



## PRESS RELEASE

### Pacific Partnership Civil-Military Coordination Workshop



**13 November 2023 (Nuku'alofa, Tonga)** – More than thirty (30) participants are part of the “Pacific Partnership 2023 – Civil Military Coordination Workshop and Tabletop Exercise that will be taking place from November 13th to 17th, 2023, at the Tanoa Hotel in Nuku’alofa. The event is a collaborative effort between the National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO) Tonga, Centre for Excellence in Disaster Risk Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DM), the U.S Department of Defense, and the U.S Coast Guard.

Pacific Partnership is the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission in the Indo-Pacific. The objective of this mission is to enhance regional interoperability and disaster response capabilities.

In her remarks, Moana Kioa, the Deputy Director NDRMO highlighted Pacific Partnership as a testament to strong partnerships and commitment to Tonga's well-being. She expressed appreciation for workshop participation, emphasizing its pivotal role in building resilience. She emphasized that the workshop and tabletop exercise aim to enhance readiness, coordination, and response capabilities for various disasters, recognizing Tonga's vulnerability. She highlighted the civic responsibility of participants, including the first responders, planners, and leaders in disaster management, in building community resilience.

The Mission Commander, Captain Claudine Caluori of the U.S Navy pointed out that the mission partners visit and conduct tailored humanitarian civic action preparedness activities in the areas such as engineering, disaster response, public health, and other outreach events. Further, additional criteria are also considered, such as host nations’ objectives and desires. She stated “Pacific Partnership transitioned from its primary focus of providing direct care to focus on collective capacity building. So, any direct care provided will be shoulder to shoulder with host nation and partner nations. And the intent is that we share the knowledge and skills that

are enduring and applicable well after the mission is completed”.

Emphasizing the need for proactive preparation, Captain Caluori also stressed Tonga's vulnerability to catastrophic events and cyclones, hindering economic growth and rising sea levels. The Commander stressed the importance of thorough preparedness and reaffirmed the US commitment to training partners to tackle challenges, particularly referencing the significant impact of the Hunga-Tonga-Tonga-Ha'apai (HTHH) in the region.

Pacific Partnership 2023 is supported by national and international partners, including the National Disaster Risk Management Office, His Majesty's Armed Forces (HMAF), relevant ministries, first responders, cluster leads, UN agencies, NGOs, and key entities such as the US Indo-Pacific Command, US Pacific Fleet, Naval Medical Forces Pacific, US Coast Guard, Centre for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DM), and USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance.

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