



NEWS LETTER

September-October 2023

NDRMO's mission is strengthen resilience and improve preparedness to save lives, protect livelihoods and assets of communities and individuals from the impact of hazards

Established in 2007, with the enactment of DRM Act 2021, NDRMO focus on national disaster resilience through policy, planning & partnerships

NDRMO - News Updates

United Nations Special Representative of Secretary-General on Disaster Risk Reduction Visits Tonga



21 Oct - SRSR UNDRR led mission together with NDRMO team visited Tonga Met

In this Newsletter

- High-level UN delegation led by SRSR DRR visited Tonga and mission's engagements
- Tsunami Evacuation Drill held on 20 Oct for community awareness & preparedness
- Over 100 participants trained on Initial Damage Assessment (IDA) in Tongatapu
- Exercise Tropic Twilight - joint visit to Ha'apai by NDRMO, NZDF and HMAF
- UN SRSR Roundtable with Development Partners on DRM priorities and challenges
- Radio and TV programme on Tsunami Awareness
- Contract signed for new headquarter of Tonga Met and NDRMO
- Exercise Longreach held to strengthen Tonga's Emergency Response Capacity
- Introducing new DRM Act 2021
- NDRMO launch new website

The United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction (SRSR UNDRR), Mami Mizutori, undertook an official mission to the Kingdom of Tonga from October 20th to October 24th, 2023 to assess disaster risk reduction efforts in the Pacific region and to commemorate World Tsunami Awareness Day.

Over the course of her five-day stay, Ms. Mizutori participated in a series of meetings and events aimed at bolstering Tonga's initiatives for disaster risk reduction and resilience building. During her time in Tonga, she held discussions with the Prime Minister of Tonga, high-ranking government officials, representatives from civil society organizations, and local communities. The primary objective was to gain insights into Tonga's strategies for mitigating the impact of disasters and the escalating climate risks. As part of these efforts, they also marked World Tsunami Awareness Day, a global campaign designed to raise awareness about reducing risks associated with tsunamis and improving community preparedness.

Tonga, much like numerous small island

nations in the Pacific, faces significant vulnerability to a variety of disaster risks, including cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic activity. Ms. Mizutori's visit sought to highlight Tonga's commendable efforts in disaster resilience, with the overarching goals of safeguarding lives and livelihoods, addressing existing challenges, devising solutions, and enhancing collaboration. This visit underlined the United Nations' unwavering commitment to assisting Tonga and other Pacific Island nations in confronting the mounting threats posed by climate change and disasters. The mission was an integral part of her broader initiative to promote the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the region.

Furthermore, the visit served as a platform for the exchange of best practices, sharing of knowledge, and the identification of areas where the United Nations can offer further support to Tonga in their disaster risk reduction and preparedness endeavors.



SRSR UNDRR with the Prime Minister of Tonga

Tsunami Evacuation Drill Conducted for Community Preparedness

On October 20, 2023, the National Disaster Risk Management Office in collaboration with Tonga Meteorological Service and Tonga Geological Service, conducted a tsunami preparedness drill at 'Apifo'ou College' and 'Ahopanilolo Technical Institute.' The main goal was to enhance coastal community readiness, especially safeguarding Catholic Schools near the shorelines, and assess the preparedness of key institutions. The initiative aligns with the 2023

International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction "fighting inequality for a resilient future." The drill involved various stakeholders, including government ministries, first responders, educational institutions, families, and businesses, aiming to save lives and reassure concerned parents. It began with unveiling Tsunami Evacuation Sign Boards in the Greater Nuku'alofa area to raise public awareness and educate about evacuation routes.



Partners Roundtable Focuses on Enhancing Collaboration for Tonga's Resilience: NDRMO Presented National DRR Priorities



On 23 October, the Australian High Commission hosted a forum in Tonga for development partners, including the UN Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, to discuss disaster and climate risk reduction. They highlighted Tonga's vulnerability and the need for urgent action, with a focus on financing for risk reduction.

During the roundtable, the National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO) identified national disaster risk reduction priorities, such as implementing the new DRM Act, securing financing, and improving disaster management plans. The event aimed to accelerate the implementation of international frameworks and strengthen partnerships

among Tonga's development partners. Attendees included representatives from NDRMO, the Australian High Commission, Chinese Embassy, European Union, Japanese Embassy, New Zealand High Commission, UK High Commission, US Embassy, JICA, UNDRR, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and the Pacific Community.

Exercise Longreach Strengthens Tonga's Emergency Response Capabilities & Enhances Disaster Preparedness



More than seventy participants were engaged in Exercise Longreach 2023, an ongoing collaboration between the Australian Defence Force, the National Disaster Risk Management Office, His Majesty's Armed Forces, and all first responder agencies in Tonga. This intensive training took place from October 10 to 12 at the Fa'onelua Convention Centre, Nuku'alofa, Tonga, and has been designed to enhance interoperability and preparedness between the above agencies.

Mr. Sione 'Akaola, CEO for MEIDECC,

Tonga, emphasized the value of Exercise Longreach in improving disaster risk management and coordination, especially in preparation for the upcoming cyclone season and El Niño alert. He urged a culture of continuous learning.

Lord Vaea, Minister for Internal Affairs, stressed the need for stronger relationships, better communication, and efficient disaster relief, tailored to daily challenges.

Australia's High Commissioner, Ms.

Rachael Moore, highlighted the importance of coordination and communication in disaster response, with Exercise Longreach helping Tonga prepare for future disasters.

Training sessions will enhance the new DRM Act and Policy to strengthen governance arrangements. Chief Superintendent of Tonga Police, Mr. 'Atunaisa Taumoepeau, thanked partners for their commitment to building a resilient Tonga and emphasized shared responsibility for the safety of Tongan communities through collaboration.

Contract signed for new headquarter of Tonga Meteorological Service and National Disaster Risk Management Office



On October 25, 2023, Tonga took a significant step in improving its disaster preparedness by signing a contract for the construction of a new headquarters for the Tonga Meteorological Service and National

Disaster Risk Management Office (TMS/NDRMO). The contract was awarded to Puloka Construction Ltd, known for its quality infrastructure projects. This partnership, formalized between the

Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management, and Meteorology (MEIDECC) and Puloka Construction Ltd, marks a milestone in Tonga's efforts to enhance its capacity for monitoring, predicting, and responding to meteorological events and disasters. The new headquarters will be a state-of-the-art facility equipped with advanced technology, empowering TMS/NDRMO to carry out its vital roles in disaster risk management and meteorological services.

This initiative underscores the Tongan government's commitment to protecting its citizens and mitigating the impact of natural disasters. Construction is now underway, promising a safer and more resilient future for Tonga with advanced disaster preparedness, early warning systems, and crisis response capabilities.

Initial Damage Assessment Training Workshop held in Tongatapu



The NDRMO, in collaboration with UN OCHA and UNDP, successfully completed a three-day IDA training workshop from October 24th to 26th, 2023, in Tongatapu. Over 100 participants from various sectors were trained to conduct effective Initial

Damage Assessment (IDA) after disasters. Training sessions were divided into three groups at different locations within Tongatapu. Participants learned about IDA processes, used structured questionnaires for needs assessment, and engaged in

scenario exercises and group work. The program aims to create a cadre of trained enumerators for coordinated disaster response. Similar workshops are planned for Eua, Vava'u, and Ha'apai islands with over 200 participants.

Radio and TV Programme on Tsunami Awareness

On International Tsunami Day, the Tonga Task Force takes proactive steps to engage with the public through live broadcasts on television and radio. These efforts play a crucial role in ensuring our community is well-prepared for potential tsunamis. The director of the National Disaster Risk

Management Office (NDRMO) collaborates with the Tsunami Task Force to raise awareness about tsunami preparedness, emphasizing the importance of being ready for these natural disasters.



Introducing newly enacted DRM Act 2021

The Disaster Risk Management Act of 2021 replaces the outdated 2007 National Emergency Management Act. The new legislation aims to establish a comprehensive legal framework for:

Reducing Disaster Risks: Proactive measures to mitigate risks through risk reduction plans, strategies, and policies.

Disaster Response: Efficient coordination during disasters among government agencies, NGOs, and stakeholders.

Disaster Recovery: Support for rehabilitation and reconstruction after disasters. The Act promotes a shift towards risk reduction and preparedness. For more details, refer to the full DRM Act 2021 text.

www.nemotonga.gov.to/laws-policies-plans

National Disaster Risk Management Office is pleased to announce the launch of its new website, providing a resource for disaster risk management information. You can now access website at nemotonga.gov.to

National Disaster Risk Management Office
Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEDECC), Government of Tonga

Emergency contact
NEMO toll free
0800-6366

Home About NDRMO Disaster Portal Resources Get Ready Contact

Strengthening resilience and improving preparedness to save lives, protect livelihoods and assets of communities and individuals from the impact of hazards

Exercise Tropic Twilight - Joint Visit to Ha'apai by NDRMO, NZDF and HMAF



In a joint initiative involving the New Zealand Defence Force Headquarters Joint Force, the National Disaster Management Office (NDRMO), and His Majesty's Armed

Forces, a visit was made to Lifuka Ha'apai to prepare for Exercise Tropic Twilight, scheduled for May 2024. The visit commenced with a gracious meeting with

Governor Pita Taufatofua of Ha'apai and proceeded to on-site inspections. Governor Taufatofua warmly welcomed Lieutenant Colonel Aimee Davis and her team, expressing sincere gratitude for selecting Ha'apai as the venue for Exercise Tropic Twilight. This endeavor is viewed as a significant step toward enhancing the resilience of Ha'apai. Those in attendance included Acting OIC for MEIDECC, Selusalema Vite, Major James Brosnan, Captain Josh Morete, NZ Defence Adviser Lieutenant Colonel Aimee Davis, Lu'isa Taunga from NDRMO SAS, and Captain Sione Moala Fifita. This collaborative planning represents a dedicated effort to reinforce disaster response capabilities in the region, promoting greater community resilience.

Highlights of SRSG UNDRR mission in Tonga (20-23 October 2023)



20 Oct - SRSG DRR led UN mission with the Prime Minister of Tonga



21 Oct - SRSG UNDRR interaction with displaced communities from 'Atataa, listened challenges



23 Oct - Dir NDRMO presenting National DRR priorities during partners roundtable



20 Oct - SRSG UNDRR participated in Tsunami Evacuation Drill



23 Oct - CSOs roundtable with SRSG hosted by New Zealand High Commission



21 Oct - SRSG paid a visit to areas affected by tsunami, listened experience of those affected



21 Oct - SRSG led mission together with NDRMO Team visited Tonga Met Service



21 Oct - SRSG met Tsunami Affectees to listen their stories & challenges

For Contact:

Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO), the Ministry of MEIDECC, Tonga
Phone: 28004, 28005, Toll Free: 0800-6366, Website: nemotonga.gov.to