

SOPAC reviews disaster risk management in Kiribati

Written by Administrator

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SOPAC is carrying out a review of the Kiribati national disaster risk management governance arrangements following a request from the Office of the President.

SOPAC provides assistance to 19 countries and territories in the Pacific region through applied geoscience and technology.

A major part of the review was a three-day workshop attended by 29 participants from Government ministries, Non-Government (NGOs) as well as church organizations that was held in Tarawa recently.

The review was started in June of this year and is expected to be completed in December at which time the revised national disaster risk management governance arrangements will begin to be implemented and the Kiribati National Disaster Management Office business plan will be finalized.

According to Noa Tokavou, SOPAC Disaster Management Advisor, the workshop offered “a unique opportunity and provided a useful insight into the current climate change adaptation measures as well as the overall risk management initiatives being adopted by the Government of Kiribati.”

The importance of the review was illustrated when workshop participants reaffirmed the primary dangers now facing the country included rising sea level, drought, fire, storm surges, loss at sea, and pandemic/epidemics. They also agreed in principle to the following:

- Hazards with a reduced likelihood but with significant consequences were listed as: tsunamis, oil spills, plane crashes.
- Disaster risk management roles and responsibilities need to be clearly articulated, in detail, within the revised governance arrangements.
- Individual agency support plans (drawn from the national plan) should be prepared.
- A strategic approach is required to government and community training and awareness in

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disaster risk management and emergency response management

- Support is essential including by the workshop participants through their individual agencies to advocate for the revised national disaster risk proposals.
- The collection and collation of data with the potential to forecast the frequency and severity of conditions that may give rise to disaster events is essential.
- The organisation of single and multi agency exercises to improve capability and planning effectiveness for disaster events is needed.



CAPTION: High wave event on a coastal area in Kiribati in 2007 (Library photo)