

PACIFIC ISLANDS REPORT

*Pacific Islands Development Program/East-West Center
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PALAU WORKING ON NEW DISASTER PLAN

Planners seek better assessment of vulnerability

By Cherrie Anne E. Villahermosa

KOROR (Palau Horizon, Nov. 18, 2009) - Palau is now working on a new disaster plan to replace the existing National Disaster Plan 1999 and to improve disaster risk management.

The Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) is currently providing support to the National Emergency Management Office with regards to the drafting of the new plan.

The new plan has been designated as the Palau National Disaster Risk Management Framework 2009. It is in its final draft form and will be presented to the National Emergency Committee before the end of the year.

Moses Sikivou, Manager of the Community Risk Programme for SOPAC said that the new disaster plan articulates institutional arrangements at national level to support improved disaster risk management. The new arrangements will hopefully provide Palau with better and more effective platform to address issues in relation to the vulnerability of Palau's communities to hazards and disasters.

Sikivou said the new institutional arrangements reflect the growing commitment stems in a large part from earlier commitments made in national development policies and as well as those that government has made at a regional level within the Pacific.

National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) Coordinator Alonzo Kyota in an interview said that Palau is grateful to SOPAC for the support it has provided over the course of 2008 and 2009 in assisting firstly with the review of the Palau National Disaster Plan 1999 and then developing the draft of the new plan.

SOPAC is now assisting NEMO to identify priorities under the new plan that can be implemented within a three-year timeframe.

The National Emergency Committee under the chairmanship of Vice President Kerai Mariur appointed a special subcommittee to work with SOPAC to develop a new disaster plan. The subcommittee includes representatives from both government and non government organizations.

Representatives from NEMO, Office of the Attorney General, Bureau of Public Safety, Public Works, Foreign Affairs, Domestic Affairs, Red Cross, Environmental Quality Protection Board, Ministry of Health, airport and the Palau National Communication Corporation (PNCC) conducted a meeting last Thursday for the final drafting of the new plan.

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