



15th Regional Disaster Managers Meeting

Summary Record

*Adopted by Regional Disaster Managers
at the
15th Regional Disaster Managers Meeting
Nadi, Fiji
7th - 8th May 2009*

1. The 15th Regional Disaster Managers Meeting was convened in Nadi the 7th to 8th May 2009 chaired by the Cook Islands. The theme of the meeting was *Strengthening NDMO Capacity for Improved Disaster Risk Management*. Meeting objectives were to:
 - review progress since the 14th Regional Disaster Managers Meeting;
 - understand the focus of the SOPAC Community Risk Programme's Work Programme for 2009;
 - identify key national Disaster Risk Management (DRM) issues for consideration by Regional Meteorological Service Directors, regional and international partner organizations and Pacific CEOs for Disaster Management and Finance/Planning;
 - increase understanding of the National Action Plan (NAP) guidelines and the specific roles and responsibilities of the National Disaster Management Offices (NDMOs) in leading the NAP exercises;
 - develop a hands-on understanding of the online reporting system for the Regional Framework for Action;
 - develop a hands-on understanding of the Pacific Disaster Net and how to harness its capabilities to enhance capacities within NDMOs;
 - increase understanding of and commitment to training and capacity building initiatives through 2009 and beyond;
 - update the role and functions of the Pacific Platform for DRM and discuss the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).
2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu. Apologies were noted from American Samoa, Australia, Guam, Nauru, Niue and Vanuatu. The participants stressed the importance of the annual Regional Disasters Managers' Meeting and encouraged the participation of all NDMOs, or their representatives, to ensure all countries benefit from the resources and tools delivered and the sharing of lessons learned during the meetings.
3. The meeting was organised by the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) with the support of The Asia Foundation/USAID-Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (TAF/OFDA), the Pacific Sub Regional office of the Secretariat for the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and United Nations Development Programme – Pacific Centre (UNDP-PC). A full list of attendees is in **Annex A**.

Opening Remarks

4. In his opening remarks the Chair, Mr Charles Carlson, Director of Emergency Management Cooks Islands, thanked the delegates for his election to Chair and recognised this meeting as an opportunity to share experiences and lessons learned from around the region. The Director noted that these regional lessons could then be applied to national-level disaster risk management.

Key Outcomes

5. The Meeting :
 - Acknowledged with immense gratitude and deep respect the invaluable contributions of the late **Dr. Senipisi Langi Kavaliku**, SOPAC High Level Advocate, for his many years of selfless service and sacrifice towards the sustainable development of the Pacific and its peoples through his contributions in education, health and disaster risk management among many others;
 - Acknowledged the importance of **mainstreaming DRM** into government agencies at the national, sectoral, and local levels, and ensuring political engagement and in-country support on these key issues;
 - Acknowledged **external factors** – such as the global recession and financial crisis, as well as the H1N1 flu pandemic – likely to have serious implications and consequences (effects) on general disaster risk management and emergency preparedness at the national level;
 - **Congratulated SOPAC, as well as** members of the Pacific Disaster Risk Management Partnership Network, for work achieved in light of the external factors and the uncertainty surrounding the rationalisation process;
 - Noted the **commitment of SOPAC to continue support to disaster risk management capacity building** in the region through the transitional process it is undergoing in 2009 and for the years ahead;
 - Emphasised the **role of NDMOs as one of the critical focal points** for international level donor engagement, Pacific DRM Partnership Network, development of in-country NAPs, and establishment of in-country inter-sectoral coordination;
 - Noted the usefulness of **coordinating DRR/DM at all levels**: from the community to local government to national up to regional level.
 - Affirmed the upcoming Joint Pacific Regional Meeting of Meteorological Service Directors and Disaster Managers is a valuable opportunity to cultivate improved **coordination between NDMOs and Meteorological Service Directors to strengthen early warning systems and recognised the need for integrated DRM and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) Programmes** both at the regional and national levels;
 - Recognised the importance of the **Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Disaster Management (DM) Framework for Action (Regional Framework) and the Hyogo Framework of Action (HfA)** as the key guides to mainstream disaster risk management and contribute to sustainable development in the Pacific;
 - Was cognisant of the need for **monitoring and reporting** on the **Regional Framework and the HfA** as a way to achieve accountability and effective use

of resources, and acknowledged the work of SOPAC in generating an online reporting tool to achieve this result;

- Noted the Pacific's representation to the upcoming **Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)**, a forum for learning and an opportunity to contribute and raise awareness on the Pacific experience;
- Noted that **consistency** should be encouraged between external donor-driven initiatives and national-level planning, and acknowledged the critical role NDMOs play in implementation of donor-funded projects and regional engagement;
- Noted the opportunities of integrating disaster risk and climate change issues into national **educational** systems;
- Affirmed the role of **technology** in building capacity for improved DRM (i.e. GIS and ICT training) as well as for cooperation and collaboration – e.g. the Report & On-line Monitor for the Regional Framework.
- Affirmed the importance of **accurate baseline data and information** to support DRM;
- Emphasised the need for strengthening of end-to-end **early warning systems** for all hazards;
- Noted the role of **governance** and institutional arrangements in strengthening and supporting DRM;
- Was deeply appreciative of the financial and technical support from national, regional and international **donor** agencies in implementing disaster risk management across the Pacific and encouraged donor agencies to ensure the mainstreaming of disaster risk management in all development programmes;
- Was cognisant of the need to **strengthen capacity** in DRM at the national level and across all sectors;
- Acknowledged the support to the Pacific by the United States Government through **The Asia Foundation and the USAID Office** of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (TAF/OFDA) noting that opportunities should be explored to extend this support for disaster risk management training and capacity development beyond 2009.
- Acknowledged the **contributions** made by Kathryn Hawley, Programme Director of the TAF/OFDA Pacific DRM (Training) Programme and Alan Mearns, former Manager of the SOPAC Community Risk Programme for their commitment to training and capacity building in the Pacific and look forward to their continued support for the future.
- Noted the key strengths, limitations and opportunities for growth and learning with regards to **technology**, and how technological tools such as the Pacific Disaster Network and the NDMO website template can be adapted and used with greater effectiveness in a variety of country settings.
- Welcomed New Zealand's intention to support the **High Level Advocacy Team** and engage more strategically with the Pacific Emergency Management Training Advisory Group (PEMTAG).

Major Issues & Challenges

6. The meeting identified a number and range of issues and challenges which SOPAC is requested to consider in collaboration and coordination with the Pacific DRM Partnership Network. **Annex B** to this Summary Record highlights some specific issues categorised in terms of the thematic areas of the Regional Framework. These are to be read in conjunction with the major issues and challenges outlined below.
- **Mainstreaming of disaster risk management and climate change adaptation** considerations through a coordinated and integrated approach into national, sectoral, local and community level development programmes, activities and budget processes are critical to increasing the safety and resilience of Pacific communities. NDMOs along with other key national agencies and stakeholders need to be supported in their mainstreaming efforts.
 - SOPAC and other partner organisations must continue **collaboration in advocacy activities** in support of mainstreaming and consider the involvement of the executive, the legislature and other key national fora.
 - **Training and capacity development** in disaster risk management remains an important concern for NDMOs and for other key actors at national level within Pacific countries. SOPAC and development partners need to explore opportunities to maintain the current suite of training courses and to identify additional training opportunities that contribute to the strengthening of key agencies such as lands, meteorological and hydrological services, agriculture, health, and other stakeholders including NGOs and community groups.
 - Pacific countries need to significantly improve access to more accurate **baseline data and information** to support disaster management, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation initiatives.
 - Ensure that the Pacific's participation to the **Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction**, coordinated by SOPAC, is robust and effective for presenting the key issues and challenges as well as identifying opportunities for future collaboration and exchange of lessons learned across an international platform.
 - Emphasised the ongoing **need for DRM training** and to encourage more donors to provide support to capacity development programmes for the region.
 - Regional and international donors and partners to explore **new mechanisms to support** institutional strengthening and capacity building to NDMOs, other key national agencies, civil society and private sector within Pacific countries.
 - Technology was recognised as an integral aspect of achieving the broad goal of mainstreaming and enhancing DRM activities, hence **capacity building in the area of technology**, as well as support and assistance from SOPAC, were identified as important areas of future activities. Technological products such as Pacific Disaster Net, an NDMO website template, and the Online Monitor for the Regional DRM Framework, were agreed as being important tools for future DRM work.
7. These issues and challenges are to be presented for the consideration of the Joint Meeting of Regional Meteorological Service Directors and Disaster Managers to be held on 11th May 2009, and also at other meetings of the Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management from 12th – 15th May 2009.

Recommendation

8. SOPAC, in collaboration, consultation and cooperation with the National Disaster Management Offices, members of the Pacific DRM Partnership Network and other relevant national, regional and international agencies/organisations, is called upon to provide direct support to address the issues and challenges as contained in this Summary Record.

Concluding Remarks

9. The meeting expressed gratitude to SOPAC for facilitating the 15th Regional Disaster Managers Meeting and commended the Chair of the meeting for his very able leadership.
10. The meeting extended its appreciation to development partners of the Pacific DRM Partnership Network and other regional and international organisations for their attendance and valuable contributions.
11. The meeting also extended its appreciation to the SOPAC Secretariat for their continuing leadership and support for this regional meeting and disaster risk management and capacity building in the Pacific.

8th May 2009
Nadi
Fiji

15th Pacific Regional Disaster Managers Meeting
Tanoa International Hotel
Nadi, Fiji
7th-8th May 2009

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SUMMARY OF KEY NATIONAL DRM ISSUES

The key national DRM issues as presented under the themes of the Regional Framework for Action are not in any particular order within each theme as all of the issues are equally important and countries are at different stages of implementing its DRM programmes.

Theme 1: Governance – Institutional, Policy and Decision-making Frameworks

- Develop DRM National Action Plans
- Develop or review DRM legislation to support national, sub-national DRM arrangements
- Review of National Water Policy
- Note the challenges of mainstreaming DRR and DM into key development sectors, need to examine initiatives implemented by other sectors and see links with DRM
- Develop Policy Documents to support DRM legislation
- Review of existing national DRR and DM or Multi-Mitigation Plans
- Integrate DRM with Climate Change Adaptation

Theme 2: Knowledge, Information, Public Awareness and Education

- Training needs analysis for: Disaster Advisory Committee; Government agencies and other stakeholders at all levels to develop a training plan and establish a cadre of accredited national DRM trainers
- Integrate DRM into schools curricula
- Develop an Equipment/Resources Register
- Support Pacific Disaster Net portal with national data and information and look at opportunities to setup a DRM Library and Resource Centre
- Develop National DRM Website
- Develop appropriate and cost effective community awareness programmes that promote DRM and strengthen capacity to maintain programmes
- Document and promote traditional coping mechanisms through: media ie documentary; capacity development programmes that focus on practises

Theme 3: Analysis and Evaluation of Hazards, Vulnerabilities and Elements at Risk

- Develop all Hazard Characteristics and Profiles
- Conduct hazard and risk assessments
 - Develop hazard and risk maps
 - Undertake Island wide hazard and risk assessments of potential hotspots
 - Conduct seismic assessment and review national building code
 - Tsunami hazard assessment, modelling and mapping
 - Volcanological study for prediction of future eruptions
 - Conduct risk assessment of all urban centres and communities
- Develop a database that incorporates both hazard and risk related information
- Identify suitable mitigation options to reduce the risks identified
- Develop a Hazard Mitigation Plan based on hazard and risk assessments, particularly for floods, earthquake and volcanic eruption

Theme 4: Planning for Effective Preparedness, Response and Recovery

- Develop and test community preparedness and response plans, particularly for schools, including NGOs and Civil Society
- Develop food security plan for emergency situations
- Develop or review and test SOPs for the National, Divisional, District and Agencies EOCs making use of existing SOPs and advances from specific hazard warning systems, such as for tsunami, cyclone and floods.
- Conduct operational exercises for various hazards (pandemic, cyclone, tsunami, fire, earthquake, volcanic eruption, storm surge, hazardous materials, aircraft emergencies, etc), incl. drills in schools to test response plans
- Develop and construct billboards and road signs to increase awareness and point out evacuation routes

Theme 5: Effective, Integrated and People-Focussed Early Warning Systems

- Strengthen capacity of key technical agencies (Meteorology, Hydrology, Geo-hazards, communications, etc) to address:
 - requirements of monitoring and early warning systems for seismic, tsunami, weather, flooding and volcanic eruption (data analysis, application of models to generate forecasts, maintenance of equipment, etc)
 - water shortage and quality (salinity) particular during extreme tides
- Need for volcanic eruption monitoring and warning systems
- Strengthen community awareness of end-to-end early warning systems
 - Improve information flows to the public for all hazards early warning
 - Free-of-charge community awareness hour programme as part of licensing conditions for TV/Radio stations once a week or twice a month.
 - Community involvement in the early warning system e.g. identifying and sharing traditional signals for natural disasters if possible/available
- Improve means of communication available for warning dissemination and SOPs are critical to timely dissemination
- Strengthen tsunami warning, through:
 - Establishment of regional or sub-regional tsunami centre warning to provide warnings for countries closer to the source
 - Data-sharing of national seismic and sea level observation data
 - Enhanced seismic and sea level monitoring networks to enable early detection and dissemination of warnings for regionally generated tsunamis

Theme 6: Reduction of Underlying Risk Factors

- Review existing national building codes and improve enforcement as well as promote benefits of compliance
- Produce manual or guide for retrofitting, for use by rural carpenters and builders
- Focus rehabilitation programs in “Building for the better”
- Implement adaptation programs and activities to address Climate Change
- Ensure every project has a risk management component prior to approval. This may require going through the CHARM or similar process at the design and documentation stage
- Rehabilitation of the coast using risk assessment considerations