

JOINT MEETING
of the
2013 PACIFIC PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT &
PACIFIC CLIMATE CHANGE ROUNDTABLE

8th – 11th July
Sofitel Fiji Resort and Spa, Denarau Island, Nadi, Fiji

SIDE EVENT 13:

In the neighborhood: The role of regional organisations in disaster risk management

Introduction

As the frequency, intensity and unpredictability of natural disasters is expected to increase in the future as a result of climate change, it is more important than ever that governments and other actors enhance their capacity to prevent, respond to, and recover from natural disasters. This session will look at the specific role of regional intergovernmental organisations in disaster risk management (DRM), using as a starting point the results of a year-long research project by the Brookings Institution which analyzed the types of engagement work of some 30 regional organisations in disaster risk management, with a particular focus on the Pacific and Caribbean

The global architecture of regional intergovernmental organisations is very complex. Some regions, such as the Americas and Africa, have a regional ‘big-tent’ organisation that includes most countries of the continent as members (Organization of American States, African Union) and also have many sub-regional organisations in which some of the continent’s members participate. Other regions – such as Asia – have many subregional organizations but no continent-wide regional organisation. The study looked in some depth at 13 organisations using 17 indicators of engagement in disaster risk management. For example, one indicator looks at whether the regional body has established a specialized organisation for DRM issues and there seems to be clear evidence that the formation of a distinct entity (whether it is called an agency, center, mechanism, or division) clearly expresses the regional organisation’s involvement with DRM. While a number of regional organisations have developed regional rapid response mechanisms, only one provides direct humanitarian assistance (the European Union). Most regions have developed technical cooperation mechanisms on the regional level (such as early warning systems) while only a few have developed regional military protocols for disaster assistance or carry out joint disaster management exercises. A promising trend in the Caribbean and Pacific seems to be the development of regional disaster insurance schemes. While this desk study provides a global overview, field-based research in the Pacific and Caribbean provides insights into the opportunities and challenges facing regional organizations in those regions.

Purpose

- To discuss the relevance of the experience of regional organisations in disaster risk management in other regions to the Pacific context
- To identify the particular needs and expectations of Pacific regional organisations by different stakeholders (national, regional, and international)
- To provide an opportunity for Pacific stakeholders to discuss the potential and challenges of strengthening regional efforts and regional coordination in disaster risk management recovery

Key Questions

- What roles do regional organisations, both globally and in the Pacific, play in disaster risk management?
- What are their advantages compared to international and national actors?
- Do they play different roles in disaster risk reduction, response, and recovery?
- Are there relevant experiences and good practices from other regions which might inform understanding and strengthen DRM performance in the Pacific?
- What are the key messages to the rest of the world about the Pacific experience with regional, international and national actors in disaster risk management?

Intended Outcomes

- Enhanced awareness of participants about the roles regional organisations play in DRM in other regions, particularly in the Caribbean
- Better understanding of the comparative advantages of Pacific regional organisations in DRM and of the opportunities and challenges for future DRM support in the region.
- Discussion by Pacific participants of their expectations of regional organisations in reducing disaster and climate related risks
- Recommendations on how Pacific regional organizations s can strengthen collaboration in DRM

Format:

- Introduction: welcomes, introductions, objectives of the session
- Presentations on the research (15 minutes each):
 - Overview of findings of *In the Neighborhood: The Growing Role of Regional Organizations in Disaster Risk Management*, Elizabeth Ferris
 - Opportunities and challenges for Pacific regional organizations, John Hay
- Comments (5-10 minutes each) by representatives of national, regional and international organizations working on these issues in the Pacific
- Discussion by participants

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