

4th Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reductions

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“Invest Today for a Better Tomorrow”

Session 2 - Official statement on the DRR in Tonga, towards the development of an Integrated Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reductions and Climate Change by 2015

Wednesday 22 May 2013, 0900– 1300

Venue: 1 Level 1

Delivered by: Mr Ringo Kalahuni Faoliu, CEO, Ministry of Infrastructure – National Emergency Management Office (NEMO)

Ms Margareta Wahlstrom, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for DRR

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Mr. Chair,

Malo e lelei from the Kingdom of Tonga. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some Pacific’s Islands and Kingdom of Tonga Disaster Risk Reduction perspectives.

In the Pacific region, we are well advanced in discussing what kind of a regional framework we want to have in place after the current Pacific Regional Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management comes to an end in 2015.

The development of an integrated regional strategy has been driven by our own needs and the national level efforts of our countries to integrate. Tonga developed

the Pacific's first integrated strategic national action plan (JNAP) for Climate Change and DRM in 2010.

I would like share with you some of the national experiences from the implementation of our JNAP for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management from my country, Tonga.

The Kingdom of Tonga like any other small island developing states is highly susceptible to the impacts of climate change and natural hazards due to its geographical, geological and Socio-economic characteristics

The risks posed by such hazards can only be effectively reduced and managed as part of a sustainable development process that adopts a broader and more integrated approach to DRR and DRM, hence the attempt by the Tongan Government to streamlined CCA & DRM into all its development policies.

This will involve the proactive management of disaster risks and reduction of vulnerability, expanding beyond the traditional approach to disaster preparedness, response and recovery, and adopting a strategic approach to improve and strengthen development effectiveness and efficiency establishment of JNAP and thus integrated CCA & DRM into its National Infrastructural Investment Plan (NIIP) so the country's major development in tune with the national attempt to manage both CCA and DRM.

The unification of this integrated approach by Government reflect the political will in the country supported by various Environmental Committee established within CEO level right up to the House of Parliaments where there already existed a

Ministerial Committee that overlook all Climate Change related issues for the Country.

We developed our JNAP over late 2009 and 2010 with the approval of Cabinet being given to the completed document in July 2010. Since then, and with the support of a range of donors and development partners, we have made some significant progress.

Two months ago work was completed on tsunami inundation models in collaboration with Geoscience Australia and the SPC and it was already presented to the Cabinet. We have also procured/installed a tsunami early warning siren system with SPC' support.

I would like to end by acknowledging the support of the UNISDR, SPC and Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, or SPREP, our regional organisation mandated for the coordination of Climate Change capacity building, in the recent support to facilitate the national progress reviews of the HFA and the Pacific regional framework for DRM.

The next DRR actions/initiative for Tonga as currently discussed with Cabinet Ministers are as follows;

1. Amalgamation/consolidation of Disaster Management Office, Meteorology and other climate change related activities/functions to form an standalone Agency is due for a submission to seek Cabinet approval and for policy direction
2. Engagement/Inclusive of Private Sector in DRR investments

3. Adoption of Indonesia initiative of using the “family” to promote DRM/DRR
4. Using of the “family approach” to promote “self reliance” thus improve DRR/DRM activities

I thank you for giving the Kingdom of Tonga the ability to contribute to the theme ***“Invest Today for a Better Tomorrow”*** initiative at this important global platform.