JOINT PACIFIC REGIONAL MEETING
of
Meteorological Service Directors and Disaster Managers

Summary Record

Adopted by Meteorological Service Directors and Disaster Managers at the Joint Pacific Regional Meeting
Novotel Hotel, Nadi, Fiji Islands
10th-11th May 2009

1. The Joint Pacific Regional Meeting of Meteorological Service Directors and Disaster Managers was convened in Nadi from the 10th to 11th May 2009 and was chaired by Fiji. The theme of the meeting was *Strengthening End-to-End Early Warning Systems – Challenges and Opportunities*. with the objectives to:

   - increase the understanding of key issues common to the Meteorological Services Directors and NDMOs;
   - explore opportunities for improved delivery of multi-hazard early warnings to Pacific communities;
   - increase capacity for improved collaboration *between Meteorological Services Directors and NDMOs.*

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States of America and Vanuatu. The meeting was also attended by regional and international organisations which include the Secretariat for the Pacific Environmental Programme (SPREP), the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), and the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO). A full list of attendees is in the Annex.

Official Opening

3. The meeting was officially opened by Mr. Timoci Natuva, Minister for Works, Transport & Public Utilities, Fiji. In opening, the Minister noted that this meeting presented an important opportunity for National Disaster Management Officers (NDMOs) and Regional Meteorological Services Directors (RMSD) to exchange information and insight into providing improved services to Pacific island communities, particularly in light of climate change and the increased incidence of disasters. The Minister noted that the last joint meeting held between these two groups was in 1998, when a resolution had been made to meet annually. The Minister hence expressed the hope to fully use this opportunity to potentially inaugurate regular and productive collaboration between NDMOs and RMSD.

4. Recognising the theme of partnerships in the Meeting, the Minister emphasised the need to get all stakeholders to participate in disaster risk management in the Pacific, including national governments, NGOs, communities, the private sector and local, national, regional and international partners.

5. Remarks by Mr. Taito Nakalevu (SPREP), Mr. Bhaskar Rao (SOPAC), and Ms. Mary Power (WMO) further emphasized the key issues of interdisciplinary collaboration, improved community and end-user awareness, the overlap between climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk management (DRM), the uniqueness of the current global financial crisis and climate change, and the important role that NDMOs and RMSD play as critical focal points for building safe and resilient Pacific island communities.

Key Outcomes

6. The Meeting:

- Noted the importance of **improved interdisciplinary collaboration between focal point agencies such as NDMOs and National Meteorological Services (NMS)**, as well as stakeholders at the local, national, regional and international level, for the implementation of effective DRM projects, particularly end-to-end early warning systems (EWS);
- Acknowledged the **unique opportunity for linkages between NMS and NDMOs as focal points for CCA and DRM** implementation;
- Emphasised the importance of collaborative and integrated mainstreaming of DRM, CC including relevant scenarios into decision making, development planning processing to support and promote sustainable development
- Recognised the **limitations and challenges in relation to expertise and community visibility** of NDMOs and NMS, and noted the ways in which the two groups can support each other's current work, such as the 24/7 operation of Met. Services to support EWS

- Noted the need for implementation of quality management systems of all services such as WMO and ICAO requirements
- Noted the **broad areas of interface** between NDMOs and Meteorological Services Directors: **extreme weather events**, including cyclones, floods, and **extreme climate**, such as drought; and as well as tsunamis
- Recapped the background, related themes and activities of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Regional Framework for Action 2005 – 2015: An Investment for Sustainable Development in the Pacific Island Countries (**Pacific DRM Framework**) and the Pacific Island Framework for Action to Climate Change (**PIFACC**) as well as the Pacific Disaster Risk Management **Partnership Network** and **Climate Change Roundtable**, and the attempts of each to avoid replication and project implementation fatigue;
- Acknowledged the **respective contributions of SOPAC and SREP** in implementing the Pacific DRM Framework linking international DM and DRR initiatives to the regional level and PIFACC in CCA.
- Recognised the importance of **local buy-in** of international initiatives on DRM and CCA in order to ensure long-term sustainability, and the importance of regular **reporting and monitoring** against regional DRM and CCA initiatives such as the DRR and DM Regional Framework and the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change;
- Emphasised the importance of **data quality** which underpins DRM and CCA, and noted with concern the deterioration of climate observations in some areas in the last fifty years, as well as the need for accurate coastal topography and bathymetry for all Pacific island countries, and the need for storm surge modelling;
- Noted the **capacity gaps** experienced by NDMOs and NMS, both in terms of human capacity and technology, and recognised the need to **invest in training and capacity building and appropriate technology**;
- Noted with concern that observed climate change in the Pacific is greater than or in the upper end of current **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) projections**;
- Acknowledged the important challenge of improving community resilience for extreme events with different time scales which require different scientific and operational tools noting the different confidence levels of each forecast
- Affirmed the importance of **building community awareness** of products and services which include disseminating hydro-meteorological and geological hazard warnings, teaching effective **community preparedness** (via drills/exercises, regular awareness campaigns and community-level response plans);

- Noted the **effectiveness of incorporating new technologies** (e.g. mobile phones, sirens) **with traditional** (e.g. word of mouth, church bells) in delivering warning messages to the community;
- Recognised the role of various technical agencies in early warning, in particular the 24/7 operational infrastructure and staffing of NMS to support it
- Recognised the particular challenges posed by the **remoteness** of Pacific Island communities;
- Noted that IPCC AR4 projections indicate that, with climate change, more intense weather and climate events are likely to occur which will lead to worse disasters.

Key Recommendations

7. Several recommendations were noted during the course of the meeting. These were identified as ways in which the collaboration between NDMOs and NMS could continue, and how such a collaboration could enhance DRM and CCA efforts in the Pacific:

- **Information-sharing and capacity building**, for example, via joint databases for hazard mapping and risk assessments and Pacific Disaster Net, to be used and updated by NDMO and NMS.
- Warning system for hydrological and geological hazards to be strengthened
- **Increased and synchronized community outreach activities** between NDMOs and Meteorological Services, in particular with regards to media interaction and involvement, community preparedness and civil society (e.g. church, non-governmental organizations) participation.
- The continuation of **joint regional meetings between NDMO and MSD**.
- **Continue to support National-level capacity building for meteorological services**
- **Strengthen the capacity and capability of the RSMC Nadi to continue its support for the Pacific region**
- **Dev**el**oping and investing in robust, multi-hazard end-to-end early warning systems** for tsunami/cyclones, flooding, heavy swells, droughts and other hydro-meteorological hazards, as such hazards account for more than 80% of natural disasters in the Pacific region
- Establishing **sub-regional tsunami warning centres** to address local tsunamis, which are not currently catered for by PTWC ;
- Noted the importance of **institutional strengthening** and coordination between agencies, in light of technological advances

- **Increased dialogue between national, regional and international stakeholders** (such as WMO, UNISDR, NOAA, etc.) to exchange data and methodologies to implement DRM and CCA initiatives;
- **Integration of DRM and CCA issues into future development planning and budgeting processes** as part of the general move towards mainstreaming;
- **High-Level Advocacy Team (HLAT)** to promote DRM and CCA as well as raise the profile of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services with NDMO.

8. SOPAC, SPREP and the WMO, in collaboration, consultation and cooperation with the NDMOs and NMS, members of the Climate Change Roundtable, Pacific DRM Partnership Network and other relevant national, regional and international agencies/organisations, is called upon to provide direct support for the realisation of the above recommendations.

Concluding Remarks

9. The meeting wishes to extend its gratitude to the interim Government of the Republic of Fiji and the people of the Fiji islands for hosting the Joint Pacific Regional Meeting of Meteorological Service Directors and Disaster Managers. The meeting commended the Chair of the meeting.

10. The meeting extended its appreciation to development partners and other regional and international organisations for their attendance and valuable contributions.

11. The meeting also extended its appreciation to SOPAC, SPREP and WMO for their continuing leadership and support for this regional meeting and disaster risk management and climate change in the Pacific.

11th May 2009
Nadi
Fiji