

Flood alert system now installed in Rewa River

Written by Administrator

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With the continued danger of flooding from the Rewa River, SOPAC, through its **Pacific HYCOS** project has funded the installation of an 'upgraded' **Flood Forecasting and Warning** system to provide adequate time for those living downstream to take necessary precautions.

Flooding is an ongoing danger affecting Fiji with an average of 10 casualties and close to \$20 million in direct damage every year to infrastructure, agriculture and homes; it also is a major interruption to, transportation and inland communications as well as tourism that was seriously affected in 2008, according to HYCOS Project Coordinator Llyod Smith.

He said that while warnings cannot stop floods, they would allow residents, businesses and government services to evacuate families, staff and assets to higher levels thereby reducing risk and potential damages.

The project implemented by the Fiji's National Hydrological Service housed at the Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) and SOPAC was funded by the European Union Water Facility for nearly a half million dollars.

"In 1986 a warning system was first introduced into the river that had operated reliably, but in recent years the age of the technology and hardware caused problems and the system was no longer operative.

"The upgraded system can now measure the catchment rainfalls, river levels and river flows, allowing for more exact flood warning forecasting based on prior information," he said. A similar warning system was also installed in the Navua River in 2007."

He said that this is part of an ongoing integrated flood management plan initiative of Fiji

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Government and National Disaster Management Office that aims to provide warning services to population centres of the four major rivers in Viti Levu: the Rewa and Navua, which now have upgraded systems installed, and the Ba and Nadi river basins to come on line shortly.

The upgraded Rewa Flood Forecasting and Warning System is made up of a fully automated, VHF radio, water level and rainfall recording stations, that are connected to a base station at the WAF Office at Wailoku in Suva.

A secondary base is located at the Nadi Fiji Meteorology Service Office that operates around the clock. According to predefined flood levels, alerts and warnings will be provided to emergency agencies and the general public.



Caption: SOPAC and Water Authority of Fiji takes measurements in the Rewa River with a Current Flow Metre, a part of the Rewa Flood Forecasting