The Role of the Regulator in Disaster Risk Management

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SUMMARY

This presentation is of three parts

- **Part I –** Why ICT/Telecommunications Regulators are critical   to National Plans for disaster risk management**;**

- **Part II -** How ICT/Telecommunications Regulators should involve themselves in the national disaster management and mitigation process; and

- **Part III** – Sharing the experience of developing NETPs in the Pacific

REGULATORS RESPONSIBILITY

➢ Governments has a responsibility to manage the effects of natural disaster on their communities. This includes both preparing their communities for natural disasters and helping them recover from these disasters.

➢ Regulators as part of their broad functions have the responsibility to (a) facilitate the development of the telecommunications sector in order to promote social and economic development; and

➢ (b) promote the efficient and reliable provision of telecommunications services

RATIONALE FOR REGULATOR INVOLVEMENT

- Noting the Regulators responsibility for ensuring that the networks continue to operate in an efficient and effective manner; and

- Further noting that, generally, there is a lack of coordination and communication policies, plans, tools to provide solutions for preparedness, response and recovery;

- The development of National Emergency Telecommunications Plans will help in establishing baselines for an effective approach to disaster management and the regulators involvement would then be critical.

HOW SHOULD REGULATORS BE INVOLVED

- The Development of national plans like the NETP must of necessity involve all stakeholders and be truly consultative;

- This would ensure a truly comprehensive plan and also have the benefits of "buy-in" from all, having been party to the Plan's development.

- Regulators (or the National Disaster Management Offices) should act as the facilitators in the development process while seeking agreement on who will "own" and promote the NETP.

THE PACIFIC EXPERIENCE

- The Pacific is in the process of finalizing a template for the Pacific Countries to use in developing their NETPs

- The experience has been that the NETP is not just an ICT technology issue

- It's the people and process that make the difference and technology must always be seen as a facilitator for transporting the correct message to the right persons at the right time

PACIFIC LESSONS

Lessons learnt are:

➢ There needs to be plans that cater for different types of disasters (Tropical storms, earthquakes, tsunami, volcanoes, man made disasters) as the protocols for each one may differ

➢ There are 4 distinct phases to plan for and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) can provide assistance in planning for all phases:

i) Preparation: Helping people to understand the need to prepare for disasters

ii) Alerting: Alerting people to impending disasters

iii) Response: Helping people and agencies to respond to a disaster;

iv)   Recovery: Helping people recover after a disaster

PACIFIC NETP

THE SLIDES THAT FOLLOW SHOW HOW THE PACIFIC AS A REGION IS ADDRESSING THE CREATION OF A GENERIC TEMPLATE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NETP.

GIVEN THE LIMITED TIME FOR PRESENTATION THIS IS BEING ADDED FOR INFORMATION AND THE LAST SLIDE PROVIDES OUR CONTACT DETAILS AND WOULD BE WILLING TO CLARIFY ANY ISSUES OR PROVIDE AVAILABLE INFORMATION TO ANY INTERESTED PARTY.
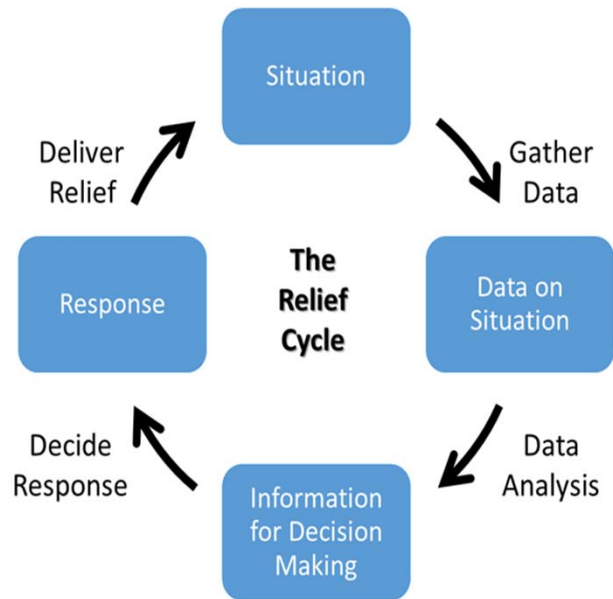
ICT in the Disaster relief cycle

Activity	Examples of the use of ICT
Gather Data	• Computer-based questionnaires to gather structured data • Communications to get data back to base
Data Analysis	• Data-mining tools to convert this data into information suitable for decision making
Decide Response	• Decision support tools to assist in allocating resources
Deliver Relief	• Communications and database tools for managing logistics • Communications tools for disaster relief teams

Disasters are on the rise

- In 1900 less than 100 major disasters were reported

TRENDS

- In 2000 more than 600 , even taking into account improved reporting that's a major increase
- In 2016 there were 315 natural catastrophe events with economic losses of $210 billion.
- **Disasters discriminate**
- Disasters affect everyone but discriminate against the poor and vulnerable
- Low income countries account for 9% of the world population but 48% of fatalities

Disasters are costly

- Current estimates for the period 2010 -2012 for damages is 1.7 Trillion US dollars 2010 -2012.
- 2016 was the seventh highest year on record with the combined economic loss exceeding the $200 billion threshold for the first time since 2013

Status of NETPs in the Pacific

- Survey of Pacific Island Countries indicated that while there was agreement on the need for an NETP only Samoa had one.
- Vanuatu has established a committee to develop its own NETP, Solomon Islands and Tonga have also expressed desire to establish a National Plan
- Most agreed on the importance of the principles in the Tampere Convention; Marshall Islands is a signatory while Tonga is a party through accession
- Most countries had a main Act (Disaster Management) while some had other acts like the Telecommunications Act that needed to be considered in developing NETPs
- Solomon Islands, Samoa, Vanuatu and Tonga had put in place significant resources to be used for disaster management

Development of NETPs

- The process used in developing an NETP is as important as the document itself;
- Identification and involvement of all stakeholders is required to ensure buy-in and adoption;
- International resources and possible assistance should be identified and integrated into the plan
- Templates exist so no need to reinvent but national considerations must be taken on board
- The NETP must be designed to include a process of regular simulations with feedback leading to modification;
- It must also include a process to ensure newcomers and recent hires to involved ministries and critical positions are fully aware of the document and their responsibilities.
- Care to be taken to ensure that it is a dynamic document

NETP Content

The NETP should address the four phases of the any disaster or emergency;

- **Preparation** – Sensitizing persons to the need to prepare for disasters
- **Alerting** – Alerting persons to action in the face of impending disasters
- **Response** – assisting people and agencies to respond to a disaster
- **Recovery** – addressing the recovery process after a disaster

The NETP should be people and process centric. It should recognize that ICT is an extremely useful tool but it should always be treated as a means to an end, not the end itself.

Considerations for the NETP

- The Samoan model has an Executive summary that provides the objectives of the plan, its mandate and identifies the key stakeholders;

- The introduction explains the mandate for change and the purpose of the NETP – Specific disaster plans for Tsunami, Cyclones, Earthquakes; etc. are included;

- The Plan Objectives are the foundations for the Role of the Emergency Communications Committee

- Implementation and measuring of achievements is a recommended inclusion

- The Plan should consider the role of ICTs in Disaster Management and Mitigation and provide arrangements for the four phases of a disaster

- Inclusion of reference materials that indicate key personnel with contacts, available resources, spectrum allocation procedures and the Plan's activation procedure are required to complete the template

NETP workshop

- PIRRC contracted an expert, Don Wallace, to assist Pacific Countries in the development of their NETP's;

- The workshop was in Port Vila, Vanuatu 15th -17th in collaboration with Regulators in the Pacific Region, the ITU, The UN Emergency Telecommunications Cluster and the Government of Vanuatu

- In preparation for the Workshop Pacific Countries were surveyed and their needs identified. The Samoan NETP was used as the base template.

Conclusions

- PIRRC in collaboration with a number of related agencies will provide the countries with resources to help in the development of NETPs;

- The initial intervention focuses on the Regulators and policy makers with the mandate to develop such a plan

- There need to be a concerted effort at both the Regional and National level to have a regionally coordinated effort that would maximize the use of available resources

- The workshop in Vanuatu is a step in the right direction but there needs to be commitment and follow up at the national level to ensure that sustainable and usable Plans are developed.

Thank you

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