



National Disaster Risk Management Office

Ministry of MEIDECC, Tonga

NEWS LETTER

October-November 2024

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

Tonga Delegation Highlights Disaster Risk Reduction Efforts at APMCDRR 2024



14-18 October: Tongan delegation at the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDRR 2024) held in Manila, Philippines

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The Kingdom of Tonga made a significant impact at the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDRR) 2024, held from October 14-18 in Manila, Philippines.

Co-organized by UNDRR and the Government of the Philippines, the conference brought together regional leaders and experts to strengthen disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies.

Tonga's delegation, led by Mr. Mafua-'i-Vai'utukakau Maka, Director of the National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO), included key officials from various ministries. They actively contributed to discussions, showcasing Tonga's innovative approaches to disaster

preparedness, early warning systems, and resilient infrastructure.

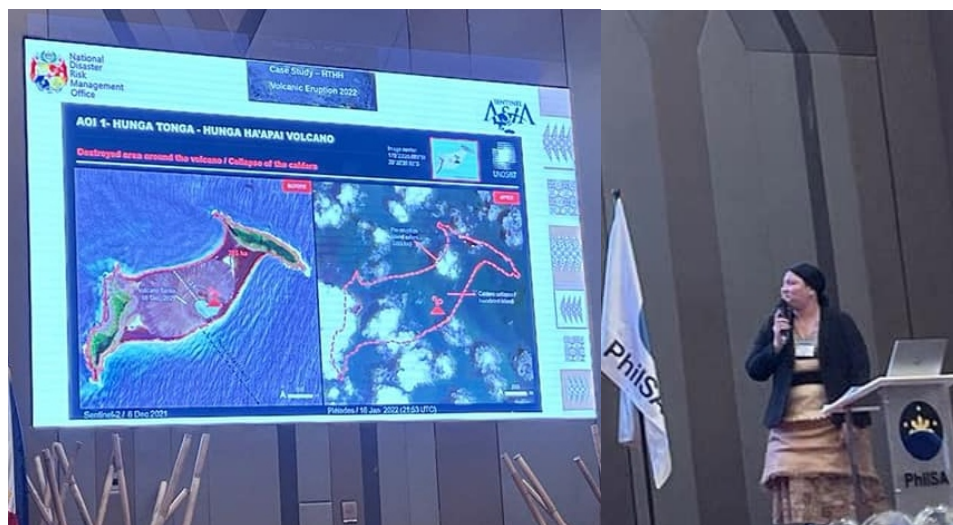
At the event, Tonga issued a statement reaffirming its commitment to resilience-building and strengthening partnerships across the Asia-Pacific. The Tongan delegation participated in various side events, panel discussions, and conferences, focusing on development finance for climate and disaster displacement, the Pacific Humanitarian Warehousing Program, Pacific Humanitarian Response Coordination Mechanism, investing in disaster-resilient infrastructure

in Asia and the Pacific, and the 5th World Tsunami Museum Conference (WTMC5).

Tonga's presence at APMCDRR 2024 highlighted its proactive DRR efforts, offering valuable lessons for communities worldwide.



Tonga Joins Sentinel Asia to Strengthen Disaster Preparedness and Management Using Advanced Satellite Technology



From November 7-11, at the 9th Joint Project Meeting for Sentinel Asia STEP-3 in the Philippines, Ms. 'Ofa Masiwawa from NDRMO Tonga, showcased how satellite technology enhances disaster operations and strengthens resilience



NDRMO is excited to announce that, as of September 19th, Tonga has officially joined Sentinel Asia as a member. This achievement makes Tonga the second Joint Project Team (JPT) member in the Pacific, alongside SPC and Fiji's NDMO.

Sentinel Asia, founded in 2005 by the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSF), is a voluntary initiative that leverages earth observation technology to improve disaster management across the region. Utilizing near real-time satellite imagery and Web-GIS mapping tools, Sentinel Asia plays a important role in

disaster risk reduction.

As a member, Tonga now has direct access to satellite imagery for pre- and post-disaster analysis, significantly improving its ability to assess damage, make timely decisions during emergencies, and strengthen community preparedness. Tonga has already benefitted from Sentinel Asia's support, with three emergency requests resulting in critical damage assessment maps that significantly improved disaster response capabilities.

Representing Tonga for the first time at the 9th Joint Project Meeting for Sentinel Asia

STEP-3, held from November 7th to 11th in the Philippines, Ms. 'Ofa Masiwawa from NDRMO, showcased how satellite technology has enhanced Tonga's disaster operations. Her presentation highlighted the importance of empowering local teams to analyze satellite imagery, emphasizing its role in strengthening disaster resilience.

NDRMO Tonga extend sincere gratitude to Sentinel Asia, the Japanese Aerospace Space Agency, the Philippines Space Agency, and UN-SPIDER for their invaluable support in making this partnership a reality.

NDRMO Attends Disaster Risk Management Training at JICA in Japan



From September 29 to October 17, Mr. Taha'asilamea Sila Ki Vai Manu of Tonga's National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO) participated in the JICA Knowledge Co-Creation Program on Disaster Risk Reduction and Community Development in Japan. The program, hosted by the Japan

International Cooperation Agency (JICA), brought together 17 participants from around the world to enhance disaster management strategies.

Over 18 days, Mr. Manu learned from Japan's disaster reduction practices, focusing on building resilient communities and



strengthening collaboration between local governments and communities. This experience will significantly strengthen Tonga's disaster risk reduction efforts. NDRMO thanks JICA and the Embassy of Japan for their support in enhancing Tonga's resilience strategies.

Enhancing Pacific Resilience:

NDMRO Tonga Participates in PaRTneR-2 Steering Committee Meeting and Training Workshop in Fiji



From November 4-8, disaster management specialist from six Pacific nations—Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu—gathered in Nadi, Fiji

for the PaRTneR-2 Project Steering Committee Meeting and Training Workshop.

The intensive session focused on using tools like RiskScape, Pacific Resilience Nexus, and QGIS to better assess and mitigate risks from coastal hazards, cyclones, and drought.

Mr. Mafua-'i-Vai'utukakau Maka, Director of Tonga's National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO), participated alongside the Tongan project team, reinforcing Tonga's commitment to advancing disaster resilience.

Led by the Pacific Community (SPC) and New Zealand's NIWA, with support from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the workshop equips Pacific nations with tools for effective, data-driven planning.

Empowering the Next Generation:

Tonga Holds Tsunami Drill for Schoolchildren on World Tsunami Awareness Day



In honor of World Tsunami Awareness Day on November 5, 2024, Tonga's National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO) led a tsunami preparedness drill across multiple Tongatapu schools, including GMS Popua, GMS Ma'ufanga, GMS Kolomotu'a, GMS

Fanga, and GPS Hala'ovave. With participation from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Tonga Meteorological Services, Tonga Geological Services, Communication Department, Tonga Fire & Emergency Services, Tonga Police and HMAF

and the Tonga Red Cross Society, the drill focused on teaching schoolchildren critical safety steps for tsunami emergencies. The event was crafted to provide young students with hands-on experience in following evacuation routes, recognizing warning signals, and identifying safe assembly points. By involving children in these exercises, NDRMO emphasizes building a culture of preparedness from a young age, ensuring they are ready to guide their communities when needed. This World Tsunami Awareness Day initiative reinforces Tonga's commitment to resilience, supported by the World Bank's PREP Tonga program.



NDRMO Tonga Participates in Regional Workshop to Strengthen Disaster and Climate Resilience in the Pacific



From October 28 to November 2, our Tonga representatives—Mr. 'Aisea Fungavai, Ms. 'Ofa Masiwawa (NDRMO), and Mrs. Lusua Toumoua (Ministry of Infrastructure)—participated in the 2nd Regional Technical Co-Design Workshop led by Integrate Pasifika in Nadi.

The workshop, following an initial session in July, gathered government and NGO

experts from Fiji, Samoa, Tuvalu, Marshall Islands, Vanuatu, and the Cook Islands to advance disaster and climate resilience.

The team worked together to shape a knowledge-sharing platform that supports virtual Communities of Practice (COP), with key outcomes including the establishment of a Steering Committee, creation of a technical working group, and

development of a platform to address shared challenges in knowledge management.

NDRMO proud of our team's contribution to this Pacific-wide resilience effort—thank you, SPC, for this opportunity, and we look forward to future IP initiatives!

Community-Based Disaster Risk Management Seminar held in Tonga with Support from China



The Seminar on Community-Based Disaster Risk Management and Resilience for Pacific Island Countries held from October 28 to November 1 in Nuku'alofa, Tonga. Over five days, 23 disaster risk reduction (DRR) practitioners from Tonga, along with participants from Fiji, worked to enhance disaster resilience.

Organized by the National Disaster Reduction Centre of China and Tonga's National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO), the seminar focused on disaster risk governance, risk reduction, data

collection, and search and rescue operations.

Hon. Lord Fohe, Tonga's Minister for Agriculture, Food & Forestry, opened the event, highlighting the importance of collaboration for community safety: "Our collective resilience is key to facing the natural disasters that challenge us." A special thanks to China for its invaluable support in sharing knowledge and best practices, as we work together to build a safer, more resilient Pacific.



Enhancing Humanitarian Coordination:

NDRMO Tonga Participates in Pacific ASYREC Workshop held in Nadi



In the second week of October, representatives from various Pacific government agencies gathered in Nadi, Fiji, for a crucial workshop on the Automated System for Relief Emergency Consignments (ASYREC).

The ASYREC system, developed by the United Nations' ASYCUDA and UNOCHA, is revolutionizing international humanitarian relief by streamlining the management and coordination of aid shipments. This system aims to accelerate response times, ensuring

that vital assistance reaches affected communities faster and more efficiently. NDRMO Tonga was represented at the workshop by Mr. Lazarus Vaipulu, who worked alongside Pacific partners to strengthen disaster response capabilities in the region.

The insights gained from this workshop will enhance NDRMO Tonga's disaster response efforts, enabling more effective coordination and faster delivery of aid in future emergencies.

Building Tonga's Disaster Resilience with Innovative Risk Tools



On October 4, the PaRTneR-2 and Integrate Pasifika teams, guided by NDRMO and supported by NIWA New Zealand, conducted capacity-building sessions in Tonga under the Pacific Risk Tools for Resilience Phase II Project. Training focused on using RiskScape and the Pacific Resilience Nexus (PRN) platform to address coastal inundation and tropical cyclone risks. Funded by New Zealand MFAT, the mission also fostered peer-to-peer learning and enhanced knowledge sharing for informed disaster risk management.

Strengthening Disaster Preparedness:

Cyclone Insurance & Drought Resilience Workshop



On 14 November, the Ministry of Finance and the National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO) hosted a full-day workshop at the Tanoa Hotel, Nuku'alofa. The event, "Drafting the Disbursement Plan for Cyclone Macro Insurance and Advancing Drought Preparedness in Tonga," highlighted key advancements in disaster risk financing and preparedness.

A major focus was Tonga's cyclone macro insurance policy, secured through the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Insurance Company (PCRIC). This policy provides rapid financial relief after severe cyclones, helping safeguard vulnerable communities and enhance national resilience. The workshop

aimed to develop a robust disbursement plan to ensure funds are directed swiftly and effectively where they are most needed.

The event also featured discussions led by Willis Towers Watson (WTW) and the World Bank on creating a drought insurance product tailored to Tonga's unique needs. Stakeholders participated in a session on drought preparedness, sharing insights on response strategies and prioritization to shape an insurance solution aligned with local realities. This workshop underscored Tonga's commitment to building resilience and advancing innovative solutions to manage disaster risks.

Disaster Risk Reduction in Action: Engaging the Vaini Community!



On November 1, a dedicated team from NDRMO, Tonga Meteorological Services, and Tonga Geological Services presented a comprehensive Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) session for LDS Emergency Response Leaders in the Vaini Division. Key topics included: 2024/2025 Tropical Cyclone Outlook by Tonga Meteorological Services, Tonga's Risk Profile focusing on volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis, presented by Tonga Geological Services, Preventative Measures to reduce disaster impacts, shared by NDRMO. Thanks to LDS Vaini for their invitation and commitment to developing a safer, more prepared community!

Inter-Cluster Coordination Committee (ICCC) Meeting: Preparing for Cyclone Season 2024-25



On 24 October 2024, the Inter-Cluster Coordination Committee (ICCC) convened to discuss readiness for the upcoming cyclone season.

Chaired by the Director of the National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO), the meeting brought together Cluster Leads to enhance inter-cluster coordination during the preparedness phase.

The Tonga Meteorological Service presented the 2024-25 cyclone season forecast, providing critical insights for planning. Cluster Leads shared their preparedness activities and state of readiness, ensuring a collaborative approach to cyclone season preparedness.

The meeting highlights the importance of coordinated efforts to safeguard Tonga during the cyclone season.

Tonga Conducts Sea-Based Emergency Response Drill



On 18 November, emergency response teams in Tongatapu conducted Operation Tofua'a: Tofua'a Airways Exercise, simulating an aircraft incident over Nuku'alofa's waterfront. The drill involved search and rescue operations aboard the MV 'Otuanga'ofa, supported by Tonga Police and Navy patrol boats. Led by Tonga Police Chief Superintendent 'Atunaisa Taumoepeau, the two-hour exercise was monitored at NEOC, National Disaster Risk Management Office.

This first-ever sea drill in Tonga tested coordination and solutions for real emergencies. Agencies involved included Tonga Police, Tonga Fire and Emergency Services, His Majesty's Armed Forces, Civil Aviation Tonga, Ministry of Health, Tonga Red Cross, NDRMO, and others. The last exercise was held in 2022 at Fua'amotu International Airport.

Tonga's Commitment to Resilient Infrastructure Highlighted at COP29 in Azerbaijan



The CEO of MEIDECC, Mr. Sione 'Akau'ola, attended COP29 in Azerbaijan alongside the Tonga delegation and participated in a CDRI side event on "Safeguarding

Investments in Disaster Resilient Infrastructure through Strengthened Governance."

During the event, Mr. Sione highlighted that, as one of the world's most disaster-prone nations, Tonga remains committed to building resilient infrastructure. With 75% of natural disasters driven by tropical cyclones and the lasting impact of the 2022 volcanic eruption, Tonga is focused on implementing its 15-year National Infrastructure Resilience Roadmap. This strategic plan, developed with the support of CDRI, UNDRR, and key development partners, aims to enhance critical systems and address the growing climate challenges.

These efforts reflect Tonga's dedication to fostering smarter, safer, and sustainable growth, demonstrating resilience and innovation in the face of adversity.

NDRMO Conducts Disaster Risk Reduction Workshop for Tonga Fire & Emergency Services Recruits



The National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO) conducted a Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Workshop for the Tonga Fire & Emergency Services New Recruit Training Course No. 15. The session, held in collaboration with Tonga Geological Services and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, aimed to enhance the recruits' disaster preparedness and response capabilities.

NDRMO Director Mr. Mafua-'i-Vai'utukakau Maka opened the workshop, highlighting the importance of DRR in safeguarding communities. A notable feature was a

hands-on simulation exercise at the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), offering recruits practical experience in disaster response operations.

The workshop covered understanding disaster risks, promoting risk-informed decision-making, strengthening community preparedness, enhancing response skills, integrating climate change considerations, and emphasizing gender-sensitive and inclusive disaster planning.

This training equips recruits with the knowledge and skills to effectively handle emergencies, bolstering Tonga's resilience.



Some Highlights of October-November



CEO Ministry of MEIDECC Sione 'Akau'ola & Aisea Fungavai from NDRMO at COP29



13 Oct: Marking International DRR Day with a special church service— deep gratitude to all partners & communities for fostering resilience



Ms Luisa from NDRMO Tonga in a panel discussion at APMCDRR 2024, Manila



NDRMO GIS expert engages at 9th Joint Project Meeting for Sentinel Asia SETP-3



19 Nov: DRR Training session with Fire & Emergency Recruits



NDRMO team engages in week-long awareness campaign for International Day for DRR 2024



21 Nov: NDRMO & Tonga Red Cross conducted Tropical Cyclone Preparedness briefing for District & Town Officers

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