

Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction
Sendai, Japan, 14-18 March 2015
Agenda Item 9: Statements by intergovernmental and other organizations

Mr Taito Nakalevu – Representative, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)

Your Excellency, the President of the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction;

Honourable Presidents and Prime Ministers of States,

Your Excellencies the Heads of Delegations,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) is indeed grateful for the opportunity to present a statement to the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and to participate in the dialogue on the Post 2015 Global Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

This past week, the Pacific Region experienced devastating impacts of cyclone Pam, a category 5 cyclone which has resulted in the loss of life, left possibly thousands homeless and left infrastructure in ruins in the Pacific nation of Vanuatu. Thus, bringing to the forefront yet again the high vulnerability that the Pacific island countries and territories face from a range of natural hazards.

A recent World Bank study pointed out that of the 20 countries with the highest average annual disaster losses scaled by GDP, 8 are from Pacific island countries. These negatively impact economic and social development in the Pacific and underscore that disaster resilience is truly a matter for economic resilience.

Despite these challenges, the Pacific countries are taking concrete steps to address disaster and climate risks, with some countries developing national action plans that integrate climate change and disaster risk reduction considerations.

The Joint National Action Plans (JNAPs) are realigning national institutional arrangements to better coordinate implementation of climate change and disaster risk reduction priorities in country. In so doing, some Pacific countries are making more efficient use of their limited financial and human resources, improving coherence across policies and programs, and facilitating the mainstreaming of these issues into national, sub national and sectoral strategies.

The integration process for the Pacific has moved to a new level the last three years as the region marches towards integrating Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change into a single regional strategy. The Strategy is called the: “Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific”. It is a Global First and we are grateful to the European Union and partners for their funding support. The Strategy fully integrates disaster risk management and climate change, and addresses these issues within the context of sustainable development.

The strategy also places particular emphasis on the importance of inclusive decision making, prioritizing the needs and respecting the rights of the most vulnerable members of society.

After an inclusive and extensive engagement process, the final draft of the Strategy will be submitted for approval by Pacific Island leaders in September 2015. It will then be formally launched at the 2016 Pacific Resilience Partnership meeting that would replace the two primary regional meetings on climate change and on DRM in the Pacific, which have been held separately until this day.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community is committed to the delivery of the new Strategy for Climate Change and Disaster Resilience (SRDP) by working with countries and partners. SPC encourages and welcomes new partnerships towards that end. Already, programmes to increase resilience are being implemented by the Secretariat and these include the ACP-EU funded programme on Building Safety and Resilience in 15 Pacific countries including Timor Leste, the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative (PCRAFI), a joint initiative with the WB and ADB and many others.

In regards to the post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the 2014 Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management acknowledges the contributions of the Hyogo Framework for Action in assisting the Pacific region to build stronger and more resilient communities and encourages the post-2015 framework to link where appropriate to the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Change agreements to strengthen coherence and mutual reinforcement of international mechanisms.

“As we look at the aftermath of the two cyclones that affected the Pacific the past week, one of which, has devastated Vanuatu, and affected the Solomon Islands, Fiji, and New Caledonia, and led to disastrous coastal flooding in Kiribati, Tuvalu and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the timing of this 3rd UN World Conference on DRR is even more pertinent to the Pacific’s need to strengthen disaster resilience. Simply, for the Pacific, building and strengthening our resilience is not only urgent, it is key to the achievement of sustainable development and improved livelihoods, for all. . Hence, SPC alongside the regional organizations of the Pacific stand ready to assist to provide effective a response and recovery for our member countries.”

Chair, I thank you.