

**Strategy for Disaster and Climate Resilient Development in the Pacific
(SRDP)**

**Background Information and Guidance on
Rationale and Possible Approaches**

Final

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Executive Summary

Background. Where possible and appropriate, Pacific island countries and territories have already made considerable progress in implementing integrated approaches to managing disaster and climate risks¹. These developments have occurred with respect to policy making, planning, implementation and institutional strengthening, among others. Thus the separate regional frameworks that relate to disaster risk management and to climate change² are now being seen as somewhat inconsistent with national priorities and approaches, and with actions being undertaken in the Pacific, at both national and sub-national levels.

Given the above, as well as the fact that the two regional frameworks expire in 2015, the historic First Joint Meeting of the Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management and the Pacific Climate Change Roundtable³ called on the disaster risk management and climate change communities to expedite the development of an integrated strategy for disaster risk management and climate change, towards resilient development for the Pacific.

While disaster- and climate-related risks do not always relate to the same natural hazards, management of the risks overlap in many aspects. As a result, it often makes sense to plan and implement the management of these risks in a systematic and integrated manner. Where there are areas distinct to the two communities of practice, such as earthquake risk engineering and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, there are often synergies. Furthermore, adaptation, emissions reduction and disaster risk management are 'cross cutting' issues that normally will be implemented simultaneously, consistent with sector policies. The shared aim of managing disaster- and climate-related risks is to reduce the vulnerability of societies and economies to the full range of natural hazards by improving the ability to better anticipate, resist, prepare for, respond to and recover from their impacts.

An integrated approach that reduces the risks to sustainable development from multiple hazards or phenomena, whether climate-related or geophysical, and whether of sudden or slow onset, is more effective and efficient. This is especially relevant if it takes into account the current limitations on national and regional capacities to address these concerns.

The 2010 mid-term reviews of the two regional frameworks recommended greater policy coherence at the regional level, in order to provide for a more conducive enabling environment for managing disaster- and climate-related risks at national and sub-national levels. Subsequently, relevant regional meetings endorsed preparation of an integrated regional strategy. The process of developing such a strategy, including its related implementation arrangements and monitoring and evaluation framework, is commonly referred to as the 'Roadmap'. The new Strategy is to be approved by Pacific Leaders in 2015 and come into effect in 2016.

This Background Information and Guidance Paper has been prepared to help guide decisions by Pacific island countries and territories regarding some critical aspects of the new regional Strategy, including the level of guidance to be provided such as high-level strategic guidance versus a more detailed action plan. The Paper has been prepared following a desktop review of relevant publications and an analysis of existing regional mechanisms for coordination/implementation of similar policy frameworks in the Pacific and in other regions such as Asia and the Caribbean. It also takes into consideration lessons from previous community-level actions, and the findings of the mid-

¹ These risks are related to all natural hazards, including weather extremes and climate variability and change.

² In 2005 Pacific Leaders approved two regional frameworks designed to help address the challenges posed to sustainable national development by the range of natural hazards, and by climate change, namely the Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action (2005 – 2015) and the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change (2006 – 2015).

³ Held in Nadi, Fiji, from July 8 to 11, 2013.

term reviews of the existing regional policy frameworks for climate change and disaster risk management. The work carried out in Pacific island countries and territories also helps guide development of a new approach that makes suitable links with these accomplishments and lessons.

Following consultations with, and decisions by Pacific island countries and territories, the options presented in this Paper will be narrowed down, and provide the basis of the draft new regional Strategy to be considered by relevant regional meetings, culminating in approval by Pacific Leaders in 2015.

Terminology. In moving forward, it is essential to have clarity regarding the terminology used to describe key concepts used when discussing the management of disaster- and climate-related risks. Collectively these involve an all hazards approach, covering geophysical, weather and climate hazards.

Significantly, disaster risk reduction includes adaptation, highlighting an important and already existing link with climate change adaptation. Disaster risk reduction also includes “mitigation”, but in this context it has a different meaning to the same term used by the climate change community to describe efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In this Paper we acknowledge the shared use of, as well as the difference in meanings for, the term “mitigation”. We avoid confusion by omitting to use the term “mitigation”, preferring to use the expression “greenhouse gas emissions reduction” or similar, and the expression “limiting hazard/disaster impacts”, or similar.

Regional Level Situation Analysis. The Paper highlights that Pacific island countries and territories are among the most vulnerable in the world. Climate change is exacerbating the current vulnerabilities, with adaptation and disaster risk reduction fast-becoming the key risk management options. After Sub-Saharan Africa, the Pacific region is the most off-track for achieving all of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Significantly, in the Pacific progress is poorest for Goal 1 (to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger), the Goal judged to be the most adversely affected by climate change and disasters.

Disasters affect large parts of the population, especially the poor and other marginalized groups. Between 1950 and 2011 disasters in the Pacific islands region affected approximately 4 million people, caused 8,693 reported deaths and resulted in damage costs of around US\$3.2 billion. Tropical cyclones, the major cause of these losses and damage, are expected to increase in intensity, though not frequency, in most parts of the Pacific over the coming decades.

Disasters have until quite recently been viewed as unpredictable and unmanageable events. As a result, resources have tended to be focused on post-disaster recovery and reconstruction, rather than on the more effective approach of risk reduction. Practical experience and scientific advancement have increased the ability to predict as well as reduce the impacts of most natural hazard events. The result has been a paradigm shift from disaster management to disaster risk reduction, coupled with climate change considerations that encourage a focus on efforts to reduce anticipated as well as current risks.

The recently published World Bank Policy and Practice Note for Climate- and Disaster-Resilient Development in the Pacific Islands Region showed that merely managing the symptoms of disasters and climate change, as many Pacific island countries and territories have tended to do, is inefficient, expensive, and not sustainable. The Note highlighted that it is more effective to address the causes of vulnerability by incorporating risk considerations in the formulation and implementation of social and economic development policies and plans, by ensuring political authority, leadership, and accountability are robust and effective, and by strengthening coordination and cooperation among key players.

Major challenges facing the region include weak institutions, limited coordination between national and regional disaster risk management and climate change agencies, and insufficient capacity to engage across multiple sectors. Disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, and

development largely operate as three distinct communities of practice, with their plethora of policies and planning instruments as well as institutional fragmentation of functions, at both national and at regional levels. While each of these practice areas is well intended, a major challenge is to achieve greater cooperation and greater integration of these instruments and efforts, along with improved coordination and alignment between existing institutions. Such an approach utilizes the limited human and financial resources more efficiently, and produces more effective and enduring results.

Limited access to, and availability of, end-user friendly data and information for evidence-based planning and decision-making is inhibiting delivery of climate- and disaster-resilient development solutions, at national and sub-national levels. Appropriate, rigorous and targeted risk information can provide the evidence required to make informed planning decisions that helps avoid mal-adaptation. Most national agencies with mandated responsibilities to undertake risk assessments face shortfalls in the required technical expertise, funding, hardware and software. Recent regional efforts, such as the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative, have improved planning and decision-support information, but this needs to be better utilised at national and sub-national levels.

As most regional and national disaster risk management and climate change priorities and needs are largely addressed using overseas development assistance, or targeted environment and climate funds, they tend to be project-based and remain by and large supply-driven. The growing proliferation of disaster risk management and climate change projects continues to cause difficulties with coordination, cooperation and coherence, but has also prompted development of online and other initiatives that seek to improve information exchange and coordination.

Looking to the future, any modest development gains already achieved will continue to be at risk from natural hazards such as cyclones and drought, with these risks being exacerbated by climate change. Pacific island countries and territories, and their development partners, have already made substantial investments in the health, education, infrastructure and related sectors of Pacific island countries and territories. Future investments should include a greater commitment to increase the resilience of the intended development outcomes. This can be achieved by ensuring the development activities include investments in disaster risk reduction, disaster preparedness and climate change adaptation. As a rule, these activities should be implemented holistically, and as an integral part of the development activities. This includes improving the resilience of water supplies, food production systems and infrastructure, especially in the health and education sectors. Appropriate levels of investment should also be made to strengthen the enabling environment for disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and greenhouse gas emissions reduction, to ensure the timely, efficient and effective delivery of resilient development outcomes.

Possible Scope and Approach of the Strategy. The Roadmap highlights the intention to achieve increased integration of disaster risk management and responses to climate change, with the latter including both adaptation and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. In the past there has been a tendency for some commentators to focus on the differences between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, and many have been identified. But increasing attention is now being given to the common focus of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, to reduce vulnerability and enhance resilience to weather and climate-related hazards. Further examination and careful consideration show that synergies are not just limited to those between disaster risk reduction and adaptation. Adaptation is becoming an increasingly important aspect of the recovery dimension of disaster management, especially when recovery and reconstruction involve “building back better”, such as by taking the changing climate into consideration.

Recent work has resulted in the notion of climate compatible development. By bringing in synergies with reducing greenhouse gas emissions, climate compatible development links with the newer themes of climate resilient development and low carbon development. Given that the climate

change dimensions of the new regional Strategy are intended to cover both climate change adaptation and emissions reduction, climate compatible development provides a very relevant framework. However, this framework does not include explicit reference to disaster risk management. This is a serious short-coming in terms of its usefulness as a framework for the new regional Strategy. To resolve this issue, it is proposed that the Strategy be based around the framework of disaster and climate resilient development, reflecting the many practical opportunities to link management of climate and disaster risks in the context of delivering resilient development outcomes.

Level of Guidance. It is also proposed that, instead of laying out a more detailed action plan, the new Strategy will provide high-level strategic guidance for the prioritization and implementation of disaster risk management, climate change adaptation and emissions reduction at national level, along with coordinated regional approaches to address national priorities, all in the context of achieving more resilient sustainable development. The rationale for not including a more detailed action plan is that much of the implementation will occur within the development sectors, at community, national, multi-country and regional levels. Such implementation activities are already well informed by their own frameworks, strategies and plans. It is recommended that the new Strategy provide high-level guidance for the continual strengthening of these instruments, based on current and emerging understanding and experience. Thus the Strategy will highlight and provide guidance for situations where the existing frameworks, strategies and plans need strengthening in order to ensure the resilience of development results and outcomes.

Possible Frameworks. The Roadmap proposes a “strategy”, while earlier iterative drafts have referred to an “integrated framework for action” and an “integrated regional policy framework”. It is important that a conscious decision is taken on whether the new regional instrument for disaster and climate resilient development is to be a framework or policy or strategy or plan, or something else. The intentions described in the Roadmap are consistent with those of a strategy as opposed to any other form of regional instrument. Therefore it is recommended that the title of the new Strategy be the *Strategy for Disaster and Climate Resilient Development in the Pacific (SRDP)*.

Term of the Strategy.

No recommendation is made as to the term of the Strategy, other than to suggest that its duration be linked to those for the instruments that succeed the Pacific Plan, the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Millennium Development Goals.

Differentiated Approaches. The 22 Pacific island countries and territories have many contrasting characteristics, both between and within them. The differences may be sufficiently significant to warrant differentiated approaches being reflected within the proposed new Strategy. The diversity and inhomogeneity of the Pacific islands region highlights that one-size-(does not)-fit-all, and calls for appropriate (customised/tailor-made) differentiated approaches to be made within the new Strategy. Such approaches need to be incorporated if the new Strategy is to address the specific challenges, problems and opportunities of the region, or for a particular situation.

For example, the needs of the most vulnerable groups (including women, children, youth, the disabled and the elderly) require greater priority, yet currently there is only cursory mention of them in various regional policies. Formulation of the Strategy should consider and account for the special needs and contributions of vulnerable groups such as women, youth, the elderly and the disabled.

The Strategy should also be clear about the goods and services it would support for delivery through national and sub-national initiatives, and those that would be delivered regionally. The latter would include management of regional public goods and services, such as the provision of specialised technical skills and services, providing disaster- and climate-related science and technology such as early warning systems and reducing uncertainty of disaster and climate risk projections, and managing shared natural resources such as fisheries and deep-sea minerals.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. Internationally there has been considerable recent progress in understanding monitoring and evaluation approaches for climate change and disaster risk management initiatives. These and many other studies, along with monitoring and evaluation experience related to monitoring and evaluating the regional frameworks and national strategies and plans, will provide the basis for a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Strategy that includes SMART indicators to measure progress during the implementation period and in particular at the mid-term.

Communications Plan. To ensure the broadest possible reach of the Strategy at all levels within countries (from central government to community level), as well as regionally and internationally, a costed communications plan will be developed. The overarching goal of the Communications Plan will be to position the Strategy as the leading source of high-level strategic guidance related to achieving climate and disaster resilient development in the Pacific. The principles that will underpin the Communications Plan are fundamental to successful communication: consistency, transparency, responsiveness, timeliness, accessibility, and relevance to the needs of target groups. These principles resonate with the Pacific Aid Effectiveness Principles adopted by Pacific Islands Forum leaders in response to the Paris Declaration. The Communications Plan will be designed to give Pacific island countries and territories, their development partners and other key players confidence in, and ownership of, the processes that will deliver resilient development outcomes. The objective is to re-focus the regional discussion about climate change and disasters, moving it from a process-dominated discussion about disaster risk management and climate change responses, to resilient development-focused actions that deliver tangible and enduring benefits to Pacific island countries and their people.

Funding Requirements. Pacific Leaders have often stressed the critical and urgent need for finance to enable their countries to respond to adaptation and disaster risk reduction needs, and in particular to assist those people who are already suffering, are displaced or are being otherwise affected as a result of the detrimental consequences of disasters and climate change. The bottom line is to ensure that Pacific island countries and territories have equitable access to predictable, adequate and sustainable financing to implement national climate change and disaster risk management strategies that are aligned with their existing development plans.

In spite of a diverse array of funding mechanisms, many Pacific leaders have also stressed they are not fully benefitting from funding that was agreed at 15th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention of Climate Change. This is due to complexities, delays and effectiveness of accessing climate funding, and the failure of donors to fully deliver on pledges. Since 1950, natural disasters have cost Pacific island countries around US\$3.2 billion, in nominal terms, in associated damage. The cost of restoring infrastructure, maintaining access to basic social services, providing social safety nets to the affected population, and investing in disaster risk reduction, is expected to be around US\$120 million, which equates to 22 per cent of GDP over the next three to four years.

Based on these estimates and the current level of international climate finance, it is unlikely that the amounts raised over the next few years will be sufficient to meet all identified needs. This raises the question of how to prioritise the spending of limited financial resources. The same issue arises at the national level, where budgetary resources are never sufficient to meet all public spending needs, making it important to consider the strength of the systems that manage climate related expenditure. However, measuring the effectiveness of public spending on climate change actions is fraught with difficulties, given the definitional ambiguity of such actions, the complexity of public funding flows, and a lack of clarity on what effectiveness actually means.

In this context, the recently developed Pacific Climate Change Finance Assessment Framework is a useful example of a regional public good. The Framework can be used to guide an assessment of a Pacific island country's ability to access and manage climate change resources across six interrelated

dimensions (funding sources; policies and plans; institutions; public financial management and expenditure; human capacity; and development effectiveness), and to utilise various modalities to assist in these efforts.

Looking ahead in terms of emerging needs related to climate finance, one of the key findings of the expenditure analyses undertaken to date is that expenditures relevant to climate change are being shaped primarily not by climate change policy, but by expenditure priorities more generally. The analyses have also identified processes of decentralisation and deconcentration as key to ensuring that climate change expenditures respond to location specific contexts, and reach the poor and vulnerable. But current coordination challenges are amplified by the fragmentation of donor financing flows and also a lack of coordination of efforts amongst donors.

Recommendations.

1. It is recommended that title of the new strategy be *Strategy for Disaster and Climate Resilient Development in the Pacific (SRDP)*;
2. Given that the 22 Pacific island countries and territories have many contrasting characteristics, both between and within them, including the existence of most vulnerable groups, the new Strategy should take into account special needs and contributions of stakeholders and key players; differentiated approaches are needed to ensure the Strategy addresses the specific challenges, problems and opportunities of the region, or for a particular situation;
3. It is recommended that, instead of laying out a more detailed action plan, the new Strategy provide only high-level strategic guidance for the prioritization and implementation of disaster risk management, climate change adaptation and emissions reductions at national and sub-national levels, in the context of resilient sustainable development; and
4. The Strategy should be clear about the goods and services it would support for delivery through national and sub-national initiatives, and those that would be delivered regionally and sub-regionally.