# The Development of National Emergency Telecoms Plans for Pacific

Prepared by

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# SUMMARY

One of the major roles of Governments is managing the effects of natural disaster on their communities. This includes both preparing their communities for natural disasters and helping them recover from these disasters.

In the Pacific, 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.

# OVERVIEW

- This presentation will focus on the preparation of NETPs in the Pacific
- The Impact of climate change on disasters will be briefly touched but is a complete presentation by itself
- The Importance of ICTs in Disaster Management and Mitigation is not fully covered here but should not be ignored.

# CONTENTS

- The Presentation addresses
- A Review of climate change and impact on natural disasters
- The Importance of ICT's for Disaster Risk Reduction and
- The Development of National Emergency Telecoms Plans for Pacific

# IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON DISASTERS

Climate change impact on natural disasters has to be taken into account when planning for Disaster Management and Mitigation.

- Climate change increases the likelihood of weather-related natural disasters.
- Global warming could lead to fewer storms but they will be of greater intensity.
- Other environmental changes brought on by global warming could make the storms more deadly. Melting glaciers and ice caps will likely cause sea levels to rise, which would make coastal flooding more severe when a storm comes ashore.

# ICT for Disaster Mitigation and Management

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) can help with the 4 phases to any emergency or disaster:

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

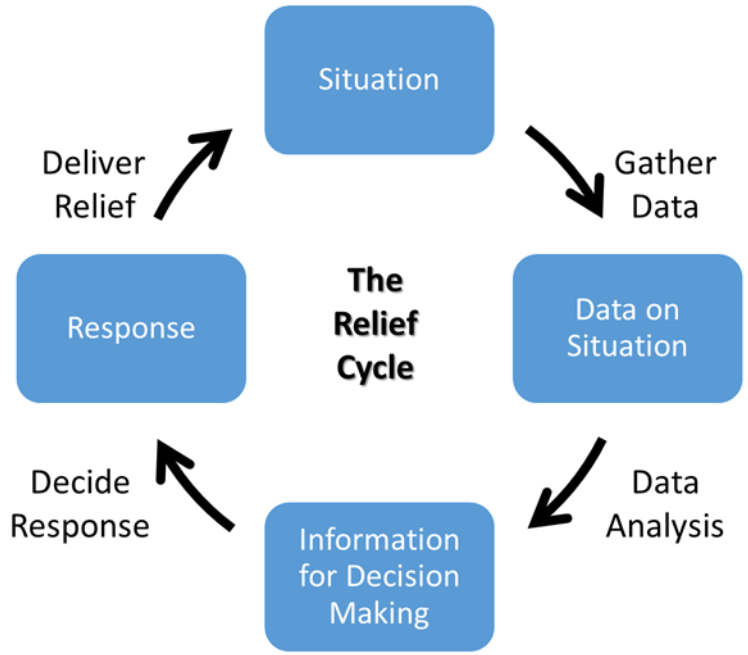
ii) Alerting: Alerting people to impending disasters

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

iv) Recovery: Helping people recover after a disaster

The ITU provides a link that highlights the use of ICTs in a disaster see: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=useYw9q0Lck

# ICT in the Disaster relief cycle




| Activity | Examples of the use of ICT |
|---|---|
| **Gather Data** | • Computer-based questionnaires to gather structured data<br>• 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<br>• Communications tools for disaster relief teams |

# TRENDS

**Disasters are on the rise**

- In 1900 less than 100 major disasters were reported
- 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


# Development of NETPs in the Pacific

- Status of NETPs in the Pacific
- Development of an NETP
- NETP content
- Pacific NETP Workshop

# 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 has contracted an expert, Don Wallace, to assist Pacific Countries in the development of their NETP's;
- The workshop will be held in Port Vila, Vanuatu 15th -17th in collaboration the Regulator, 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 will be 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

For further information on this presentation please contact

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