

Pacific Regional Local Government Symposium 2010

Working Group Session 1C: Building Urban Resilience to Disasters & Climate Change

Chair:	Ms Amina Uriam, Director Internal Affairs, Kiribati
Facilitators:	Ms Angelika Planitz, Sub-regional Coordinator Pacific, UNISDR Ms Sarah McCartney, Pacific Program Manager, UN-Habitat Ms Catherine Wallace, Disaster Risk Information Officer, UNISDR
Session Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Chair welcomed participants and introduced the three (3) facilitators. ▪ The facilitators provided an overview of the session for participants and delivered the UN Secretary-General's Official Message on the Occasion of the International Day for Disaster Reduction ▪ The facilitators launched the Pacific version of ISDR's 2010-2011 World Disaster Reduction Campaign: <i>Making Cities Resilient – is your city getting ready?</i> and presented UN-Habitat's <i>Cities and Climate Change Initiative</i>. ▪ Representatives from Cairns and Port Moresby shared their cities' experiences in participating in the <i>Resilient Cities Campaign</i> and <i>Cities and Climate Change Initiative</i> respectively. ▪ Question time / plenary discussion was held, with a number of participants sharing the experiences of their city/town/local government with respect to climate change and disaster risk reduction. ▪ The Chair concluded the session.
Context:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ International Day for Disaster Reduction October 13 marks the International Day for Disaster Reduction. In 2010, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, used this day to recognise the achievements of local governments and communities in building more sustainable towns and cities, whilst calling on all stakeholders to continue building resilience against increasing natural hazard and climate change risks. ▪ 2010-2011 Making the Pacific Resilient Campaign With more than half the world's population living in urban areas, cities and towns are particularly vulnerable to the risks of natural hazards, such as cyclones, earthquakes, drought and floods. To strengthen a town's readiness to reduce disaster impacts, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction together with its partners, such as UN-Habitat, is launching a new campaign in the Pacific region to raise awareness and boost commitment for sustainable development practices that will increase well-being and safety. The two-year campaign, Making the Pacific Resilient: My Community is Getting Ready!, urges leaders and local governments to commit to a checklist of <i>10 Essentials</i> that will make their towns more resilient. ▪ Cities & Climate Change Initiative The Cities and Climate Change Initiative targets cities in developing and least developed countries. It emphasizes good governance and practical initiatives for the municipalities and their citizens. The participatory Environmental Planning and Management process is adapted to specifically address climate change and related issues such disaster risk within a city. A set of tools will be developed to support cities in raising awareness on the impacts of climate change and support the mitigation, adaptation and risk reduction capacity of the city.
Outcomes:	

1. Is your community getting ready?

The group recognised that many Pacific cities and towns still have a long way to go in making their communities resilient to climate change and disasters. Several of the local governments present were working towards at least one of the *10 Essentials* and acknowledged the importance of continuing this work and building resilience, rather than waiting for disaster to strike.

RECOMMENDATION: The 2010 – 2011 World Disaster Reduction Campaign on *Making the Pacific Resilient – Is your Community Getting Ready?* campaign was widely approved within the group as an effective mechanism for raising awareness of the importance of resilience, and galvanising support and enthusiasm within local government and the communities they represent. Numerous participants expressed an interest to sign up their local government to the campaign and requested the assistance of UNISDR, UN-Habitat and CLGF in connecting them with learning opportunities, technical assistance and role model cities to support the local governments in their campaign commitments.

2. What are the key challenges for local governments striving to implement initiatives to improve the resilience of their communities?

The group discussed several challenges, including that (a) Pacific Island Countries have little influence over the causes of climate change (which predominantly lie with larger, more developed countries) yet are among the most severely affected by it; and (b) smaller local governments often lack the resources to improve their resilience.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (a) It was noted that the causes of climate change are a separate issue to the need to adapt to it. While it is important that national governments continue to address the causes of climate change, the impacts are being felt already and local governments must build resilience to this now. It has also been acknowledged that natural disaster risk is magnified by climate change. By reducing their vulnerability to the impacts of natural hazards, local governments will also be strengthening their ability to adapt to climate change.
- (b) Regarding resource constraints, the group acknowledged that this would always be an issue, but was not a reason for inaction. There are several options for increasing resilience in the face of scarce resources, including:
 - Starting small – any steps to increase resilience are valuable; local governments can start very small and build on their initiatives over many years.
 - Partnering and sharing experience – local governments can share their existing good practices with one another or even join forces and pool resources to implement new initiatives. Better resourced, or ‘role model’ cities can also be partnered with developing cities and towns to share experience, tools and resources.
 - Funding and operational support can be obtained from a number of organisations in the region. If local governments use the *10 Essentials* checklist to identify what they would like to work towards to build resilience, UNISDR, UN-Habitat and CLGF can assist in connecting them with agencies offering resources for implementation.

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- PARTICIPANTS LIST -

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Sarah Philpott	Cairns Regional Council
David Tovovun	Tafea Provincial Government
Reginald Iangap	Lenakel Municipality
Clement Irasva	PNG
Faasili Afamasaga	MWCSD – Samoa
Angela Mageito	National Capital District Commission, Pt Moresby
Teina Frank-Jessie	Cook Islands Ministry of Infrs. & Planning
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