



National Disaster Risk Management Office

Ministry of MEIDECC, Tonga

NEWS LETTER

February-April 2025

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 Highlights Local DRR Actions & Financing at Oslo High-Level Disaster Risk Reduction Forum



Director of NDRMO Tonga, Mr. Mafua-'i-Vai'utukakau Maka, in a panel discussion at the High-Level Policy Forum on Accelerated Financing for DRR, held in Oslo, Norway on 25-26 March 2025

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From 25-26 March 2025, Mr. Mafua-'i-Vai'utukakau Maka, Director of Tonga's National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO), participated in the High-Level Policy Forum on Accelerated Financing for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) held in Oslo, Norway.

The Forum, hosted by the Government of Norway with support from United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), gathered leaders from over 20 countries to address the global financing gap in DRR.

Mr. Maka joined 'Panel 3 of the Forum: Transforming DRR Policy Priorities into Concrete Financing and Implementation', sharing Tonga's experience in turning

policy into practical, funded action.

He highlighted Tonga's shift toward proactive, decentralized disaster risk management under the DRM Act 2021 and DRM Policy 2023–2030, including the establishment of Island and Village DRM Committees and the rollout of multi-hazard early warning systems.

Mr. Maka also stressed the importance of resilient infrastructure and risk-informed planning to reduce vulnerability in one of the world's most disaster-prone nations.

On financing, Mr. Maka shared Tonga's layered approach, including the National Emergency Fund, parametric insurance (PCRIC), and climate finance partnerships with the Green Climate Fund. He called

for greater international support to scale up early warning systems, emergency operations centres, and community-based DRM. In meetings with GFDRR, Tonga also sought technical and financial assistance to implement local DRM plans and expand warehousing and evacuation infrastructure.

Tonga's participation reinforced the country's leadership in localizing DRR and showcased practical pathways for translating global policy into ground-level impact. Outcomes from the Forum will inform key global discussions, including the 2025 Global Platform on DRR and future development financing frameworks.

NDRMO Concludes Tongatapu Consultations, Advancing Nationwide Roll-Out of Decentralized DRM



On 15 April 2025, around 40 district and town officers from Tongatapu’s local government gathered at the Fa’onelua Convention Centre to share their views and concerns on the formation of Village Disaster Risk Management Committees (VDRMCs).

The National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO) has successfully concluded the first phase of its nationwide DRM decentralization roll-out, marking a major milestone with the completion of consultations in Tongatapu.

The consultations engaged over 140 participants, including Civil Society Organizations, NGOs, faith-based and community-based organizations, local implementing partners, and district and town officers. These efforts were aimed at building shared understanding of the new DRM structure under the Disaster Risk Management Act 2021 and the National DRM Policy 2023–2030.

“This initiative is about more than compliance of DRM Act 2021—it’s about shifting decision-making and preparedness into the hands of our communities,” said Mr. Mafua-‘i-Vai’utukau Maka, Director

of NDRMO. Director of NDRMO said “By establishing Village DRM Committees and supporting them to develop local plans, we are building a stronger, more resilient Tonga.”

Each Village DRM Committee (VDRMC) will include eight community representatives ensuring inclusion of women, youth, and persons with disabilities—and will be

responsible for developing Village DRM Plans and budgets. These plans will guide DRM planning at the island and national levels.

With the Tongatapu phase now complete, the roll-out will extend to Ha’apai, Vava’u, ‘Eua, and the Niuas, targeting all 23 districts and over 1,200 participants by the end of 2025.



On 4th April, the second consultation brought together District Officers, highlighting their crucial role in guiding and supporting villages to implement their DRM responsibilities effectively.



On 3rd April, more than 30 participants representing Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)—including NGOs, Faith-Based and Community-Based Organizations—came together to discuss how communities can lead their own disaster preparedness and planning. The event underscored a strong commitment to inclusive, locally owned DRM.

NDMRO Conducts DRM Act Sensitization and Initial Damage Assessment Training to Strengthen Disaster Preparedness

On 13 March, the National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO) has launched a two-day training at Pasilika Cathedral Hall to strengthen disaster preparedness and response. Over 40 participants—including local officials, NGOs, and cluster leads attended.

The training covers Tonga's Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Act 2021 and a refresher on Initial Damage Assessment (IDA). The DRM Act highlights a shift toward proactive risk reduction and preparedness at all levels.

Opening the workshop, Ms. Luisa Tuiafitu, Acting CEO of MEIDECC, emphasized the importance of clearly understanding roles and coordination in disaster response.

Day one focuses on the DRM Act and



Policy Framework 2023–2030, with interactive sessions on governance, emergency protocols, and coordination structures.

Day two features IDA tools and simulations, including Kobo Toolbox and

GIS mapping, to enhance data collection and decision-making.

The workshop is supported by NEMA New Zealand and the Pacific Resilience Program (PSRP) II, advancing efforts to build resilience across Tonga.

NDRMO Participates in 29th Pacific Regional Disaster and Emergency Managers Meeting

Tonga Highlights Community-Led Disaster Financing



From 2–8 April 2025, the Director of the National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO) Tonga, accompanied by the NDRMO team, participated in the 29th Pacific Regional Disaster and Emergency Managers Meeting (PRDEMM) held in Fiji.

The event brought together disaster and emergency management leaders from 15 Pacific Island countries to advance regional priorities under the Nadi Declaration. Tonga reaffirmed its commitment to collective resilience and regional cooperation in the face of climate-driven disasters.

As part of the programme, the Director

NDRMO joined a panel discussion on Disaster Risk Financing under the Pacific Resilience Partnership Technical Working Group. He shared Tonga's transition to proactive, community-led risk governance through the DRM Act 2021 and National DRM Policy 2023–2030, emphasizing the rollout of Village DRM Plans and the need for dedicated local financing.

He also outlined Tonga's layered approach to financing, combining contingency reserves, parametric insurance, and international support, while calling for faster, anticipatory funding that reaches communities directly.

Basic Sendai Framework Training with UNDRR



On 10 March 2025, UNDRR facilitated a basic training and refresher session for all NDRMO staff, focusing on Tonga's role in implementing and reporting progress under the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

The session, led by Mr. Amin Shamseddini, highlighted the importance of national reporting and the ongoing contributions required from NDRMO staff to support Tonga's disaster risk reduction commitments at regional and global levels.

Tonga Response Coordination:

Cold Debrief Held to Highlights Lessons from March 31 Earthquake



On 11 April 2025, the National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO) convened a Cold Debrief with first responders to review the national response to the 7 magnitude earthquake and tsunami that struck on 31 March.

The debrief served as a critical platform to assess what worked well, identify gaps, and propose improvements across agencies. Discussions focused on coordination at national and community

levels, the effectiveness of early warnings, evacuation procedures, and public communication.

The session reaffirmed the importance of joint planning and continuous learning to enhance future emergency readiness.

NDRMO extends sincere appreciation to the people of Tonga for their calm and prompt response. Coastal evacuations were carried out swiftly with the support



of Island Governors, District and Town Officers, and key responders including Tonga Police, Fire & Emergency Services, and the Tonga Red Cross Society.

NDRMO also thank inland communities, churches, and NGOs for hosting evacuees, and media partners for timely information dissemination.

Public feedback is helping shape future improvements.

NDRMO Staff Complete Heavy Machinery Training to Strengthen Disaster Response Capacity



From 3–8 April 2025, two NDRMO staff members from the Logistics & Warehouse Division successfully completed specialized heavy machinery training at Be Safe Limited in Auckland, New Zealand. The training, funded by the BSRP II Project under SPC, aimed to strengthen operational readiness for emergency response. Courses included Digger & Excavator Operations, Load Handling with Mobile Plants, and Driving

Heavy Machinery (Rollers, Tracks, Wheels). Key skills covered hazard identification, safety measures, load movement planning, and practical machine operation.

Congratulations to Mr. Lazarus Vaipulu and Mr. Paea 'Ilangana for completing the training, which enhances NDRMO's capacity to respond swiftly and safely during disasters.

Fire Safety Awareness for NDRMO Staff



On 27 March, Tonga Fire & Emergency Services delivered a Fire Safety Awareness session for NDRMO staff, covering fire behavior, hazards, and prevention practices. The session, part of NDRMO's staff development program supported by the BSRP II Project (SPC), reinforced workplace safety and strengthened collaboration with one of our key first responders.

Enhancing Humanitarian Coordination: NDRMO and UNOCHA Co-Host Humanitarian Awareness Session



On 25 February 2025, NDRMO, in collaboration with UNOCHA Pacific, hosted a Humanitarian Awareness and Information Management Session in Nuku'alofa.

The UNOCHA visit focused on raising awareness about the Asia-Pacific Humanitarian Pool Fund and strengthening partnerships with Cluster member NGOs and CSOs engaged in disaster response in Tonga. It also set the stage for the

upcoming Anticipatory Action Feasibility Mission scheduled for May 2025.

NDRMO thanks all participating NGOs and CSOs for their dedication to improving disaster preparedness and coordination.

NDRMO Tonga welcomed Ms. Naw Htoo and Mr. Nemaia Koto from UNOCHA, who delivered the session and also met with the NDRMO Director.

Tonga Police Conduct Safety Awareness for NDRMO Staff



On 28 March, Tonga Police conducted a safety awareness session at NDRMO, highlighting their core roles, structure, and support functions during emergencies.

Led by Acting Senior Inspector Mr. Ahosiu Tali, the session helped new staff better understand police operations and reinforced collaboration between both agencies in disaster risk reduction.

The activity was supported through the BSRP II Project under SPC, as part of NDRMO's ongoing staff development efforts.

Strengthening Disaster Response: NDRMO Hosts Information Management Refresher with UNOCHA Support



As part of ongoing capacity-building efforts, the National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO) Tonga held an in-house Information Management refresher on Friday, 28 February, immediately following the TC RAE stand-down operations. The session was facilitated by UNOCHA Pacific in close collaboration with NDRMO's Research and Training team.

The training focused on the essential role

of Information Management in disaster response and reinforced NDRMO's leadership in coordinating damage assessments and maintaining the national disaster risk reduction database, as mandated by the Disaster Risk Management Act 2021.

By strengthening internal knowledge and practical skills, NDRMO continues to enhance its ability to respond effectively to emergencies and disasters.

NDRMO Staff Trained on Gender and Safeguarding



On 24 March, the Women and Children Crisis Centre (WCCC) Tonga delivered a Gender and Safeguarding training for staff of the National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO).

The session covered key topics including gender awareness, responding to gender-based violence in emergencies, referral pathways, and safeguarding protocols. Delivered in the Tongan language, the training ensured strong cultural understanding and relevance.

NDRMO extends its sincere thanks to WCCC Director Mrs. 'Ofa Guttenbeil-Lilikiliki and her team for their support. We look forward to continued collaboration.

NDRMO Participates in Regional Workshop on Geohazard Resilience



From 24–28 February 2025, Tonga’s National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO) joined regional experts at the Regional Workshop on Science and Partnerships for Geohazard Resilience in the Pacific held in Apia, Samoa.

Co-organized by UNESCO and Samoa’s Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the workshop focused on strengthening early warning systems and advancing the Regional Geohazards Strategic Framework. Sessions covered

seismic and tsunami monitoring, volcanic risk, and landslide preparedness.

Representing NDRMO Tonga, Mr. ‘Aisea Fungavai actively contributed to discussions and was appointed to the PTWS WG-PICT Task Team and as interim member of the PACWAVE-IOC Tsunami group—affirming Tonga’s commitment to regional collaboration.

NDRMO extends appreciation to UNESCO and partners for this important platform.

Building Disaster Leadership Across the Pacific



From 3–7 March 2025, NDRMO Tonga participated in the Regional Strategic Leadership Programme held in Suva, Fiji. Supported by the UK Government, the training brought together emerging leaders from six Pacific countries to strengthen leadership and coordination in disaster response.

Mr. ‘Aisea Fungavai represented Tonga, contributing to enhanced multi-agency collaboration and resilience-building efforts.

Thanks to the UK Government for supporting Pacific disaster leadership!

Empowering Communities: Strengthening Preparedness Through 72-Hour Emergency Kit Outreach



On 8 February 2025, the National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO), in collaboration with the Lapaha District Office and community leaders, conducted

a 72-hour emergency kit assistance outreach across eight villages in Constituency 10, Tongatapu. The initiative aimed to strengthen disaster preparedness

through the inspection and verification of household emergency kits.

This activity served as a pilot for new digital tools, including a standardized kit checklist, real-time dashboards, and mobile data collection via Survey123. The outreach also leveraged local networks, particularly women’s groups, to enhance community engagement and ownership.

Key outcomes included stronger local partnerships, heightened awareness of essential preparedness items, and valuable community insights—such as the inclusion of ID cards and spiritual items in emergency kits.

The activity reflects NDRMO’s commitment to building resilient communities through localized action, innovation, and continuous improvement.

Strengthening Readiness: NDRMO Completes Senior First Aid Training with Tonga Red Cross



On Thursday, 17th April 2025, the National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO) successfully concluded a two-day Senior First Aid Training, conducted in collaboration with the Tonga Red Cross Society.

The training is part of NDRMO's broader commitment to enhancing internal capacity and preparedness for emergency response and field operations.

Day 2 focused on hands-on practical sessions and assessments, reinforcing the

theoretical knowledge introduced on Day 1. The training equipped staff with essential life-saving skills and the confidence to respond effectively during emergencies and deployments across Tonga.

NDRMO extend thanks to facilitators Mrs. Silongo Fakasi'ieiki and Mr. Sione Talifolau Lihau for their expert guidance, and to BSRP II for financial support to this important initiative.

PIEMA Visit to Tonga - Strengthens Partnerships & Emergency Preparedness



From 22–25 May 2025, the Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance (PIEMA) team visited Tonga to strengthen collaboration on emergency management. They held consultations with the National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO), Tonga Fire & Emergency Services, Tonga Police, and Cluster members.

Key discussions focused on advancing the Strategic Roadmap for Emergency Management (SREM), aligning it with national development plans, identifying capacity-building needs, and planning the next phase of support. Supported by SPC, New Zealand, and Australia, the mission reinforced strong partnerships to enhance Tonga's disaster preparedness and resilience.

Some Highlights of February-April DRM Activities



13 March: Participants in the group work at DRM Act Sensitization & IDA Workshop



15 April: Town Officers & Districts Town Officers at Consultation on Village DRM Committees & Plans



25 March: Group photo of High-Level Forum on Accelerated Financing for DRR held in Oslo, Norway



11 April: Cold Debriefing held with first responders to review the national response of 7 magnitude earthquake on 31 March in Tonga



24 March: Women and Children Crisis Centre (WCCC) facilitated a Gender & Safeguarding training for all NDRMO staff



25 Feb: NDRMO's Logistics & Warehouse division, underwent training on water truck maintenance to support emergency response readiness

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