**Solomon Islands feedback for the post 2015 Framework**

**Strengthening institutional capacity to align DRR and CCA**

The case for integrating DRR and CCA efforts has been made and won. In a PIC context this is especially relevant due to their high level of exposure to hazards, sea level rise and other climate change induced phenomena. Reducing risk to disasters and the predicted impacts of climate change requires us to limit vulnerabilities and build resilience. The HFA advocates that this must be applied at all levels of society. National governments have a duty of care for their populations and a range of international organisations pledge their support to protecting human lives. There exists a challenge, therefore, to develop ways and means of aligning and delivering DRR and CCA. The rhetoric exists, but implementation is proving difficult. The HFA Mid-Term review tells us that the development of legislation and plans at the national level is progressing well but that, despite guidance on good practice, **reducing underlying risks is an area that states continue to struggle with** (UNISDR, 2011a). According to the report, “the accessibility and usefulness of the current guidance” may be impeding progress (UNISDR, 2011 pp 62).

In the context of this work we must be clear that the HFA is a jargon-heavy tool produced by an institution, the United Nations, with **nation states as its primary focus**. If the ‘accessibility and usefulness’ of guidance is to be improved then the **language and approach needs to be considered carefully**.

The HFA outlines that **all sectors** should be involved in DRR; all government departments; the private sector; local government; communities; civil society organisations. The integration of DRR and CCA is also advocated by the HFA (UNISDR, 2005 and 2011). This presents a complex challenge. **In order for this diverse cross-section of actors to identify areas of collaboration, concepts must be presented in a way that they will understand and allow the creation of outcomes that these groups will be encouraged to support.**

The argument here is that applying a **human security perspective** to risks faced by Pacific Island communities could be useful for strengthening institutional and local capacities to reduce those risks. Human security provides a framework, which **allows risks to be viewed holistically in terms of the potential impact on people rather than structures or institutions**. It encapsulates vulnerability and resilience paradigms and can be used to identify **cross-sectoral implications of disaster and climate change risks**. In a PIC context, consideration and integration into policy making of **cultural factors that are likely to impact on people’s choices and the efficacy of programmes**, is a crucial consideration. Again, this is an inherent benefit of adopting a human security approach as it creates space and dialogue to consider community security and with it, key cultural influences. Perhaps most importantly, **human security deals in language that non-experts use and will understand and that people can easily apply to their everyday lives**. Human security is mentioned, albeit briefly, in the HFA and may prove useful in terms of implementing the rhetoric therein, through its practical framework and contribute positively to DRR and CCA policies and planning.

## Human Security

Security, at its core, is about **protection from potential risks**; human security is about making individuals rather than states the referent objects in terms of that protection. According to the United Nations Commission on Human Security (UNCHS, 2003) there are three vital ‘freedoms’ which human security connects – freedom from fear, freedom from want and freedom to take action on one’s own behalf. The UNCHS stresses that the focus is on protecting the “vital core” of the individual rather than encompassing anything and everything that can cause harm. In order to protect people from critical and pervasive threats they need to have the building blocks of survival, dignity and livelihood.

Human security captures access to basic material needs such as food, shelter, education and healthcare AND refers to concepts of human dignity, participation in community life, personal autonomy and freedom from oppressive power structures. It is not merely about survival, it is about building on strengths and protecting human rights. In this regard it resonates with much of the literature on ***resilience***. If climate change is viewed as a ‘threat’ and disaster are recognised as harmful to people, then engaging in security discourse would seem appropriate.

The 1994 Human Development Report identified 7 categories that underpin human security. It is these 7 categories that provide the framework for this work. They are; **food security, health security, environmental security, economic security, personal security, political security** and **community security**.

**Human security, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction**

While we can never eliminate *all* risk, human action can exacerbate or mitigate the impact of potential hazards. In order to create sound policy and engage in action that reduces harm rather than amplifying it, we must endeavour to understand the totality of a threat. It is for this reason that focusing on ***human security may be useful for adapting to the impacts of climate change and provide opportunities for implementing more effective disaster risk reduction***.

Taking a human security perspective can be useful for examining the complex interrelations that produce and exacerbate vulnerability amongst human populations. Human security can also act as a useful evaluation tool, against which aid and interventions can be assessed for their impacts on the lives of people they aim to assist. Arguably, **it is only by being aware of all aspects that may undermine resilience, can we hope to strengthen it**. (This includes human health as per Dr Jimmie Rodgers comments!)

Focusing on scientific uncertainty, as per the continuing greenhouse gas emissions debates, serves to divert attention from the underlying factors that create vulnerability. Are we not ‘missing the point’ in terms of environmental change if we fail to re-frame it as an issue of human security? We need to view climate change as being integrally connected to issues such as poverty, health and conflict. Environmental issues, for example, loss of biodiversity and deforestation interact with social, economic and institutional dynamics creating a spiralling of insecurities, which places people increasingly at risk. This ‘linking’ function of human security makes it useful in framing the threats posed by climate change, facilitates dialogue between often disparate groups and offers an alternative view to the technocratic and State level focus of the majority of efforts at reducing risks.

It is clear that human action can exacerbate or mitigate the impact of potential hazards. In order to create sound policy and engage in action that reduces harm rather than amplifying it, we must consider the totality of threats in terms of how people interact with risk in their daily lives. The vulnerability and resilience literature underlines that ***disasters are not caused by hazards, but a complex inter-relationship between social, political, environmental and economic factors***. It is for these reasons that focusing on human security may be useful for understanding the potential impacts of climate change and provide opportunities for implementing more effective disaster risk reduction.

The argument here is that applying a human security perspective to the disaster and climate change related risks faced by Pacific Island communities could be useful for strengthening institutional and local capacities to reduce those risks. Human security provides a framework, which allows risks to be viewed holistically in terms of the potential impact on people rather than on structures or institutions. It encapsulates vulnerability and resilience paradigms and can be used to identify cross-sectoral implications of disaster and climate change risks.

In a PIC context, ***appreciation of cultural factors*** that are likely to impact on people’s choices and the efficacy of programmes, is a crucial consideration and must be integrated into policy making. Again, this is an inherent benefit of adopting a human security approach as it creates space and dialogue to consider community security and with it, key cultural influences. Perhaps most importantly; human security deals in language that non-experts use and will understand and that people can easily apply to their everyday lives. This has implications for training, capacity building and public awareness raising; all areas requiring careful attention according to the Solomon Islands HFA review.

## What are the possible implications for future risk management efforts in the Pacific?

It is clear that the populations of PICs are threatened on numerous fronts, by disasters and the predicted future impacts of climate change. All seven of the components underpinning human security are at risk. By utilising a human security framework we can see how ***many of the risks are linked and compounded***. For example, if a person suffers from an illness their health security is undermined. This may prevent them from working which reduces their economic security in turn this can threaten their food security. Similarly, strengthening environmental security (e.g protecting mangroves and reefs) can help to minimise risks to personal security during an extreme event by these natural barriers buffering impacts.

**Risk Management and the HFA**

The HFA review in the Solomon Islands provided an opportunity for key stakeholders to identify possible actions and ways of thinking about their work in the context of reducing risk. Some vital issues were discussed and representatives from a wide range of sectors (government, non government, private sector, state owned enterprises, donors, faith based organisation) had the opportunity to engage on topics of mutual interest. Recommendations for future work emerged from the process and representatives became more familiar with DRR discourse and saw opportunities for implementing DRR in their daily work. A number of issues that were difficult to discuss in a mixed gender group were identified, this was particularly useful in terms of implications for conducting future fieldwork and shaping post-disaster response efforts.

The HFA monitoring tool allows for one level to be chosen for each indicator however this proved problematic for some topics as whilst good progress may have been made in certain areas, little progress was judged in others. This ‘forced’ participants to assign an overall indicator level that provided a less accurate measure of progress achieved to date.

Governance issues lie at the heart of successful and unsuccessful development in terms of incorporating DRR and this would appear to hold true for the Solomon Islands. Climate change adaptation was repeatedly discussed during the review and there is hope that aligning DRR and CCA will produce useful outcomes given the progress made so far. The HFA review process did not, however, facilitate much dialogue on political security, despite the recent civil unrest that affected the country for a number of years. There was little discussion of this, which is surprising given the highly disruptive impact these years have had on the people and the economy. Ethnic divisions are a root cause of vulnerability and yet the HFA process did not evoke discussion of conflict and complex emergencies. This is an important point to be aware of, but it is not possible to conclude at this juncture whether the oversight is a result of a blunt tool, the HFA, or the way it was used by those conducting the review.

Another issue that was omitted from discussions was international trade regulations that can impact negatively on economic and food securities. By extension of this, negative impacts on health security through heavy reliance on imported foods were also overlooked. Community security was discussed during the review, but emerged as a response to the fact that it is an integral part of Solomon Island culture and that there did not appear to be much ‘space’ to discuss it in terms of the information required for input to the HFA monitor. Participants were keen to share key cultural and social features that underpin resilience in their country and were surprised that these issues were not more central in terms of the HFA monitoring tool. In light of these issues, it can be argued that the HFA review ‘missed the mark’ as it did not offer much opportunity to create dialogue or catch input on these critical considerations. ***For the Pacific context, a human security framework arguably captures more about the everyday realities of communities living with risk***.

If the referent object of risk management capacity building is the state, as would appear to be the case with the HFA, rather than with communities there are serious potential implications if national governments cease to function. The Solomon Islands have a precedent for this in light of the recent civil unrest, and do not stand-alone in the Pacific region in terms of political instability.

## Conclusion

The HFA represents a landmark in promoting the DRR agenda. The review process is cumbersome for small nations that struggle daily with human and financial resources, but useful for creating dialogue and guiding efforts at risk reduction. The HFA review process in the Solomon Islands was well received by those involved and positive steps have been made in light of this engagement. There is still much to be done but with continuing energy and enthusiasm from agencies and communities, further progress will be made. There must be increased efforts for considering DRR in terms of development***. Existing sources of national revenue are political priorities so will be carefully considered by governments and can be usefully framed as a means of protecting future investment in the Pacific by embedding DRR into the fabric of planning processes***. The driving principle could be that DRR should be focused on the ***cornerstone of development*** in each country and try to reduce vulnerability or increase resilience in those sectors. In some PICs this would be tourism, in others it could be beef or pearl production. A major challenge for the Solomon Islands is that much of their national income comes from the logging industry, which is a driver of risk for flooding and landslides. There needs to be greater consideration that the capacity of the environment is limited – not only as the source of raw materials, substances and functions required for life, but also in terms of space for disposing of waste and pollution of all kinds. In addition, care should be exercised in terms of utilising mechanisms within existing disaster management structures as this could site responsibility for DRM and CCA with the NDMO and Ministry of Environment as opposed to the cross-cutting approach advocated by the HFA.

There needs to be greater consideration of the interconnection of the basic spheres of life – the economic sphere, the social/cultural sphere and the environment; solutions allowing for only one or two of these will be ineffective in the long run. Adopting a long-term perspective and a human security approach to facilitate this could prove useful. ***Development decisions need to be assessed in relation to long-term impacts, rather than a focus on short-term political priorities***. At the local level people do not differentiate between disaster risks, climate change risks, the challenges of poverty or the injustices of inequality. These issues all form part of the daily reality that people face and should be tackled together. Perhaps the answer is to ***rethink implementation of risk management from a human security perspective and redistribute tasks, responsibilities, skills and capabilities throughout various sectors***. Ultimately, the goal is to make the country and its people more secure the architects of the DRM arrangements in the Solomon Islands hope that this will transpire with their implementation but further political instability may impede this progress. It is vital; therefore, that ***community resilience*** is strengthened. The basis of this resilience lies with the communities themselves, through ***traditional resource management; social capital; and the knowledge and skills that have enabled people to thrive in these islands for millennia***. Ultimately, we can learn much from ancient cultures that value familial relations over economic capital gains. How we interact with these nations in the future should reflect this, if we as a species hope to weather the storms ahead.

**JNAP process vote**

In order to start preparing the Joint National Action Plan for DRR and CCA (JNAP), participants of the multi stakeholder workshop were asked to vote on the process approach that they felt would best fit, or be most useful to, Solomon Islands.

Four approaches were presented and described in the following ways:

1. **The Policy Approach** – where the existing documents pertaining to CCA and DRR (e.g. The NAPA, The CC Policy, The NDC Act and The NDRM Plan) would be mapped over each other to come up with a definitive list of priority areas.
2. **The Sector Approach** – each organisation would be asked to go back to their respective work plans and offices and produce a summary of how their work/focus areas might be affected by climate and disaster risks and report back to MECDM.
3. **The Thematic Approach** – disaster and climate risks are put into the context of what people require in order to be secure (e.g. health security , food security, economic security etc). By taking a human security approach, Solomon islands communities are placed at the centre of efforts to limit harm and cross cutting risks that communities face in terms of climate change and disasters are able to be captured.
4. **The Combined Approach** – this would involve elements of all of the above.

Three participants voted for a policy approach, no one voted for a sectoral approach, twenty two participants voted for a thematic approach and nine voted for a combined approach[[1]](#footnote-1). In an effort to consider the wishes of all involved it was agreed that the ***Thematic Approach*** would be used as the overarching guide for the JNAP process, with reference to both policies and sectoral plans to encourage buy-in and provide political leverage.

1. By the afternoon of the third day approximately 35 participants remained, however all participants present on Day One of the workshop were aware of this proposed activity on Day Three. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)