

Snapshots

DISASTER REDUCTION PROGRAMME

Snapshot 69

May 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

The Pacific delegation had a strong representation at the 2001 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction which was held in Geneva, Switzerland from 8th – 13th May. In this issue we provide you with a few of the country statements that were presented at the Platform.

On the 'home front' the work on Joint National Action Plans for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management (JNAP) continue to gain momentum. Recently, the initial request from Tuvalu for SOPAC and SPREP support to develop a Climate Change Policy has blossomed into a full blown JNAP exercise. We have the latest on this and other happenings within.

Enjoy!

Mosese Sikivou

IN THIS ISSUE

- Excerpts of country statements delivered at the 3rd Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, Geneva, Switzerland 8-13 May 2011
- SPC and Wallis and Futuna cooperate to reduce the risk of natural disasters
- Weather Equipment for PNG National Weather Service
- Disaster Management training continued for town planners and municipal authorities in Fiji
- Completion of topography and bathymetry data collection in Nuku'alofa, Tonga
- Tuvalu embarks on development of National Climate Change Policy and Joint National Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management
- Emergency Operations Centers and Disaster Management training for police officers and emergency services personnel in Samoa
- Upcoming Events

Excerpts of country statements delivered at the 3rd Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, Geneva, Switzerland 8 – 13 May 2011

Fiji

Delivered by Manasa Vaniqi, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Rural Development and Sugar

"...Fiji's main institutional framework the Act and the Arrangement are now under review. The New Disaster Risk Management Arrangement has been completed and now ready for adoption. The accompanying Act however, is undergoing the final legal procession for adoption. The review identified other areas for consideration before the Disaster Act is tabled for adoption. This is noted and considered for the Act before it is finally adopted. The review noted that the Arrangement and the Act have suitably addressed the response and recovery phases of disasters DRR is not particularly shown or significantly covered. This is a big challenge for us. Adequate institutional framework must be provided so that certain procedures and processes for DRR can be prioritized for the next five years. A national platform or action plan particularly for DRR and Climate Change must be put in place.

For Hazards that affect Fiji, the most developed in terms of early warning and the most tested is cyclone. This is also true in terms of preparedness and response. Two of the main reasons could be the annual occurrence of cyclones and the frequency of testings its response plan go through. The other is the location of the Regional Weather Forecasting Station in Fiji. This is not the same with other hazards. We have capacities for Flood, earthquake, tsunamis and landslides; the agencies that look after them need further support and assistance to carry out their roles effectively. The SOPAC is assisting Fiji on technical grounds and other assistance available from other donors..."

Download: http://www.pacificdisaster.net/pdnadmin/data/original/GPDRR_FJI_2011_statement.pdf

TONGA

Delivered by Ms Luisa Tuiafitu Malolo, Coordinator for the Second National Communication on Climate Change project, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Tonga

"...One of the key milestones and an important step forward for Tonga is the development of its Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management. In Tonga, we have explored the linkages between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. They both focus on the same underlying aim and that is to reduce vulnerability and risk and to enhance resilience to the impacts of climate change and natural hazards.

Tonga is the first country in the Pacific region to develop this joint plan and keen to be the first to fully implement this initiative. This plan is consistent with national, regional and international policy drivers, agreements and frameworks on climate change and disaster risk management, and specifically the Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action 2005-2015 and the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change 2006-2015. Tonga is pleased to have paved the way for other countries in the Pacific and also acknowledge that some countries in the Pacific are currently developing their Joint Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management Action Plan, including the Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia and Niue.

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, the National Emergency Management Office, and the national multi-disciplinary teams for climate change adaptation and disaster risk management played the key role in

developing this plan in Tonga. Special gratitude is offered to the Applied Geoscience & Technology Division (SOPAC) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and also the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) joint team for providing professional and technical assistance throughout the development of this plan. Tonga is indeed fortunate to have experts in the country with the required skills and expertise to carry out this important task. This was a valuable exercise as it enhanced the technical capacities of the nationals. It also reduces Tonga's highly dependence on international consultants. Utilizing the resources already available in country and the organizations in the Pacific region to carry out this task is a cost-effective mechanism..."

Download: http://www.pacificdisaster.net/pdnadmin/data/original/GPDRR_TON_2011_statement.pdf

Solomon Islands

Delivered by Loti Yates, Director National Disaster Management Office, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology

“...Our experience with DRR and CCA programmes over recent years has been the relative isolation of the NDMO, the nominal engagement of Government and ad hoc externally driven initiatives in a handful of our 8000+ villages. These initiatives have had little cohesion and have had only localised impacts with no means to support on-going activity.

Our response to the 2007 tsunami, affecting 540 of our villages, was limited by our lack of resources and inability to co-ordinate with other agencies - resulting in a largely externally managed process. For the first three years of recovery there was broad disengagement of our Government which ultimately limited external support. In some places temporary camps have today become semi-permanent displaced settlements. For CCA there has been ten years of talk and externally driven reports which have yet to materialise in significant ‘on the ground’ initiatives.

All of this sat in a poorly developed governance structure from the 1980’s and the widely held external perception that there are ‘issues with absorptive capacity’ which constrain internal programmes...”

Download: http://www.pacificdisaster.net/pdnadmin/data/original/GPDRR_SLB_2011_globalplatformcountrystate.pdf

Kiribati

Delivered by Michael Foon, Policy Officer, Disaster Risk Management, Strategic Risk Management Unit, Office of Te Beretitenti

“...Living on small, scattered and isolated islands poses many challenges, the extremely fragile environment and narrow resource base we depend on means that we are constantly faced with risk on a day to day basis. Kiribati is extremely vulnerable to climate Induced hazards.

Increasingly, communities in Kiribati are being affected by coastal erosion and sea water inundation, and have been calling on government to help them to relocate to unaffected sites.

Strengthening disaster risk management and mainstreaming both DRR and climate change adaptation into national planning has been the focus of our government activities in the last two years. To realize this, the Government of Kiribati had set up a National Policy Unit within the Office of the President in late 2009 with primary focus on oversight and coordination of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction activities among the various stakeholders in country.

Undertakings to review DRM arrangement and developing a national action plan for disaster risk management are reaching their final stages and it is a matter of months before this is finalized and endorse for implementation. Please allow me to thank the Applied Geoscience & Technology Division (SOPAC) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) for the unrelenting support given to this initiative.

For the future we see that there are more opportunities to combine our efforts in climate change adaptation with those for DRM. We acknowledge that there is now a greater emphasis for integrated approaches to dealing with risks posed by natural hazards and have witnessed the escalation of efforts in the Pacific island countries in this regard. We in Kiribati see the merit in doing likewise and have embarked on setting, what we believe to be the foundation of similar undertakings in future...”

Download: http://www.pacificdisaster.net/pdnadmin/data/original/GPDRR_KIR_2011_statement.pdf

Vanuatu

Delivered by Peter Korisa, Research and Planning Officer, National Disaster Management Office

“...Vanuatu has made some key achievements in the Disaster Risk Management arena we were the first country in the Pacific region to develop a National Action Plan (NAP) for Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management (DRR-DM). The NAP was developed in 2005 and endorsed by Vanuatu’s Council of Ministers in 2006. It builds upon the Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action (2005 – 2015) and the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005-2015).

The development of the NAP has helped to demonstrate the importance of DRR-DM as a multi-stakeholder and cross-cutting development issue, establishing appropriate institutional and legal frameworks, and mainstreaming consideration of DRR-DM into all development programs, sector plans and budgets. As a result in the past year Vanuatu has had significant successes in mainstreaming DRM in to the planning and budgetary processes. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Management has been fully supportive of incorporating risk assessments in to the new policy proposal process. This will be done in order to encourage sectors to recognize disasters as an issue for development. In addition to this the reporting process for the National budget is also being modified in an attempt to make investments in DRR and DM more visible.

There have been discussions in country relating to the potential for the merger of the Vanuatu National Advisory Committee on Climate Change (NACCC) with the NAP Task Force and also the development of a joint set of implementation arrangements/ plans for the NAP, the National Action Plan for Adaptation and Climate Change Policy. Both the NDMO and the Department of Meteorological Services are highly supportive of the integration.

These initiatives would not have been possible without the support from regional and multilateral partners, without them, we as small and vulnerable countries would not be able to deal with the increasing risks that are now being compounded by the impacts of climate change. Please allow me to thank the Applied Geoscience & Technology Division (SOPAC) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) for their unrelenting support...”

Download: http://www.pacificdisaster.net/pdnadmin/data/original/GPDRR_VUT_2011_statement.pdf

Cook Islands

Delivered by Elizabeth Wright-Koteka, Director Central Policy and Planning Office of the Prime Minister

“...Let me stress that the Cook Islands is very serious about Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation. We are developing a Joint National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation. This will be further operationalised through Community level action plans.

Both Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change are now under the auspice of the Office of Prime Minister reflecting the priority now placed on Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change.

Our Government is also currently strengthening existing and developing more robust Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation Policies supported by stronger legislation and governance structures.

The Cook Islands Cabinet, as of last week, committed to the establishment of a Disaster Risk Management Trust Fund by pledging \$260,000 from our national budget to begin the fund. The policies governing the fund dictate that funding cannot be used for any other purposes but disaster risk management including adaptation to climate change. It is our Government’s hope that this Fund will serve to mobilise both national and external investments targeting the building of resilience in our communities...”

Download: http://www.pacificdisaster.net/pdnadmin/data/original/GPDRR_COK_2011_officialstatement.pdf

SPC and Wallis and Futuna cooperate to reduce the risk of natural disasters

Through the project 'Reducing Disaster Risk in Pacific Overseas Countries and Territories', SPC's Applied Geoscience and Technology Division (SOPAC) will, for the first time, extend its support to Wallis and Futuna. The French territory, highly exposed to natural disaster risk, will receive SOPAC technical expertise and funding to enhance its knowledge of risks and improve its preparedness to disasters.

A signing ceremony took place on 17 May in Mataa' Utu, bringing together the European Union, SPC, and the Administration Supérieure (Office of the Chief Administrator for the territory of Wallis and Futuna).

The agreement worth €387,000 will support Wallis and Futuna in enhancing the safety of its people and infrastructure in the face of natural disasters, particularly tsunamis. The island of Futuna is highly exposed to tsunamis.

SOPAC will partner with NIWA (New Zealand's National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Research) to develop a range of realistic tsunami models, thereby allowing Wallis and Futuna to focus its efforts on the most vulnerable zones. Through the acquisition of complementary telecommunication equipment and the training of its response teams, Wallis and Futuna will seek to enhance its preparedness to extreme events. This initiative will also reach vulnerable communities through improved information on natural disaster risk and the rehabilitation of evacuation routes and zones.



Island of Wallis.



EU Ambassador to the Pacific Wiepke van der Goot (seated, left) looks on as Michel Jeanjean, Préfet/Chief Administrator of Wallis and Futuna (center) and SPC Deputy Director-General Richard Mann (right) sign the agreement.

While these activities will take place locally, Wallis and Futuna will also benefit from the regional exchanges facilitated by SOPAC, enabling the territory to share and access knowledge and expertise throughout the Pacific in disaster risk mitigation, preparedness and response.

The agreement between SPC and Wallis and Futuna falls under a larger regional project aimed at reducing disaster risk in Pacific overseas countries and territories, thereby benefiting New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna and Pitcairn Islands. The project is managed by SOPAC and funded by the European Development Fund.

Weather Equipment for PNG National Weather Service

Five Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) and twenty data logging rain gauges were supplied to the PNG National Weather Service (NWS) which will enhance the capacity to monitor weather patterns. This was made possible through the EU funded Disaster Risk Reduction (B-Envelope) project implemented by the Applied Science and Technology Division (SOPAC) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

The focus of the project in PNG is to strengthen early warning systems with €3 million allocated under the project for new equipment. The project is working with a number of key stakeholders such as the National Disaster Centre and the Port Moresby Geophysical Observatory, to strengthen their capacity to respond to natural hazards. The five AWSs will be installed at Buka Airport (Bougainville), Misima Airport (Milne Bay), Lablab (Siasi Island), Aiyura and Tambul (Highlands) with the data logging rain gauges to be installed in all Provinces. Installation of the AWS at Misima is completed with other sites to follow. The new equipment will provide real time information on temperature, wind speed, wind direction, humidity and rainfall. The new equipment was supplied by Vaisala Pty. Ltd. who also trained PNG NWS staff on installation and maintenance at a cost of around US\$250,000.

The Acting Director of the PNG NWS, Sam Maiha, stated that the AWS's and data logging rain gauges will improve the capacity of NWS to provide information to the public on cyclones and flooding. "The Highlands region is important with agriculture being a main source of income so we closely monitor weather patterns. The AWS's located along the coast at Misima and Siasi Island will provide better marine forecast particularly the winds through Vitiaz Strait". He added that the new equipment compliments the existing infrastructure which will result in a better service to the PNG people.

SPC and the Government of PNG acknowledges the important contribution of the European Union in providing assistance to strengthen early warning systems in PNG



Automatic weather station being installed in PNG.



Disaster Management training continued for town planners and municipal authorities in Fiji

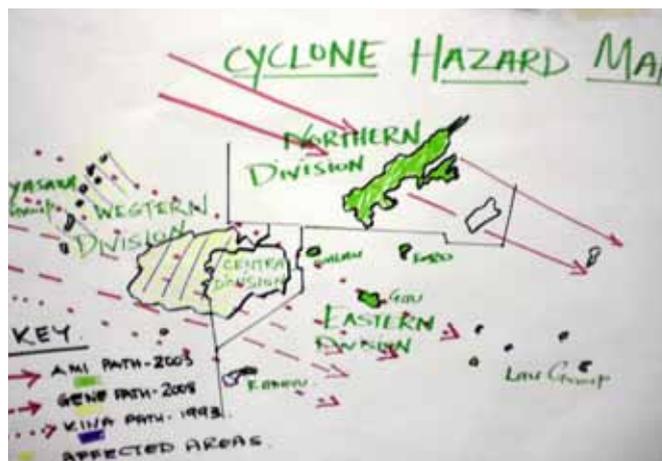
Town planners and key officials from local municipal authorities and relevant agencies in Fiji are currently the target group for disaster management training being organised by the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO). In line with the theme of 'preparing cities and towns for disasters', the Ministry of Provincial Development, Disaster Management and Sugar has been coordinating with key disaster management professionals in Fiji to promote greater awareness of risk reduction through enhanced training for municipalities. With support from the SPC Applied Geoscience & Technology Division (SOPAC) Pacific Disaster Risk Management Programme (PDRMP) the NDMO has been able to carry out a series of disaster management trainings for local government officials in the major districts of Fiji.

"Our intention is to conduct disaster management training courses for all registered municipal authorities in Fiji along with their respective local stakeholders. So far, we have completed three of the four planned training courses that we scheduled for 2011. The Introduction to Disaster Management training courses aim to introduce to the municipalities the concepts of disaster management for mainstreaming into development planning. Knowledge and skills gained from this course will help town planners to make better, more informed decisions as often poor development planning can exacerbate the impacts of disasters on our communities", the Director NDMO, Mr. Pajiali Dobui adds.

A national training team consisting of experienced DM facilitators from a number of agencies (i.e. Ministry of Finance, Public Service Commission, SOPAC, Pacific Community focused Integrated Disaster Risk Reduction) is expected to complete the final round off the disaster management training for municipal officers in the Northern Division in early June.



Group work at the Disaster Management Training.



A cyclone hazard map developed by the participants of the Disaster Management Training.

Completion of topography and bathymetry data collection in Nuku'alofa, Tonga

The Applied Geoscience and Technology Division (SOPAC) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in partnership with Geoscience Australia (GA) has been working on the AusAid funded project named "Capacity building for Tsunami risk assessment in the South West Pacific". Achievements in earlier phases of this project highlighted Tongatapu's high exposure to tsunamigenic earthquake event, and the lack of baseline data for Tongatapu to accurately investigate possible tsunami impact. The present phase of this project is a deeper investigation of Tongatapu's tsunami threat which starts with the acquisition of better baseline data.

This mission included 3 weeks topography survey of Nuku'alofa and potential evacuation routes to higher ground using real-time kinematic Global Positioning System. It also included collection of multi-beam bathymetry sounding data offshore to fill data gaps on the reef and beyond it to the north-east of Nuku'alofa. A Fiji vessel was hired to carry SOPAC's equipment to provide a cost- and time-effective solution to the bathymetry survey. The critical issues for tsunami modelling in this area are the location and depth of the reef edge and the gradient of the reef slope. The offshore or bathymetric component of this project was completed over 38 days which was interrupted briefly by TC Bune.

A total of 1000 nautical miles of multi-beam data was collected by the Ocean and Island Programme team lead by Senior Advisor of marine geophysics Robert Smith. The survey used a RESON 8101 multi-beam sounder and for positioning the Differential Global Positioning System marine star service was used with great success. The improved terrain model of Tongatapu will be used in a numerical modelling approach to produce a set of tsunami inundation maps for Nuku'alofa suitable for use in evacuation planning

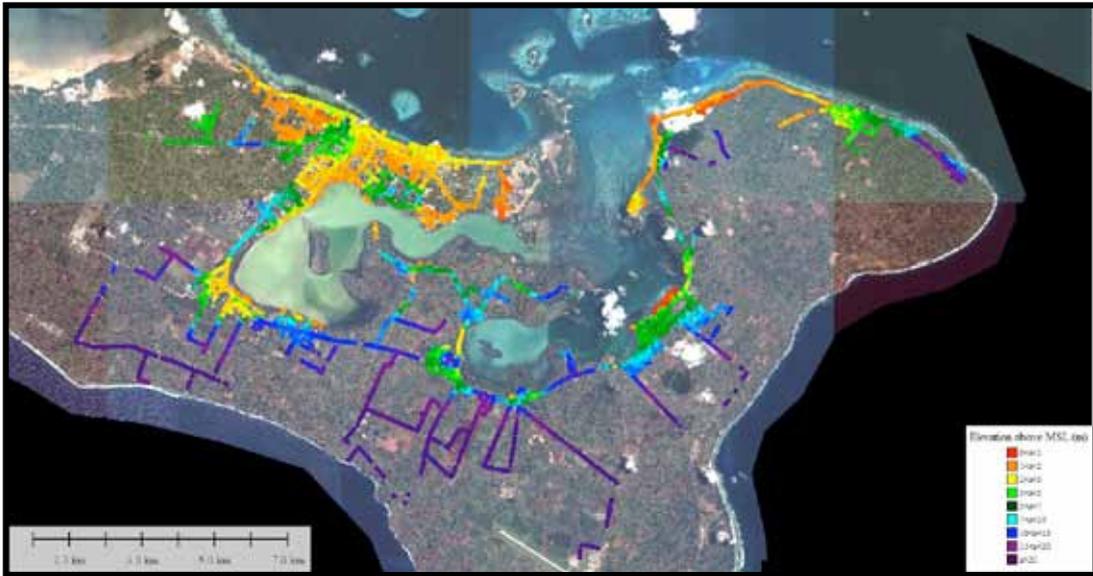
If successful, the work undertaken as part of this phase will be used as a pilot for possible tsunami impact assessment in other member countries.



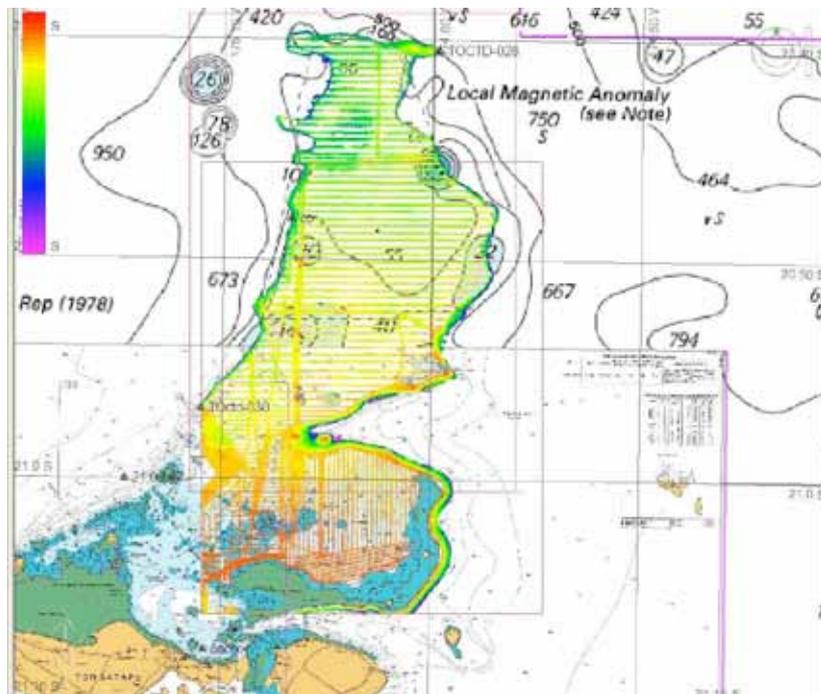
Setting up the Base Station for Real Time Kinematic survey.



Placing of Radio antenna on towers to get wide radio signal coverage.



Shows coverage of Real Time Kinematic data collected in Tongatapu.



A total of 1000 nautical miles of multi-beam data was collected with RESON 8101 multi-beam sounder.

Tuvalu embarks on development of National Climate Change Policy and Joint National Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management

Responding to a request from the Government of Tuvalu, a joint team from the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) SOPAC Division has completed a mission in Funafuti from 10th – 19th May to commence the process of developing a Tuvalu Climate Change Policy and Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management.

The request is in line with the Strategic Priority 7 of the Te Kakeega II, Tuvalu's National Strategy for Sustainable Development, 2005-2015 which was reviewed in 2008.

Tuvalu's Director of Environment, Mataio Tekinene in his opening statement in a stakeholder workshop said, "Climate change is a development and cross-cutting issue, impacting all sectors and at all levels. He added that all stakeholders will be relied upon in the coming months to realise the Government's intention to have a CC Policy and JNAP by October of 2011".

The process to developing a CC Policy and JNAP will be led by a Tuvaluan National Expert Team consisting of members from the Tuvalu Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) Steering Committee, the National Disaster Council and the Tuvalu National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) Steering Committee.

The joint regional team supporting Tuvalu include SPREP's Dr Pelesikoti, Sustainable Development Adviser Sefanaia Nawadra, Environment Officer Tepa Suaesi, Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) Project Officer Peniamina Leavai and PACC Communications Coordinator Setaita Tavanabola. Noa Tokavou, Disaster Management Adviser is the contribution to the effort from the SPC/SOPAC Disaster Risk Reduction Programme.



Community representatives participating in the situation analysis phase of the development of Climate Change Policy.



Participants discussion during the workshop with the Expert Team.

Emergency Operations Centers and Disaster Management training for police officers and emergency services personnel in Samoa

Police officers from Cook Islands, Niue and Vanuatu joined fellow law enforcement officers and other emergency services personnel in Samoa for an eight-day training on disaster management and emergency operations centres organised through the Samoan Disaster Management Office (DMO) and Ministry of Police by the Australia Federal Police.

In line with the regional Pacific Disaster Risk Management (Training) Programme's aim of reducing vulnerability of Pacific Island communities to disaster by building sustainable regional, national, and community level disaster management capacity through enhanced training, improved advocacy, and strengthened local institutions, the training set out to equip the course participants with necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to fulfil their assigned roles in disaster management. The courses also provided opportunity for participants to learn from each other through the sharing of knowledge and experience from recent disaster events they responded to in their countries: the 2009 tsunami in Samoa, multiple cyclones in Cook Islands in 2005, and volcano threats in Vanuatu 2010 – 2011.

This training is part of a series of disaster management courses (Introduction to Disaster Management (IDM), Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) and Exercise Management (ExMan)) being implemented for Samoa Police and emergency services under the auspices of the Australian Federal Police, The Asia Foundation and SOPAC's PDRMP. Trainers were drawn from the Pacific regional cadre of instructors developed through PDRMP over the years. For this series the regional facilitators were from Fiji, Samoa, and Vanuatu.



Images from the Emergency Operations Centers and Disaster Management Training in Samoa.

Upcoming Events

- 30 May: Technical Meeting on the Joint SOPAC/ADB/WB Initiative on Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing, Fiji.
- 31 May: Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing - Demonstration to Pacific DRM Partnership, Fiji.
- Early June (dates to be confirmed): Signing of disaster risk reduction agreements between SPC and the Pitcairn Islands government.
- 7 – 9 June: Introduction to Disaster Management Training for Northern Division Municipalise, Fiji.
- 8 June: Launch of Tender for construction of national Emergency Operation.
- 27 June – 1 July: Vector Surveillance Training, Tonga.
- 4 – 7 July: Aviation Emergency Training and Exercise, Nadi, Fiji.
- 29 June – 6 July: Nauru DRM NAP mission.
- 19 – 28 July: Climate Change Policy/ JNAP prioritisation, Tuvalu.
- 29 July: Official opening of new Emergency Operation Centre in Chuuk, FSM.
- 25 July: Official opening of new Emergency Operation Centre Kosrae, FSM.
- 27 July: Official opening of new Emergency Operation Centre Pohnpei State, FSM.
- 5 August: Official opening of new Emergency Operation Centre in Palau.



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