

## Third Meeting of the Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC-3)

20-23 July 2015  
Nuku'alofa  
The Kingdom of Tonga

### **Agenda Item 11.3: Media Trainings on Disasters, Weather, Climate Services, Climate Change and Disasters.**

#### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this paper is to outline the potential to bridge stronger relations between Pacific media and Pacific meteorological services in order to help build media and meteorological capacity as climate, weather, climate change and disaster communicators delivering important messages to the general public.

#### **Background**

2. The SPREP Media Outreach Programme works with Pacific Media and island experts to help build their capacity bringing about more information sharing on environment issues through the media. The range of activities since 2008 includes national and regional training for Pacific media helping them to understand environmental issues, national and regional training for practitioners so they strengthen their relations and confidence in working with media to ensure a flow of information, development of resources and fellowships that provide hands on experiences for reporters enhancing their professional development. It also includes working with practitioners in the environment fields to build their media and communications capacity to confidently engage with media to share information and raise awareness and understanding. This particular activity falls within an ongoing SPREP Media Outreach Programme with a focus on weather, climate and climate change and is implemented with the Climate Change Division and the Pacific Meteorological Desk Partnership.
3. Two recent regional projects that have engaged the media to build their capacity on weather, climate, climate change and disaster reporting as well as to create the relationship between the media and the meteorological services. The FINPAC project is funding national media and meteorology trainings in all the 14 countries in the Pacific. The Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS) project targets 8 countries and works with the Media to ensure;
  - Broadcast Climate and Disaster Resilience Plans (BCRDP) are developed so broadcasters are resilient during times of disaster
  - Media understand better the operations of the NMHSs and the DMO offices
  - Reporters have the right knowledge on weather, climate variability, climate change and disaster management so they can better report on issues

4. The COSPPac Project has been an invaluable contributor to this effort in the region by assisting the NMHSs to develop their communication strategies for climate services and building their capacity on how to communicate information through the different mediums.
5. The premise for these activities is that, while climate meteorologists continue to make significant progress in the understanding of the climate system and continue to improve predictions, the products and service they produce are frequently not available to the general public in accessible formats. With climate science becoming increasingly valuable for explaining current weather and climate events and informing practical decisions, weather presenters and other communicators need analyses, simplified texts and terminologies, graphics, images and other multimedia materials for translating complex scientific and technical outputs into information that can be more readily consumed by the general public.
6. Lessons learned from the Vanuatu media, NMS and NDMO agreed that the category 5 TC Pam;
  - a. stretched the capacity of all broadcasters and stations - everyone was not prepared for an event of that magnitude,
  - b. tested governance and legislation frameworks put in place, MoU's and agreements,
  - c. the MoU between NDMO, VMGD and the VBTC was very helpful because it facilitated for the national radio to activate its back-up radio at the NDMO Office and broadcast information from within the building after all their building and networks were down, and
  - d. most of the media outlets do not have proper backup systems in place to broadcast during extreme events internet links are weak in times of disasters, i.e. when TC Pam damaged the communication transmitters, all communications were down.

### **Update**

7. The trainings have received very positive feedback from the media personnel and the NMHSs in those countries where the trainings have been organised. In some countries, such as in Vanuatu, the collaboration has resulted in MoU's developed between the media and the NMHSs on how to collaborate during emergency situations. Some of the NMHS heads have developed excellent working relationships with the media outlets after workshops organised in countries, making it easy for them to be accessed for information by the media.
8. The remaining countries for the FINPAC project to implement the media trainings are scheduled for later this year and 2016. While projects will be completed in 2016, the momentum should be maintained in building the capacity of broadcasters, announcers and the print media journalists. This can be done through a media and meteorology roundtable meeting supported by partners and the discussion can be based around innovative ways to engage and disseminate weather and climate information.
9. The PACMAS funded BCDRP Project comes to an end in August and will result in Broadcast Climate and Disaster Resilience Plans for 8 island nations, Simulation Training to test the BCDRP's, a Standard Operating Procedure or Memorandum of Understanding between the Met Service and the Broadcaster outlining the role of the media before, during and after times of emergency weather events as well as training for newsroom reporters on climate change and disaster risk management.

## Recommendations

10. The Meeting is invited to:

- **note** the progress by SPREP through the FINPAC, PACMAS and its Partners to develop the capacity of the media in the region to report better on the different hazards;
  - **acknowledge** the support of PACMAS and its partners to engage the journalists in weather and climate reporting;
  - **support** the continuation of activities under the SPREP Media Outreach Programme; and
  - **note** the proposal to have a Media and Meteorology Roundtable Meeting in 2016 and **encourage** PMC and development Partners to support this initiative.
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14 July 2015