**Fourth Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction**

**19 – 23 May 2013**

**Geneva, Switzerland**

**COUNTRY STATEMENT**

**Niue Island**

**Richard Hipa**

**Secretary of Government & Chair of National Disaster Management Council**

**Government of Niue**

Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen,

Whilst disasters such as tropical cyclones does not discriminate against which countries, economies it strikes, the social and economical impacts on our economies remains a challenge for our governments and communities with regards to our ability to recover from a disaster, not only to rebuild our lives, our villages and our country but what is important is the lessons, the experience we learned from a disaster such as the category 5 cyclone that strike Niue in January 2004.

When we deal with disasters, preparations, budgets etc., as we do with MDG’s, we are dealing with populations, people, lives... hence safety of our populations remains a key challenge for our Governments and communities.

**Disaster Risk Reduction & Building Resilient through Investment for a Safer Tomorrow**

Having the necessary legislations is important and responsible Governments must have legislations. Having sound policies and regulations, operational and investment guidelines will assist how we plan our Disaster Risk Reduction and building our resilience.

***Universal access Policy*** remains an obligation for the Government of Niue and from the experience of the 2004 cyclone, Government is investing in our public infrastructure where key utilities; water, telecommunication and power cabling are placed underground and reticulated to every home. The aim to having phone and Internet service’s to every village and household will enable our population to access information and early warning is an essential requirement for Niue, being geographically isolated.

Whilst we have abundance of underground water, and water reticulated to every home in Niue, a drought is a threat to our agriculture and food security. For this, Niue have installed water bore holes at various locations around the island, installed new and replaced old water reservoirs in villages, these be used for domestic and agriculture. A project to install a water tank for each home will commence in September this year. This will enable us to collect rain water. In a quick survey following the 2004 cyclone, water was rated as the number 1 priority post disaster. We were fortunate to have water available to very home the day after the cyclone, and this is due to investing in safe infrastructure!

This year, Niue will build a new primary school, relocating the school to safer grounds away from the coastal area and we look forward to having the school completed in 2014.

**Building Code** – Niue’s building code is regulated and with the technical assistance by SOPAC/SPC Niue has reviewed our building code.

These are important DRR & CCA investments and the Government of Niue wishes to acknowledged the financial assistance received from the GEF, EU, NZ Aid and Aus Aid in working in partnership with the GON.

**Planning is Essential**

In order to build resilience, reduce risks, protecting our population etc., planning is essential. Niue has a 5 x year National Integrated Strategic Plan (NISP) and the pillar’s includes Governance, Financial Stability, Economic Development, Environment, Social & Taoga (our language and culture). This plan was an outcome of wide consultation with public and private sectors, NGO’s and Civil Society. Our national budget and our Economic and Development budget is aligned to the NISP.

Under the Cabinet appointed National Disaster Management Council, Niue has a National Disaster Action Plan, which incorporates Disaster Action Plans for every Government Department and for every village. The NDMC conducts workshops annually to work with the community leaders and councils on their role at times of disasters.

The Council in association with the Niue Broadcasting Corporation runs a cyclone preparedness campaign over radio and television every between October and April, the cyclone season. This assists and reminds all stakeholders of our responsibilities. Whilst the Disaster Action Plans was initially for cyclones, we working to include, earthquake, tsunamis and drought.

Niue’s Joint National Action Plan (JNAP) on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management is ready and about to be launched. This plan is a proactive response to reducing the risk of Climate variability and the long term effects of Climate Change. This plan provides the basis for Adaptation initiatives including disaster risk responses in a more integrated and coordinated approach.

**Disaster Risk Management (DRM)**

Niue will be establishing its DRM Office and appointing of a full time DRM Manager. Niue supports building upon current DRM partnerships in the region and the establishment of effective integrated opportunities with partner organisations in the region and at the international level.

**Way Forward**

As a Small Island State, Niue has continued to voice our vulnerability on the impacts of Climate Change at international forums. As our governments strive to build national resilience to the impacts of disasters, invest in DRR, we do not have the capacity and the resources required to do all that we need to do, recognizing that our situation as small island states is dire and imminent – the cyclones are getting more severe, some of our countries are going under as sea level rises, our drinking waters contaminated etc..

The following recommendations must be considered in this 4th Global DRR platform:

* The access to much needed climate change funding in order to assist with our national DRR and CCA programs/projects must be conducive to assisting but not inhibiting our efforts.
* Donor funding must be aligned to our countries national priorities but not the donor’s priorities.
* Governments must be committed to having the required legislations and Investment in DRR and CCA for the sake of protecting our populations.
* That we recognise that as we approach post 2015 DRR, building resilience, the situation for world with regards to Post 2015 MDG’s the situation is bleak for most countries.
* The world must be united in our efforts to DRR and CCA just the same as we are also committed to MDG’s for we have a responsibility to our future generations to leaving them a world they need to enjoy, and that is our responsibility today – we do not have time to waste!!