

The Pacific Humanitarian Partnership 2017

“Localization in Preparedness and Response”



Meeting Report



Pacific
Humanitarian
Team

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Acronyms

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency	OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
CBT	Cash-based Transfer	ODI	Overseas Development Institute
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund	OSOCC	On-site Operations Coordination Centre
CPP	Country Preparedness Package	PHP	Pacific Humanitarian Partnership
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific	PHT	Pacific Humanitarian Team
CSO	Civil Society Organization	PIC	Pacific Island Country
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)	PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
DIVA	Diverse Voices and Action	PIPSO	Pacific Islands Private Sector Organization
ENSO	El Niño Southern Oscillation	PLWD	Persons living with disabilities
FBDRRC	Fiji Business Disaster and Resilience Council	PRAN	Pacific Rainbows Advocacy Network
FBO	Faith-based Organization	RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
FDPF	Fiji Disabled People's Federation	RSMC	Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre
FNU	Fiji National University	SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
FRDP	Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific	SPC	Pacific Community
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization	TC	Tropical Cyclone
LGBTQIA	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex and Asexual or Allied	UBD	Unsolicited Bilateral Donation
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (New Zealand)	UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
NEMO	National Emergency Management Office	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization	UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
NIWA	National Institute for Water and Atmosphere	UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
NZRC	New Zealand Red Cross	WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
		WFP	World Food Programme
		WHS	World Humanitarian Summit
		WUTMI	Women United Together Marshall Islands

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Pacific Humanitarian Partnership (PHP) Meeting was hosted by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Suva, Fiji from 2 – 3 October 2017. It was held in close cooperation with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the Pacific Community (SPC) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) as part of Pacific Resilience Week 2017. Last year's World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) made a strong call for localization of humanitarian aid and the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) has undertaken serious reflection followed by some initial action to make this happen.

This meeting brought together over 100 representatives from national authorities and humanitarian actors across the region to promote a localization of humanitarian preparedness and response agenda and to build upon the outcomes of the 2016 PHP meeting, the WHS meeting and regional consultations, and most importantly, aligning to the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP).

Some key themes were raised in the meeting, which are highlighted below.

The strongest theme was Localization.

The core message of the meeting was about localization, stemming from the outcomes of the WHS – ensuring that all actors work to support the response at the local level, strengthen their decision-making power and focus more on the local communities through sustainable projects and local initiatives. In this respect, the governments, the private sector and humanitarian actors/aid agencies need to work together on the ground within communities to improve access, speed and effectiveness of the response and recovery efforts. It is important to build relationships that will be of assistance in responding to the affected communities.

Key recommendations were to:

- resource local-level programs and permanent disaster management staff to strengthen local capacity.
- donors shifting their thinking from annual budgets to effectively localize humanitarian aid.
- make more multi-year funds directly available to local actors, civil society organizations (CSOs), gender and disability groups and national responders.
- conduct joint appeals and use pooled funding mechanisms for efficient use of resources.
- look at early triggers to activate local finances before an emergency occurs (e.g. Forecast-Based Financing – early action towards disaster preparedness – IFRC and Solomon Islands).

What does localization mean in the Pacific?

Echoing the discussions of the WHS, the panelists identified that external partners need to only reinforce or enhance, not replace, local systems. The principle “adapt to adopt” was recommended, which requires the global humanitarian community to refocus and adapt to the Pacific island country (PIC) cultures and adopt to their communities. This approach would encourage the UN agencies and International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) to appreciate the Pacific island traditions tracing back to 2,000 years and encourage humanitarian aid programmes to adapt the global arrangements to the Pacific needs more effectively.

- Localization is about self-determination in the Pacific.
- There is a need to take a step back and identify what can be done to localize the response efforts instead of forging ahead with the current arrangements.
- The sector, as a whole, needs to challenge the emergency providers to step out of their comfort zones in order to achieve a structured and transformational approach.
- Ensure that the community leaders such as women, people with disabilities and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex and Asexual or Allied (LGBTQIA) community to have a voice in the discussion.
- Effective response is built on effective planning.

Another key theme was making sure that the humanitarian responses are tailored to the Pacific.

There was a strong message that the global humanitarian community should refocus to adapt to the PIC cultures and adopt to their communities, through appreciating the Pacific island traditions and encouraging humanitarian aid programmes to adapt to the global arrangements to the Pacific needs more effectively.

Key points include:

- supporting the creation of effective localized organizational models.
- investing in traditional methods where appropriate, effective and accepted not only to preserve the culture but to improve them.
- engaging in coordination initiatives such as the PHT.

- tailoring communication messages and strategies that recognize different audiences to deliver the same overall message. The unsolicited bilateral donations (UBDs) communications strategy is a good example, where there is a clear difference between messages circulated to diaspora in Australia and New Zealand and those to be circulated within the PICs.
- bridging gaps in preparedness and response and integrating climate change and disaster risk reduction in humanitarian action to address crosscutting issues with the governments and disaster management actors.

This means a focus on national coordination of humanitarian responses.

The PHP encouraged the external actors to build national capacity in order to prepare and respond to humanitarian challenges and support a collective strategy. It was noted that competition amongst partners within the humanitarian sphere and within other sectors creates a crowded disaster risk management space, resulting in coordination complexities that can overwhelm local and national capacity. In this respect, the PHP encouraged all external actors to:

- understand and engage in local processes and country-specific coordination and implement the vision of the WHS.
- work to fill gaps in the national systems and capacities.
- reduce the international footprint during response to allow opportunities for local actors to utilize their skills and capacity.
- re-think approaching communities as being the first mile and not the last mile, the first step and not the last step.
- create forums and meetings for peer-to-peer relationships to be built in-country and interact at the local level (e.g. with national Red Cross societies).
- work to remove or reduce barriers that prevent organizations and donors from partnering with local and national responders in order to lessen their administrative burden.
- invest in disaster preparedness, readiness and resilience as a focus in the Pacific.

It also means working to localize preparedness – through the Country Preparedness Package.

The Country Preparedness Package (CPP) is an approach to strengthen the relationship between countries suffering a disaster and the humanitarian community. It was developed in response to the regional and global feedback and reflections on how to best support the countries suffering a disaster. Its aim is to increase awareness in-country of international support options and how international actors of the existing national systems and structures can activate them, while increasing understanding. The result is an agreed approach for how countries and international agencies will work together in a disaster.

The CPP Phase 1, developed in partnership with the PICs and co-led by OCHA and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has encouraged and assisted information sharing between and across the national and international cluster groups and actors in the humanitarian space, enabling national agencies to connect and share information more easily with each other and with international partners.

- The effective delivery of the CPP is not immediate. It can be difficult to ensure all relevant actors come to the table to clarify the coordination structure, to provide information of minimum capacities, to access, share and verify data. If the CPP drafts are not thorough, critical information for response coordination could be overlooked.
- Partners must take note of the national structures and look to where they best fit within. The CPP Phase 1 aims to assist this process by documenting and sharing information on the national structures.
- The CPPs would be most effective where the government leads the process and partner organizations actively support. Disaster support must be linked to the national systems in order to be most effective.
- The Solomon Islands CPP started during the review of the DRM arrangements; therefore, much of the data that was used in the CPP was taken from that review.
- Recent use in Vanuatu during the Ambae response.
- Benefits of the consultation process included opening dialogue with development partners, strengthening partnerships between the government and the PHT clusters and can complement existing support plans.
- The CPP in RMI has made it easier for the NDMO to share information to international partners prior to their visit into RMI and the process identified gaps, which were otherwise not apparent.

Supporting the humanitarian responses in the Pacific, according to the participants at the PHP, means that localization must particularly be done at a grassroots level to support disaster resilience.

This means:

- including local partners and lead agencies in country consultations, monitoring and evaluation of aid distribution and in need assessments.
- strengthening the decision-making capacities of local women, LGBTQIA and disability groups along with faith-based organizations (FBOs) and using their capacity to enhance the response.
- inter-Pacific sharing of lessons learnt.
- providing peer support and external technical and management coaching to local actors.
- supporting and enhancing the reach of regional initiatives.

It also means ensuring that particular attention is given to vulnerable groups at the local level in a humanitarian response.

The involvement of and engagement with vulnerable groups is also essential to ensure that their key specific needs are met during a response. “As local as possible, and international as necessary”. It is important to leverage each other’s strengths and contributions in a complimentary two-pronged approach. For the international component, there must be added value of international humanitarian action to maximize the effectiveness of the response.

- Needs of the LGBTQIA are not restricted to the protection community but are included in all clusters such as WASH, livelihoods and shelter.
- While it was noted that some LGBTQIA groups were included in the Protection Cluster, they need to be fully engaged in different groups.
- There is often no data available for people of diverse gender and sexual orientation and the LGBTQIA groups at both the community and national levels.
- There is a need for gender considerations with evacuation centers, as shared living spaces and bathroom facilities can pose challenges for people with diverse sexual and gender identities and can exacerbate discrimination against them.
- Accessibility of evacuation centers is challenging for persons living with disabilities (PLWD) and they often have to rely on their neighbors or family member’s houses.
- Support drills or preparedness activities that would aid the communities in preparing for the disaster.
- Include PLWD in assessment teams to ensure awareness of the diverse needs – such as psychological support, counseling services, adaptation of WASH facilities, accessibility of evacuation centers, provision of medical consumables and mobility devices – as well as a better understanding of what “mainstreaming” really means for people with disabilities at the ground level.

And continuing to support capacity development for preparedness.

PICs recognize that capacity is present within the Pacific; however, it may not be able to handle international arrangements. Therefore, international arrangements need to contextualize their operations to build upon this capacity. Capacity in terms of preparedness and response efforts needs to be strengthened if localization is the way forward.

- Conduct more trainings based on the Core Humanitarian Pacific Guidance Note for non-Pacific actors.
- Be creative in looking for local resources to augment the local financial and accountability capacity.
- Increase the understanding of effective disaster management and humanitarian response by smaller, local actors.
- Support initiatives that promote ongoing capacity development and collaborative learning. For example, UN Women has focused on capacity developments through pairing the National Disaster Management Offices (NDMOs), women ministries and CSOs together.
- Advance Co-Cluster coordination (e.g. building local coordination through cluster groups).
- Providing refresher trainings for existing volunteers on disaster response (e.g. as conducted by Oxfam’s recently activated Pacific Advance Response Team).
- Meet the need by creating specialized, country-specific training in-country as requested.

It also means strengthening local capacity in information management.

There needs to be more investment in information management capacities, which makes it difficult for countries to share their priorities widely and to ensure that all actors are working off the same situational understanding.

Key recommendations include:

- building capacity of the PIC Governments to share their priorities, policies and challenges to improve assistance widely through an accessible medium.
- ensuring that all actors are sharing and receiving up-to-date information by encouraging the use of information sharing platforms (over preparedness and response) and engaging in good communication practices.
- adopting new practical technologies and looking for opportunities to partner with the private sector.

Conclusion

The humanitarian sector must reform to be fit-for-purpose for the needs of the Pacific. It must break down institutional barriers to implementing localization and strengthen the existing coordination mechanisms to reduce the burden on national and local actors. This will be achieved by linking into government-led structures and shifting more resources and control of operations to the local level. Notwithstanding differing roles and mandates, whether as governments, NGOs, regional organizations or UN agencies, our common mantra must be putting people at the centre and respecting the affected people as critical partners and contributors to humanitarian response, preparedness and resilience.

The shift to localization is complex and the transition period may come at a cost. However, localized humanitarian action is unlikely to be achieved any other way. Localization is not an easy concept; it requires changes in the systems, which provides a massive challenge to donors as well as responders. The two-day PHP provided a platform to delve deep into the issues of localization, and the discussion from each session is captured in the following pages. OCHA would like to thank the participants for their constructive engagement and looks forward to continuing the dialogue in the future.

"Bringing Meaning to Localization in the Pacific"

Presenter

Mark Mitchell – Senior Humanitarian Programme Coordinator, Caritas Aotearoa NZ

Session Contributors

Aleta Miller – Representative, UN Women

Stephen Close – Assistant Director, Humanitarian Policy and Partnerships Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

Mosese Sikivou – Fiji Regional Coordinator, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)

Emele Duituturaga – Executive Director, Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organisation (PIANGO)

Kathryn Clarkson – Head of Pacific Regional Office, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

Loti Yates – Director, NDMO Solomon Islands

Key Session Messages

- Localization is about self-determination in the Pacific.
- There is a need to take a step back and identify what can be done to localize response efforts instead of forging ahead with current arrangements.
- The sector, as a whole, needs to challenge emergency providers to step out of their comfort zones in order to achieve a structured and transformational approach.
- Ensure community leaders such as women, people with disabilities and the LGBTQIA community have a voice in the discussion.
- Adapt to Adopt: where the global humanitarian community should refocus to adapt to Pacific island country cultures and adopt to their communities.
- An effective response is built on effective planning.

Session Summary

The concept of localization has been around for many years; indeed, first responders have always been local. It became clear in the workshops leading up to the 2016 WHS in Istanbul that localization was important. This need was then prioritized in the Agenda for Humanity Core Responsibility number five, which requires the humanitarian sector to invest in local capacities. This year's discussion centered on how the sector could collectively move forward from well-meaning gestures and research documents to ensuring that "localization" is not just a buzzword for this year. The session's tone shifted to a "Fijian talanoa session", a discussion in which everything is set on the table and elephants in the room pinpointed. The panelists emphasized that localization and self-determination in the Pacific is the right thing to do, as it puts the power in the hands of those whose communities have been most affected. Ensuring that local voices are not just consulted with, but involved in the decision-making process was another key focus. Major questions that surfaced included how different organizations across the humanitarian spectrum could operationalize localization, how to address the issues of funding and information sharing to ensure that local organizations are strong and how can all humanitarian actors work towards these collective goals through their differing approaches. Panelists identified that external partners need only reinforce or enhance, not replace, local systems, echoing the discussions of the WHS. The "adapt to adopt" principle was recommended, which requires the global humanitarian community to refocus and adapt to the PIC cultures and adopt to their communities. This approach would encourage UN agencies and INGOs to appreciate the Pacific traditions tracing back to 2,000 years and encourage humanitarian aid programmes to adapt their global arrangements to the Pacific needs more effectively. DFAT highlighted the need to be realistic and focused on the actual problems and barriers to achieving localization of humanitarian aid. Overall, the panelists agreed that while real effective change can be slow, localization is necessary and is truly achievable.

"Taking Control of the Response" – moving from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention

Presenter

Finau Heuifanga Limuloa – Pacific Disaster Law Delegate, IFRC

Session Contributors

Mrs. Rothina Ilo Noka – Gender & Protection Cluster Coordinator, Vanuatu Department of Women's Affairs

Sunia Y. Ratulevu – Director, NDMO Fiji

Key Session Messages

- International assistance must respect national systems, structures and protocols already in place. They come under the national authority and leadership in terms of response upon their entry to the country.
- The most valuable contribution from international humanitarian partners would be filling in the gap areas identified by the national governments.

Session Summary

This session reflected upon the lessons learnt from the recent disasters in the Pacific. These experiences have identified the need for robust policies and procedures in order to clarify the roles, the national coordination systems and the facilitation of international assistance into these national coordination mechanisms. It is this level of robustness and detail that will assist the PICs to move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. This culture is essential to improving the PICs' resilience to frequent disasters and to the effects of climate change. In this session, Fiji and Vanuatu Government representatives reflected upon the various humanitarian actions and responses that were carried out, such as Tropical Cyclone (TC) Pam, TC Winston and TC Donna. The capacity of the existing communities should not be undermined; they should be strengthened and considered first. The national and sub-national policies and procedures need to ensure that the humanitarian partners carry out their work to strengthen the national response and must be recognized by all actors. National government and partners in country have demonstrated growth and expansion in capacities, which should inevitably lead to less international intervention and ensure that the local capacities are utilized first.

The Fiji NDMO spoke to their experience of TC Winston - where the arrival of containers was anticipated and logistics assistance for humanitarian actions was provided by the Fiji Government - that led to the development and the endorsement of the National Humanitarian Policy. This focus redefined the roles and responsibilities and commenced a review of their National Disaster Risk Management Act undertaken with the Red Cross, in which the inclusion of gender issues will be ensured. The Fiji NDMO stated that the National Humanitarian Policy is critical to national response and implored international humanitarian partners to recognize the existing system, processes and government structures. This will ensure that the national priorities can be identified and addressed through humanitarian assistance.

Vanuatu's Gender & Protection Cluster Coordinator spoke on their planning and response experiences during TC Lusi, TC Pam, TC Donna and the mass evacuation of Ambae Island due to an active volcano, where she described successes working with partners across the sectors in developing assessment forms, cyclone and volcano response plans, which should be linked into by all partners. The Gender & Protection Cluster has specifically taken on the lessons learnt over these responses to better assist the NDMO and other clusters address protection issues through the development of the standard operating procedures (SOPs). The Cluster is forming partnerships with Food Security and WASH sectors to develop tools and has provided message on their daily radio programmes. Vanuatu was nearing the end of a two-year review process of their National Disaster Management Act in direct response to the TC Pam experience. They have established institutions such as the Community Disaster and Climate Change committees that link national and community level responses. Localization includes the need to ensure that the policies, plans and coordination mechanisms include and filter all the way to the sub-national, provincial and community level systems and promote bottom-up approaches. The NDMO ensures that the Gender & Protection Cluster is involved in planning and preparedness to minimize risks during times of disasters. Furthermore, the NDMO is integrating the Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change approaches and forming partnerships across sectors, in addition to developing assessment forms, cyclone and volcanic response plan and recovery funds. Church partners have provided tremendous support in mobilizing youths to respond in assessment and distribution as well as ensuring that the protection needs of people were met during TC Pam.

"This is what a Humanitarian looks like"

Presenter

Noelene Nabulivou – Political Advisor, Diverse Voices and Action (DIVA) For Equality

Naeemah Khan – Gender & Humanitarian Analyst, UN Women

Session Contributors

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Adi Vasulevu – Convener in the Northern Division / Rural Transitional Woman Leader, FemLINKpacific/Women's Weather Watch/Transcend Oceania

Isikeli Tumaiwakaya Vulavou – Founder and Executive Director, Rainbow Pride Foundation

Bonita Qio – Coordinator, Pacific Rainbows Advocacy Network (PRAN)

Katryn Relang – Executive Director, Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI)

Key Session Messages

- Support local CSOs to work on preparedness and response as they already do the work and need resources to do it effectively.
- Prioritize gender and protection needs of women and girls in humanitarian preparedness, response and recovery.
- Persons with disabilities are also agents of change and can support their communities after a disaster despite their disabilities.
- Include people of diverse sexual and gender identities in livelihood resilience and development, as the LGBTQIA community often face discrimination in getting decent employment, making disaster recovery a challenge and more vulnerable. There is currently a lack of guidelines at the national and local level on working with the LGBTQIA community during a disaster.
- Acknowledge that policies and guidelines need to be evidence-based and need to take into consideration traditional knowledge.
- Inclusion of persons with disability in assessment teams to ensure that their diverse needs – psychological support, counseling services, accessibility of evacuation centres, provision of medical consumables and mobility devices – are captured for immediate attention. Additionally, it empowers others in the field that are considered disabled by comforting them in traumatizing situations and promotes for a better understanding of what "mainstreaming" really means for people with disabilities at the ground level.
- Inclusion of women in preparedness planning as they are often the first responders in their communities but are often not at the decision-making table, meaning that their needs and perspectives are not heard.

Session Summary

This session provided an empowering space for local CSOs to share their experience of working in gender and protection-related response. An open dialogue was encouraged, identifying issues and challenges faced by these organizations including the engagement with humanitarian structures and coordination mechanisms. Session participants also stressed the competing priorities faced by everyone working on cross-sectional and intersectional areas (e.g. social justice, economic justice, ecological justice, climate change etc) and how these issues are felt at the community level. Local CSOs and their partners must work in these complex spaces and ensure the rights of all community, whether in the humanitarian sector, development work, climate change mitigation or disaster risk reduction. Session participants encouraged more integrated ways of thinking, with particular reference to localizing the humanitarian sector and the impact of climate concerns on the equation. For example, some villages have to relocate their homes to higher grounds due to sea level rise, a distressing task as often these are the homes of their ancestors. It was acknowledged that women and youth played important roles in this process and were actively mobilizing communities as part of the disaster response. PRAN Fiji acknowledged the great work done by femLINKpacific through Women's Weather Watch, a two-way communication tool that distributes information quickly and puts women's voices back to the national level. It communicates what women are facing in real time, both pre- and post-disaster, and the main source of information on disasters that can be accessed and understood by women in rural communities. FDPF raised a question surrounding the phrase of "mainstreaming disability" and challenged partners and actors to think about what the phrase means as a way of thinking rather than as a way of reacting. Efforts by the Fiji Government working on the Fiji Humanitarian Policy to capture the needs and to encourage the inclusion of PLWD as part of the assessment teams in TC Winston response were recognized. They requested that other Pacific national governments and bodies follow suit. Session participants acknowledged that being a humanitarian required personal sacrifices to be made; that patience was needed to affect change and that it was equally important to both build and maintain relationships with those already in the humanitarian and disaster response spaces, including government departments, INGOs, NGOs, CSOs and development partners. Additionally, wider expertise should be considered to further localize efforts with diverse people working towards human rights-based outcomes.

“Localization and Accountability to an Outcome” – NGO and CSO engagement and coordination

Presenter

Tu Tangi – Senior Programme Manager, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT)

Session Contributors

Raijeli Nicole – Regional Director, OXFAM in the Pacific

Emele Duituturaga – Executive Director, PIANGO

Hotoravu Alenge – Deputy Director, NDMO Solomon Islands

Key Session Messages

- All actors should focus on what they do well, build on and recognize each other’s strengths. PIANGO stressed the importance of ensuring that the responses are in line with the country’s context and acknowledged the fact that the current recognition of all NGOs to go under one umbrella is a challenge.
- Enhance the practitioners’ understanding that accountability is a two-way stream to sub-national and national structures as well as to the affected communities, its partners and donors.
- All humanitarian issues are embedded in development issues. Therefore, localization needs to be collaborated in a holistic way.
- Humanitarians need to practice the leave-no-one-behind concept.
- There needs to be a greater appreciation for context and what it means for an INGO player to be working in the region. INGOs have the responsibility to collaborate and practice a coordinated approach.
- The Solomon Islands Government has included NGOs in decision-making bodies, such as the sector committees. It is not about representing a group but rather the interest of the affected people.

Session Summary

In the wake of the WHS, there has been a concentrated effort on localization and donors agreed to dedicate a greater percentage of funding to the local actors. This session centered on a conversation of the differing roles and mandates of government sovereignty and NGO autonomy, to most effectively ensure that the affected people’s needs are met before, during and after disasters. Under the Charter for Change, NGOs agreed to a list of actions to implement localization and the FRDP and highlighted the activities on localization for the Pacific. NGO representatives stated that a generalization persisted that both international and national NGOs often worked outside, parallel to or even disconnected from the national and sub-national structures for preparedness and response. However, it was proposed that the same could be said on the existing structures, that it is sometimes primarily exclusive of the NGOs. The heart of localization discussions is always around resources and partnerships. Where partnerships are concerned, there is the need for transparency and accountability and the need to identify how the NGOs can work together. Many NGOs find it a challenge to understand their roles in a disaster response. Therefore, the government needs to advocate for the role of NGOs and invest in community engagement. On the other hand, INGOs aim to commit to the actions on the ground under the Charter for Change by working on how to transfer power from the leadership to the community.

The Deputy Director of the NDMO from Solomon Islands acknowledged the role of international and local NGOs through the 2017 Disaster Management Plan. Under Part 2 Section 61 of the Plan, it states that partners, NGOs and CSOs have a critical role in the country during preparedness and response. However, they need to clearly understand their roles within the system rather than contributing to parallel systems, which results in time wasted in managing people. They can meet the needs of the affected communities by embedding themselves with sector committees and providing support, in the form of developing SOPs, to the appropriate leading ministries as well as by supporting local NGOs to be linked into regional coordination.

The session did not shy away from these dynamic tensions, identifying the sovereignty of a government and the autonomy of an NGO as the two key authorities in the debate. Discussion took place on shifting the conversation to ensuring accountability rather than focusing on control. NGOs need to be accountable to the people they work with as well as to the donors. The session facilitator highlighted that there needs to be some principles around roles and responsibilities, mutual respect, mechanisms for regular dialogue, reference to human resources, technical and financial resources and to have some definition of partnerships and what the limitations are. All parties agreed that there is a need for greater involvement of local CSOs and actors to share responsibility for disaster resilience. These can be achieved through formal policy, clarity of the roles and commitment to accountability while continuing to work together but differently to ensure that the affected persons’ needs are at the center of all efforts.

El Niño and the Upcoming Cyclone Season

Presenter

Bipen Prakash – Acting Principal Climatologist, Fiji Meteorological Service

Outlook

The activity in the 2017–2018 TC season within the Regional Specialized Meteorological Center (RSMC) Nadi – Tropical Cyclone Centre is anticipated to be below average with moderate confidence. The official 2017-2018 TC Season begins on 1 November 2017 and ends on 30 April 2018. Four to six TCs are expected to occur during the 2017-2018 season.

TC activity in the South Pacific region is likely to be shifted westward (Coral Sea) during the 2017-2018 season. This outlook is based upon the status of El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) over the preceding July to September period. During this period in 2017, neutral to borderline La Niña conditions were present. Furthermore, the analogue seasons were further narrowed based on international guidance forecast for neutral to weak La Niña conditions during most of the coming TC season. Historically, these conditions have favoured a westward shift in TC activity in the South Pacific.

TC activity in southern Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Fiji and Wallis & Futuna waters is likely to be normal this season, while there is a reduced risk for Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Samoa, Tonga, Niue, Cook Islands and French Polynesia. TC activity in the Kiribati and Marquesas area is unlikely. There is normal risk of severe TCs for Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Fiji and Samoa, while there is reduced risk for Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Samoa, Tonga, Niue, Cook Islands, Society Islands, Austral Islands and Tuamotu Archipelago/Gambier Islands. Severe TC is unlikely in the Marquesas, Pitcairn Islands and Kiribati regions. For Fiji, one to two TCs could be expected this season, which one may reach or exceed the Category 3 status. For those TCs passing close to the country, associated active cloud and rain bands may occasionally affect Fiji with marked rainfall and possible flooding, including sea flooding of low-lying coastal areas. With the expectation of TC genesis to lie to the west of the Dateline in the Coral Sea region, there is a high chance of TCs to approach Fiji from the Northern, Western and Southern sectors.

Historical records show that TCs have occasionally formed outside the official TC season. Therefore, it is critical that all communities remain alert and prepared throughout the 2017-2018 TC season and beyond. Liaise with your local meteorological service for more details, as predictions, forecasts, and ENSO impacts vary from country to country. This early warning information is available and we need to do a better job of using it to inform and initiate early action.

“Unsolicited Bilateral Donations (UBDs)” – Why Cash is Best

Presenter

Florent Chane – Logistics Coordinator, World Food Programme (WFP)

Session Contributors

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Jenna Lusaka – National Logistics Cluster Development Officer, WFP

Key Session Messages

- The arrival of the UBDs into a disaster zone, while often well-intended, produces negatively impacts on the efficiency and effectiveness of the humanitarian supply chain and delivery of life-saving goods. This is because UBDs congest ports and entry points, compete with priority relief items for transport and storage and require significant time for sorting and management. Sending UBDs is also a timely and expensive process with many of the associated costs absorbed by the government of the affected country and humanitarian organizations on the ground. This includes transport, warehousing, custom tariffs and disposal of goods that are not able to be used or are not needed (e.g. expired food).
- UBDs often have long-term environmental impacts, either because they end up in landfills or because of their disposal requirements.
- Sending money to humanitarian organizations on the ground means that the agencies are able to purchase what is needed, when it is needed and provide the most flexible assistance for disaster-impacted communities.
- Key communication message includes: cash is best because it is immediate, flexible, cheap to transport, assist the local economy and does not impact the disaster response supply chain.
- When engaging with diaspora communities on UBD issues, we need to ensure that trust is built more widely between NGOs and communities to alter the way in which they view monetary donations in a disasters response.

Session Summary

This interactive session raised awareness among humanitarian practitioners on what UBDs are and what their impact is. This session focused on how they can be reduced, why ‘Cash is Best,’ how each of the participants can play a role and the different messaging required at the regional and national level to reduce unwanted goods entering disaster zones. For these messages to be most effective, they must be tailored to individual audiences whilst maintaining the same overall message of ‘Cash is Best’. This will ensure the promotion of effective giving and receiving practices for communities impacted by a disaster. Targeted audiences include: the education sector, the private sector, FBOs, diaspora communities and the media. More work needs to be done to stop good intentions from costing the affected countries undue strain due to unwanted goods. With only 5-10% of donations that arrive in disaster zones meeting urgent needs, cash should be considered a better option.

The approach to addressing the UBD issues includes both a regional and national communication strategy, along with localized action in raising awareness so that people understand the logistical constraints of UBDs in a disaster zone. These include shipping time, financial burden and congestion at shipping ports and entry points, identifying why cash is truly the best way to ensure good intentions have the greatest positive impact on disaster-affected communities. The session also provided an overview of resources currently available, contact information for guidance on how to download these resources and assistance on the best ways to communicate the message.

During the session, Director of the National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) in Tonga shared experiences from TC Ian response, whereby NEMO was requested by the New Zealand Red Cross (NZRC) to classify and sort goods and relief supplies from containers for distributions. They lacked the resources to carry out this task effectively and the onus is on the agencies sending donations to take up this role.

"Localizing Preparedness" – Country Preparedness Package

Presenter

Paula Holland – Regional Technical Specialist Preparedness and Recovery, UNDP

Rashmi Rita – Information Management Officer, OCHA

Session Contributors

Osnat Lubrani – UN Resident Coordinator & UNDP Resident Representative, United Nations

Tim Langrine – Director, NDMO Marshall Islands

Loti Yates – Director, NDMO Solomon Islands

Aleyda Valdes – Humanitarian Affairs Officer, OCHA/PHT

Key Session Messages

- Partners must take note of the national structures and identify where they best fit in. CPP Phase 1 aims to assist this process by documenting and sharing information on national structures.
- The CPPs would be most effective when the government leads the process and the partner organizations actively support. Disaster support must be linked to the national systems in order to be most effective.
- The Solomon Islands CPP started during the review of the Disaster Risk Management arrangements. Much of the data that was used in the CPP was taken from that review. The CPP process increased the opportunity to discuss what the government can do during disasters, to learn of the roles being undertaken by organizations by sector and for in-country partners to ensure that they understood the disaster risk management plan.
- Benefits of the consultation process included opening the dialogue with development partners and strengthening partnerships between the government and the PHT clusters.
- The RMI CPP has made it easier for the NDMO to share information to international partners prior to their visit into the country and the process identified gaps that were otherwise not apparent.
- The idea is for the CPP to ensure a custom-tailored country-specific approach to work together in a disaster. Gratitude was expressed to Solomon Islands, RMI and Vanuatu for their partnerships around this initiative. Feedback will be sought on the ways to move forward in other countries.

Session Summary

The CPP is an approach to strengthen the relationship between countries suffering a disaster and the humanitarian community. The approach aims to increase the country's awareness on the available international support options and how they can be activated. The result is an agreed approach for how countries and international agencies will work together in a disaster.

The CPP was developed in response to the regional and global feedback on how to best support the countries suffering from a disaster. Speaking on behalf of the PHT, the PHT Co-Chair and the UN Resident Coordinator (for Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, RMI, Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu) stated that the CPP initiative will operate in two phases. Phase 1 follows a consultative process, which articulates the national disaster risk management structures and contacts so that the PHT and other humanitarian partners can identify where they may best fit within the existing arrangements and can then tailor their support. The panelists agreed that the CPP Phase 1 encouraged and assisted information sharing between and across the national and international cluster groups and actors in the humanitarian space, enabling national agencies to connect and share information more easily with each other and with international partners.

Nevertheless, OCHA observed that there was still a need for partners to understand the capacity of each other to support the countries following a disaster (e.g. what assistance each agency could precisely offer and how much time it would take on the ground). For that reason, CPP Phase 2 aims to build on Phase 1 and establish operational contingency planning based on country-specific disaster scenarios. CPP Phase 2 will then generate an understanding of the potential needs of the affected populations based on the disaster impact model to boost the speed, volume and quality of the response. This will ensure added value through the action plans and international support when needed. OCHA considered that opportunities exist to think creatively about the future of the CPP with technological advancements and to gauge the interest of other countries in piloting the project.

“Bridging Divides” – addressing crosscutting issues in the clusters

Presenter

Laisani Savu Petersen –Child Protection Officer, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Session Contributors

Cluster Coordinators – PHT

Session Summary

The WHS consultations emphasized the importance of a better collaboration between humanitarian and development actors, doing more with less and working better towards shared results through a new way of working, including those who work outside the clusters. To lessen the impact of disasters on the most vulnerable community members across the Pacific region, all actors with their respective mandates working in this space must place people at the center of all efforts. To ensure that resilience is the focus of the relief efforts, the development principles of sustainable development, disaster risk reduction, climate change and humanitarian agendas need to be worked throughout to strengthen humanitarian policy, practice for effective response, preparedness and recovery.

The session breakout outcomes are available upon request.

“Operationalizing Reform Commitments in the Pacific”

Presenter

Beth Eggleston – Director, Humanitarian Advisory Group

Session Contributors

Heba Aly – Director, IRIN News

Christina Bennett – Head, Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG), Overseas Development Institute (ODI)

Railala Nakabea – Assistant Professor, Fiji National University (FNU)

Filipe Nainoca – Director General, Fiji Red Cross

Key Session Messages

- The way international organizations do business must change and the process will require some time and period of mentorship.
- Localization provides an opportunity to tighten accountability.
- Balance of humanitarian actions builds on and strengthens local and traditional practices and maximizes the potential of the national and regional capacity in conjunction with engaging the necessary international resources.
- Identify and agree on common humanitarian principles. It is a useful and necessary foundation. Agree on common ethos on working together. Make sure everybody gets to voice their opinions.
- Localized humanitarian action is usually led by national actors of all levels in civil society.
- Culture – modeling behavior and being the change that one would like to see. The term localization needs to be defined in a way that it is understood and can be used.
- What we need to do is to get the right assistance to the people at the right time to assist leaders as well as to ensure that the funding is provided to those who need it the most.

Session Summary

This session was a moderated discussion looking at operationalizing localization commitments in the Pacific and identifying the challenges faced both at the local and global level. The WHS and the Grand Bargain focused on the changes that the international system must address to better support local actors in humanitarian response. There are several practical challenges that hinder the realization of localization in the Pacific. These include the need to update the legislation to reflect the current circumstances, the communication of relevant local research that has been undertaken and the recognition that leadership is a key quality to build confidence. Session panelists encouraged the audience to lead by example rather than waiting for change at a global level. They particularly encouraged local organizations to model the behaviour that supports the principles of localization; the Pacific can lead by example without waiting for changes to take place at the global level. Nevertheless, for two-way learning to occur, the dialogue needs to be strengthened between the Pacific and the global sector. Key focus areas for localization with both donors and responders include accountability, coordination, operations and culture. Concrete actions should be undertaken immediately, such as ensuring that the national actors lead their responses, that the voices we do not normally hear are at the table and that the Grand Bargain commitments are operationalized through a transfer of power. These actions are important as well as an emphasis on recognizing that the decision-making power and respectful relationships are just as important as the transfer of money. Looking at the different contexts globally, there is a general desire to implement localization. However, it is also important to acknowledge that the donors have practical constraints. The humanitarian sector must be aware of some of the blockages that the donors face at a global level if they are to make appropriate, sustainable, effective change.

FNU, in conjunction with the Centre for Humanitarian Leadership, Humanitarian Advisory Group and the Australian Red Cross, conducted research in early 2017 that examined localization of humanitarian response in the Pacific. Based on these findings, localized humanitarian action led by the national actors or grassroots levels of civil society builds and strengthens local practices and maximizes national and regional capacity for requesting for international support. HPG further expressed that coordination should be more about collaboration rather than control and about direct connections with intermediaries. Technical expertise may be required in the future at a national level, but the sector needs to ensure that this assistance is delivered in a way that can be accepted by local actors and ensure that the leadership of the response is not overtaken or undermined.

The panelists agreed that the required shift to localization is complex and that the transition period may come at a cost. However, localized humanitarian action is unlikely to be achieved any other way. Localization is not an easy concept; it requires changes in the systems, which provides a massive challenge to donors as well as responders. The humanitarian sector needs to acknowledge that the donors' view of localization differs from that of humanitarian responders. There may always be a financial system that requires some degree of sub-contracting, but the focus should be ensuring that each level adds value.

“A Turning Point for Cash Transfer Programming in the Pacific”

Presenter

Jone Vakalalabure – Food Security Cluster Coordinator, WFP
Ana Alburqueque – Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA)
Katalaine Duaibe – Oxfam in the Pacific

Session Contributors

Members of the Pacific Regional Cash Working Group

Key Session Messages

- Cash programming is effective and efficient if the organization, agencies and governments coordinate to ensure that people are getting the right help.
- Cash is one way of undertaking response work.
- Cash allows for greater flexibility, can mobilize necessary resources for immediate action and is adapted to the local context, whereas unsolicited items may be of poor quality or may not be actually be required.
- Cash can cover needs such as medicine, shelter, food, education and other essentials without the costs of delivering, storing and sorting goods that may not meet the affected people's needs at that specific time.

Session Summary

This session highlighted the advantages and potential for cash-based transfer (CBT) programming with a focus on raising awareness of the CBT modality of providing post-disaster assistance. CBT programmes have been rolled out in the Pacific since 2009 by IFRC in Samoa following the tsunami disaster, by Oxfam in Vanuatu in 2016 following TC disaster and by partners such as ADRA, Oxfam, UNDP and WFP in Fiji in 2017 following TC Winston. Cash can boost the market cash flow and sustain markets in employment. The focus on locally-made money ensures investment in the local people and their goods, as well as the injection of cash into the local economy and agencies. Conflicts exist around how and where to spend money, but the choice and liberty is enhanced for individuals and families. It widens options for self-determination and it allows for the family to recognize their priorities and feel a sense of empowerment, ownership and dignity of their livelihood recovery. If people are disabled, this can help specify their needs and can use the money to support children. Concerns were raised surrounding the capacity and experience of those implementing the program strategy acceptance, market availability and relationships with financial service providers. Overall, the session demonstrated how cash programs are a resource for the Pacific, especially during disasters.

“Strengthening UNDAC’s Presence in the Pacific”

Presenter

George Murray - Humanitarian Affairs Officer, Field Coordination Support Section, OCHA

Key Session Messages

- Rapid response capability in the Pacific that is representative of, and integrated into, the region needs to be enhanced.
- The value of having the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) members from the region supporting greater local knowledge and expertise is essential to effective post-disaster efforts.
- Recent emergencies have shown that it is imperative that the international first responders better understand the operational and cultural context in which they are deploying.
- IFRC noted that they have a similar system to UNDAC as well as a National Society presence across all the PICs. They raised the question of how much consultation with IFRC on the Pacific UNDAC strategy had taken place and that they would wish to work closely with the UNDAC system in the future.
- It is critical for the success of UNDAC in the Pacific to maintain and strengthen the donor support base of this network, particularly the engagement of the Governments of New Zealand and Australia.
- The NDMO Cook Islands discussed the importance of ongoing training so that national UNDAC members are available for emergency deployments. The NDMO noted that regional deployments serve to build valuable experience amongst the members across the region.
- A strengthened UNDAC team that reflects regional diversity and ownership will enhance its added value.
- All UNDAC-related elements of this strategy exist within the broader preparedness and capacity building plans of the regional NDMOs, OCHA Office of the Pacific Islands, the PHT, SPC and the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC). Any UNDAC deployment in support of a national/regional emergency will be closely coordinated with the PHT in the event of a medium- or large-scale natural disaster.

Session Summary

A side event on the UNDAC Pacific Strategy 2018 - 2020 took place with the discussion focused on strengthening the UNDAC system in the Pacific, following a significant decline in trained and active members over the recent years. Multilateral first response capacity across the region that utilizes the resources of all partners in a coherent manner is limited. Therefore, given the risk posed by natural disasters to the PICs, UNDAC uniquely offers an operational methodology and rapid response capability that can be deployed within the Pacific in support of the national first-response efforts. This will develop a highly skilled representative team readily available to support the national or regional response efforts. Several Pacific Directors of the NDMOs strongly recommended reviving the national focal point system and providing refresher training for those who have dropped out of the roster as a starting point. Representatives from New Zealand and Australian Governments endorsed the proposal to revive the UNDAC in the Pacific. This, in conjunction with the recommendation that more consultation needs to be done with the PICs, particularly with the NDMOs and other rapid deployment mechanisms, will identify a collaborative strategy for utilizing the strengths of the UNDAC network.

The three goals of the UNDAC Pacific Strategy include:

Goal 1 - UNDAC is reinforced as a key, multinational and multi-skilled first response team in the Pacific.

Goal 2 - OCHA Office of the Pacific Islands strengthens the national and regional understanding of the UNDAC-related tools and services deployed in support of the government services.

Goal 3 – Ensure that suitable opportunities are available for the existing UNDAC members and new potential members in the Pacific to engage in response and preparedness activities.

The UNDAC network provides rapid response teams to support coordination, assessments and information management, typically for large-scale emergencies in support of the NDMOs, OCHA or the PHT in the response phase. In addition, tailored small-scale support teams of disaster managers and humanitarian experts can also be deployed, covering areas such as environmental emergencies, On-site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) coordination and Urban Search and Rescue capabilities.

“The Building Blocks for Successful Private Sector Engagement”

Presenter

Nicola Glendining – Resilient Development Adviser, UNDP Pacific Risk Resilience Programme

Session Contributors

Morika Hunter – Chair, Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council (FBDR)

Leonard Chan – Vice-chair, Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council

Alisi Tuqa – Acting Chief Executive Officer, Pacific Island Private Sector Organization (PIPSO), Pacific Business Resilience Network

Vatimi Rayalu – Chief Economist, Fiji Ministry of Agriculture

Key Session Messages

- Engaging the private sector in the Pacific can mean one of two things: supporting the private sector to reduce the impacts of climate change and disasters on their own operations or alternatively leveraging off them as agents of change in government-led resilience building activities.
- A paradigm shift on the private sector engagement is required to a point where the private sector is a core partner in all aspects of resilience building activities and where their engagement is strategic and coordinated.
- The private sector is critical to support the communities and Fiji's economic growth.

Session Summary

This session focused on engaging the private sector in the Pacific. The focus was on both supporting the businesses to reduce the impacts of climate change and disasters on themselves as well as partnering with them as change agents for preparedness, response and recovery efforts in humanitarian assistance. A paradigm shift of the private sector engagement has started in the Pacific with the establishment of the Business Resilience Councils in Fiji and Vanuatu and a Regional Network whose remit is to:

- Forge and sustain partnerships between the private sector and the government, local communities, regional agencies (CROP), the UN, CSOs and others to build the resilience of communities;
- Provide a clear entry point for the private sector to engage in disaster and resilience activities; and
- Support businesses to build resilience and to reduce risks from climate change and disasters, particularly focusing on micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises.

The first network, FBDR, was established following TC Winston in Fiji. Since its establishment, the network's achievements include securing a seat on the Fiji Disaster Management Committee (DISMAC) and inputting into the Fiji Disaster Management Act, business representatives sitting on sector disaster coordination meetings (clusters), developing and launching a Business Continuity Planning (BCP) Toolkit and securing funding to undertake a BCP training of trainers for program across the country.

On the back of this success, PIPSO has established the Pacific Business Resilience Network. This was based on the need to support the Chambers of Commerce to work with the business sector in their respective countries to build resilience of businesses and support the organization to better access the private sector financing. PIPSO is working with the Chambers of Commerce in a number of countries to replicate the success of the FBDR.

Annex: Agenda

<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>Session / Topic</i>	<i>Presenter</i>	<i>Side Session</i>
Monday	2-Oct 2017			
8:30	9:00	Registration	OCHA	
9:00	9:30	Welcome and Opening of the Pacific Resilience Week (Group Photo)	OCHA	
9:30	11:00	"Bringing Meaning to Localization in the Pacific"	CARITAS AOTEAROA NZ	
11:00	11:30	MORNING BREAK		
11:30	12:30	"Taking Control of the Response" – moving from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention	NDMO FIJI, NDMO VANUATU, IFRC	
12:30	13:30	"This is what a Humanitarian looks like"	UN WOMEN, DIVA FOR EQUALITY	
13:30	14:30	LUNCH		
14:30	16:00	"Localization and Accountability to an Outcome" - NGO and CSO engagement and coordination	OXFAM	
16:00	16:30	AFTERNOON BREAK		
16:30	17:00	El Niño and the Upcoming Cyclone Season	FIJI MET	
17:00	18:00	END OF DAYTIME SESSIONS		
18:00	20:00	Joint Welcome and Opening	OCHA, SPC, UNISDR, SPREP	
Tuesday	3-Oct 2017			
8:30	9:00	Recap on the previous day	OCHA	
9:00	10:00	"Unsolicited Bilateral Donations (UBDs)" – Why Cash is Best	WFP	
10:00	10:30	MORNING BREAK		
10:30	12:00	"Localizing Preparedness" - Country Preparedness Package	UNDP & OCHA	
12:00	13:00	"Bridging Divides" – addressing cross-cutting issues in the Clusters	UNICEF	Strengthening UNDAC's Presence in the Pacific
13:00	14:00	LUNCH		
14:00	15:30	1. "Operationalizing Reform Commitments in the Pacific" & 2. "A Turning Point for Cash Transfer Programming in the Pacific"	1. Humanitarian Advisory Group 2. WFP & Oxfam	
15:30	16:00	AFTERNOON BREAK		
16:00	17:00	"The Building Blocks for Successful Private Sector Engagement"	UNDP	
17:00	17:30	Meeting Closure	OCHA	
17:30	18:00	END OF DAYTIME SESSIONS		