



## PRESS RELEASE

### Initial Damage Assessment Training Workshop Concludes Successfully in Tonga



**26 October 2023 (Nuku'alofa, Tonga)** – The National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO), in collaboration with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has marked a significant milestone with the successful conclusion of a three-day training workshop on Initial Damage Assessment (IDA).

From October 24th to October 26th, 2023, over 100 representatives from government agencies, non-government organizations, and the private sector gathered in Tongatapu for a comprehensive series of workshops. The primary goal of this initiative was to equip participants with the essential knowledge and skills required to conduct effective Initial Damage Assessment (IDA) following disasters or emergencies. To accommodate the substantial number of participants, the training was organized into three separate groups, each conducted at various locations (Ancient Tonga, Davina) within Tongatapu.

During the three-day workshop, participants familiarized themselves with a wide range of IDA-related topics, including the understanding and IDA process. They became acquainted with structured IDA questionnaires designed to gather crucial information for needs assessment and actively engaged in scenario-based IDA questionnaire exercises, collaborative group work, and simulation activities.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Mafua Vai'utukakau Maka, the Director of the National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO) highlighted the importance of the IDA training, which equips key personnel with the ability to swiftly assess the impacts of various disasters, including national calamities. The Director NDRMO stressed the importance of technology in disaster preparedness and in responding to disasters effectively and saving lives. The director acknowledged the support of UN agencies, particularly UNDP, in the recovery and capacity strengthening efforts following the Honga-Tonga-Honga-Hapai volcanic eruption and tsunami. The director concluded by wishing the participants a successful training and encourage them to make the most of the learning and discussion.

The overall all goal of this program is to establish a cadre of trained enumerators who will play a vital role in supporting a well-coordinated national IDA team deployed to communities affected by disasters including enhance inter-agency cluster coordination in emergency response. The NDRMO is dedicated to working closely with district and town officers to ensure they are well-versed in the specific set of questions to be collected during the IDA period.

The NDRMO, UN OCHA, and UNDP reaffirm their unwavering commitment to working collaboratively to build a resilient and prepared community in Tonga by imparting participants with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective Initial Damage Assessment, this initiative takes a significant stride in enhancing the region's capacity to respond to disasters and emergencies.

Similar IDA training workshops are scheduled to take place in Eua, Vava'u, and Ha'apai islands, with over 200 participants will take part in the same high-quality training on Initial Damage Assessment.

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