the FSM). The celebration was held at the compound of International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

The event was officially opened by the Governor of Pohnpei State, Honourable John Ehser.



Oleen Poll at the joint booth of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Office for Environment and Emergency Management.



Group photo of the FSM DRM Partner Network at the celebration of the International Day of Disaster Reduction.

Key remarks were also delivered by the US Ambassador to the FSM Peter Prahar, the Director for the Office of Environment and Emergency Management (OEEM) Andrew Yatilman and the SPC North Pacific Regional Office Manager, Amena Yauvoli.

Mr. Yauvoli spoke about the risk of many people in Micronesia who are living in earthquake prone communities and many more that live in communities at risk from cyclones and other extreme weather events. “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 communities both in the urban and rural areas are already at risk”.

He stressed that it is important to make disaster risk reduction an integral part of development planning efforts. “SPC- through the 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”.

A total of 250 people, including the invited primary school students, attended the event.

The activities for the day ranged from booth displays by the organisation of the DRM Network, the screening of DRM documentaries/short films for school students, organised quizzes and games, safety/emergencies demonstrations and fun activities such as face painting for children. The general public were overwhelmed with the day’s activities, especially the students who walked away with a wealth of knowledge and information material about disaster risk management.

IOM and the DRM Network members extended their deep appreciation to SPC/SOPAC for co-sponsoring the event and also to the US Embassy and the FSM National Government for providing technical support. A special thanks were accorded as well to all the participating schools and the general public for turning up in big numbers to the event.

# Building Resilience to Drought in Nauru

The prevailing dry period affecting most of the Pacific small island States underscores the importance of water management and conservation. Nauru is taking steps to address vulnerability to drought with the construction of rain water catchments over all community tanks. Desalinated water is the predominant source of fresh water for potable use such as cooking, drinking etc. There are about forty five community tanks with 5,000 litre capacity distributed throughout Nauru with three tanks located in each community. The community tanks are filled from the desalination plant on a monthly basis at no charge to the community to provide clean water to the respective communities. Due to the high demand for potable water the community tanks are however empty for most of the month as most of them are not connected to any roof catchment.

The Disaster Risk Reduction Project (B Envelope) funded by the European Union is supporting the Government of Nauru to address water security by constructing water catchment sheds over all community tanks. This will ensure that they also capture rainwater and provide a more sustainable source of clean water for the communities.

The construction of the rainwater catchments is currently in progress and is scheduled to be completed in early December 2011. Construction work is being undertaken by Central Meridian Ltd. and will cost around AUD150,561. The Project Manager, George Beck, visited Nauru in early November and was impressed with the work in progress. He stated that despite some delays in importing building materials to Nauru work has progressed over the last couple of weeks. When they become operational with gutters placed on the roof catchments it will reduce the dependency on the desalinated plant during the wet season. The B-Envelope project will invest €500,000 into improving water security on Nauru. While these resources are not sufficient to address the water needs on Nauru it will provide a more sustainable solution to improving access to fresh water. The Government of Nauru is supporting implementation through supervision of construction work and providing technical advice on intervention initiatives.



# Countries prepare for Cyclone Season: Disaster Management Training for Vanuatu and Fiji

## Vanuatu

As part of preparations for the 2011/2012 cyclone season the Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) identified as a priority the need for training of newly appointed NDMO staff along with key personnel from the Ministry of Health, the Department of Environment and Climate Change, the Meteorological Services and the Fire Service.

“This training was important for us as we head into the cyclone season next month (November). Understanding the functions of the Vanuatu disaster management system, how it applies to the concepts of disaster management and the use of terminology with which to communicate are critical for our new NDMO staff to better perform their roles and carry out responsibilities along with personnel from other key agencies”, explained the new NDMO Director Mr. Shadrack Welegtabit during a pre-training meeting in Port Vila.

In her closing remarks the Director of the Pacific Disaster Risk Management Programme, Ms Kathryn Hawley, emphasised the concepts learned through the Introduction to Disaster Management (IDM) Course have provided greater understanding, terminology, and tools commonly used in disaster management and relevant to not only Vanuatu but across the Pacific. A number of courses have been delivered across the region. Many are adapted for national-specific training and implemented in up to fourteen Pacific countries. Hawley further added that the SPC-SOPAC Disaster Reduction Programme, which is the implementing partner for The Asia Foundation’s Pacific Disaster Risk Management (Training) Programme (PDRMP), provides critical support to its member countries to ensure disaster management offices optimise their institutional knowledge and networking capabilities.

“These are two critical areas that affect coordination during any disaster response and being key functions within the NDMOs, there is need for ongoing training and up-skilling of new as well as existing staff. In addition to the IDM course there is opportunity for additional skills development through other PDRMP courses for the Vanuatu NDMO and these will be addressed over the coming year. SPC-SOPAC and the Foundation look to work with the NDMO on their training and capacity building priorities, with requests being incorporated into our annual training calendar” she said.



Participants and facilitators of the Introduction to Disaster Management training course that was held in Port Vila from the 12th to the 14th of October.

## Fiji

During October the PDRMP provided ongoing support to the Fiji NDMO for Initial Damage Assessment (IDA) training. Village and community leaders from Macuata and Cakaudrove Province received training on Fiji's IDA process with practice on the use of the post disaster IDA reporting format. As well, the last of three scheduled Introduction to Disaster Management (IDM) courses offered through the Fiji Public Service Commission's (PSC) Centre for Training and Development (CTD) for 2011 was conducted in Fiji's Northern division. Twenty-two government officials successfully completed the IDM training in Labasa. During the course closing the Divisional Commissioner Northern, Lieutenant Colonel Ilai Moceica, stated that as officers representing key government departments in the division, his office looks to trained personnel to support operations when needed and particularly during cyclone seasons. Participants should use their new knowledge and skills to sensitise their respective department staff and assist preparation for greater coordination during operations, as and when needed.



A syndicate exercise during the last of three scheduled Introduction to Disaster Management courses offered through the Fiji Public Service Commission's Centre for Training and Development for 2011 that was conducted from the 5th to the 7th of October in the Northern division.

# Tuvalu Climate Change Summit embraces the Climate Change Policy and National Strategic Action Plan for CCA and DRM

The joint regional team of representatives from SPREP and SOPAC returned from Tuvalu after supporting the development of the Climate Change Policy and National Strategic Action Plan for CCA and DRM which was endorsed at the Climate Change Summit on September 30th. The Climate Change Summit is the first of its kind to be organised by the Government of Tuvalu.

The Summit was attended by over 250 participants comprising of community leaders from the nine (9) islands Niulakita, Nukulaelae, Funafuti, Nukufetau, Vaitupu, Niu, Nanumaga, Niutao and Nanumea; Tuvalu High Commissioners and Consulates; members of Parliament; church leaders, representatives from NGOs and civil servants.

The following seven goals of the climate change policy were endorsed in form of a communiqué and signed at the end of the summit.

- Strengthening Adaptation Actions to Address Current and Future Vulnerabilities.
- Improving Understanding and Application of Climate Change Data, Information and Site Specific Impacts Assessment to Inform Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction Programmes.
- Enhancing Tuvalu's Governance Arrangements and Capacity to Access and Manage Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management Finances.
- Developing and Maintaining Tuvalu's Infrastructures to Withstand Climate Change Impacts, Climate Variability, Disaster Risks and Climate Change Projection.
- Ensuring Energy Security and a Low Carbon Future for Tuvalu.
- Planning for Effective Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery.
- Guaranteeing the Security of the People of Tuvalu from the Impacts of Climate Change and the Maintenance of National Sovereignty.

These seven goals are also the foundation of the National Strategic Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management which will be tabled together with the Climate Change Policy for cabinet's endorsement.



Pepetua of the Department of Environment facilitating a session at the CC Summit



# Information from DRM events is now uploaded in Pacific Disaster Net

Presentations, outcome statements and other information from the recent events on disaster risk management in the region have been uploaded in PDN and include:

- 3rd Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management 2011, Auckland, New Zealand, 1 - 5 August 2011
- Pacific Humanitarian Information in Disasters Training, Suva, Fiji, 26-30 September 2011, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- Regional Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) Workshop, Holiday Inn Hotel, Suva, Fiji, 17 - 21 October 2011
- STAR (SOPAC's Science, Technology and Resources Network, 17 - 21 October 2011), Nadi, Fiji

Links to the documents can be found via the Navigation tab as shown in the screen shot below -



The screenshot shows the Pacific Disaster Net website interface. On the left, the 'Navigation' tab is active, and the 'Meeting/Conferences' section is expanded to show the year 2011. The '3rd Pacific Platform' link is highlighted with a red box and a red arrow pointing to the main content area. The main content area displays a 'Table of Contents' for the '3rd Pacific Platform - Meeting/Conference (15)'. Below the table of contents, there are filters for 'Select Topic', 'Select Country', and 'Select Organisation', along with 'Filter' and 'Reset' buttons. The description for the '3rd Pacific Platform' is visible at the bottom of the table of contents.

Id	Title	Year
7029	Second announcement : 3rd session of the Pacific platform for disaster risk	2011
7232	Major meeting on disaster reduction for the Pacific region	2011
7238	3rd Session of the Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management	2011
7239	Opening Address : 3rd Session of the Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Man	2011
7240	3rd Session of the Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management : Message	2011
7241	[Christchurch Earthquake 2011: New Zealand's Response]	2011
7242	Natural Hazards Unnatural disasters : the economics of effective prevention	2011
7243	Entry points for mainstreaming DRR and CC into development : setting the	2011
7244	The Cook Islands experience : integrating disaster risk management and cl	2011
7245	Session 4 : mainstreaming DRM in the education sector ; Pacific Platform for	2011
7246	Building Resilience to disasters and climate change through inclusive and inl	2011
7247	A phased approach to mainstreaming climate change adaptation and disast	2011

**3rd Pacific Platform - Description**  
**Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management 2011, Auckland, New Zealand, 1 - 5 August 2011**

The links for documents from the Pacific Platform are as well accessible in a collection which can be downloaded from [http://www.pacificdisaster.net/dox/pp\\_2011.pdf](http://www.pacificdisaster.net/dox/pp_2011.pdf).

For enquiries please contact [jutta@sopac.org](mailto:jutta@sopac.org).

# Training on Resilient Recovery

In October 2011, the International Recovery Platform (IRP) hosted a regional training session on Resilient Recovery. Participants attending the training in Incheon, Korea came from several regional agencies including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) for Korea, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Applied Geoscience and Technology Division (SOPAC) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). The training was aimed at building critical mass of professionals orientated towards resilient recovery and enhancing capacity to minimize the impacts of future disasters in the Asia Pacific region.

Large scale natural disasters can overwhelm the capacity of Governments to effectively recover. Past experiences such as the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011, the Haiti Earthquake of January 12th, 2010 and the flooding of Pakistan in 2010 have clearly illustrated the need to improve capacity in disaster response and recovery.

The training used a case study based approach incorporating experience from past disasters and using the lessons learned from these examples to try to address a theoretical scenario. This training is to be expected to be incorporated in to the Damage, Loss and Needs Assessment training which will be provided in the Pacific during 2012.



Working Group at Resilient Recovery Incheon, Korea.

# Upcoming Events

- 7 – 9 November: Emergency Operations Centres (EOC) refresher training, Fiji Eastern Division
- 6 – 16 November: Consultations on SPC-SOPAC Disaster Risk Management support to the Republic of Nauru through DRM Mainstreaming and supporting activities, Nauru
- 8 – 10 November: Introduction to Disaster Management (IDM) training – Nauru
- 14 – 19 November: Second annual partners' meeting "Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction in Pacific Overseas Countries and Territories" Project, followed by regional exchanges in the areas of 'water and sanitation' and 'disaster risk management', Fiji
- 18 November: Workshop to review Samoa National Tsunami Early Warning System, Samoa.
- 19 – 26 November: Consultations on Vanuatu's Disaster Risk Management Action Plan and review progress to date and to develop a Country Implementation Plan for Vanuatu, Vanuatu
- 22 – 26 November: Develop a package of assistance for Disaster Risk Management with the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), Solomon Islands



Postal Address: Private Mail Bag, GPO, Suva, Fiji Islands  
Street Address: Mead Road, Nabua, Fiji Islands  
Tel: +679 338 1377 Fax: +679 337 0040  
E-mail: [s.zoll@sopac.org](mailto:s.zoll@sopac.org)  
Web site: [www.sopac.org](http://www.sopac.org)