



MINISTRY OF METEOROLOGY,
ENERGY, INFORMATION, DISASTER
MANAGEMENT, ENVIRONMENT,
CLIMATE CHANGE AND
COMMUNICATIONS (MEIDECC)
NUKU'ALOFA, TONGA

Inter Cluster Coordination Meeting (Cluster Leads & Co-Leads), El-Nino Alert 2023-24

Meeting no. 1

Date/Time: 14 July 2023, 09:00am

Venue: NEMO Conference Room

Committee Members:

1. CEO for MEIDECC; Chairperson
2. National Emergency Management Office
3. Tonga Meteorological Services
4. Ministry of Health
5. Ministry of Land and Natural Resources
6. Department of Environment
7. Ministry of Agriculture Food and Forests
8. Ministry of Fisheries
9. Ministry of Education and Training
10. Ministry of Internal Affairs
11. Department of Communication
12. Ministry of Public Enterprises
13. Ministry of Infrastructure
14. Ministry of Finance

Also in Attendance:

15. Tonga Red Cross Society
16. UNOCHA
17. UNDP

Attendees:

Represented by Moana Kioa, Acting Director NEMO
Malakai Vainikolo, Viliami Tongamana
Laitia Fifita
Filisi Ufi Tonga
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Mafile'o Masi
Mikaele Saipa'ia, Lamipeti Havea
-
-
Mafi Luti Hoa, Karishma Narayan
Stan Ahio, Malia Vea
Violani Tupou
Peni Fa'aui
-

Anaseini Iotebatu
Mereoni Ketewai, Nemaia Koto
Ashley Fua

Minutes of the Meeting

Welcome Remarks;

Mrs. Moana Kioa, the Acting Director for NEMO, chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone to the meeting and conveyed the apologies from the Chairman, the Chief Secretary & Secretary to Cabinet, and Acting CEO for MEIDECC.

Opening prayer

The meeting was led with an opening prayer by Malakai Vainikolo from the NEMO.

Agenda	Main Discussions	Resolution
Welcome Remarks	The Chairlady acknowledges the attendance from all members and the importance of this meeting to plan strategies during preparedness and response to (when required) potential implications of an El-Nino event.	
1) Presentation from Tonga Meteorology Services	<p>The TMS issued an <i>El- Nino Alert</i> for the whole of Tonga. This alert stage has high probability to upgrade into the actual El-Nino stage in the coming weeks or month depending on the weather conditions and indicators.</p> <p><i>Please see power point presentation attached herewith for details</i></p>	-Cluster Leads in their respective sectors were encouraged to further assess the potential implication that the El-Nino phenomena would cause in their particular sectors and how to mitigate the impacts of such event and to response to it.
2) Roundtable discussion from Cluster Leads and Co-Leads on the potential preparedness and response main strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Logistics & Coordination- NEMO/MEIDECC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinate public awareness programs such as tv and radio programs regarding the El-Nino Alert to inform public on potential impact of an actual El-Nino phenomena. - Prepositioning and stock taking of relief items to assist responding to if there's water crisis emergency caused by a drought. This include ensuring the availability of water desalination unit to be deployed to outer islands if there's urgent need and other water related items such as buckets and jerry cans to be distributed for storing of water. ○ Emergency Shelter & Non-Food Items- NEMO/MEIDECC, Tonga Red Cross <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Similar to above, relief items related to drought and WASH are being prepositioned and stock take to ensure there's enough relief items to response to an emergency. 	<p>-NEMO and TMS will host and coordinate radio program with Cluster Leads, starting from next week to inform public on potential implications of El Nino and advise on measures to avoid negative impacts of a drought brought by the El Nino phenomena. The Cluster Leads will be invited to take turn on this radio program.</p> <p>-Cluster Leads to fill in Preparedness and Response Plan template circulated by NEMO to collate preparedness and response activities and actions to El-Nino/ drought. The deadline is by the end of next week (Friday 21st) for</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Displacement and Evacuation Center Management- NEMO/MEIDECC, IOM - The newly established Cluster will call its first meeting soon to ensure members are well aware of the strategies and activities that will be undertaken by the Cluster to prepare and response to a disaster such as a potential drought. This would include ensuring the readiness of Evacuation Centers (ECs) should there be cases of displacement caused by this El-Nino event. The readiness strategies will include not just the facilities available in the ECs but also the process and protocols of managing the ECs. - The current active ECs in Longolong that still host the families displaced from ‘Atata Island will be a top priority of concern for this newly established Cluster. ○ Safety & Protection- Ministry of Internal Affairs - IEC materials specifically for child protection are in the process of translated into Tongan language - Have preposition recreational kits to help children’s recreational activities in times of emergency and disaster. - Have formed an ongoing communication with the displaced communities from ‘Atata and Mango in their respective new locations to ensure child protection issues are addressed immediately if cases arise. ○ Health, Nutrition & WASH- Ministry of Health, Ministry of Land & Natural Resources, Dep of Environment - MOH has acknowledge the need for a more regular meeting to ensure a multi-agency preparedness and support to a disaster including the El-Nino event and its potential implications. - Ministry (MOH) currently have ongoing activities to prepare for drought and water shortage related disasters. - DoE conveyed that part of the Waste Sub Cluster preparedness activities is reducing the amount of organic waste such as leaves at the Tapuhia Landfill to allow space for proper disposal of more dangerous wastes. - DoE will also look at ways to address coral bleaching as a potential impact of this El-Nino phenomena and its consequences such as potential harmful of fishing and other recreational activities in coastal areas. - DoE also contributed to the discussion to focus the public awareness programs on informing and 	<p>compilation and submission to the National Disaster Risk Management Committee (former NEMC) through Director and CEO.</p>
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educating the public to use water wisely with attention to high-risk areas/locations such as Ha'apai (low lying islands and high risk of seawater intrusion into water table) and the Niuas (due to their isolated location)

- - **Essential Services- Ministry of Public Enterprise**
- The public enterprises under the Ministry have existing Business Continuity Plan dictating how to operate during emergency and recovery from disasters in order to still provide essential services such as water and power to the affected communities and whole of Tonga.
- With regards to ensuring communication services are available or quickly restore during and/or after a disaster, they're working closely with the ETC Cluster to share and define clear roles and responsibilities of private sectors and other organizations.
 - **Emergency Telecommunications- Department of Communication**
- Have drafted a National Emergency Telecommunication Plan to ensure ongoing provision communication services during a disaster or quickly restoration after a disaster
- The Nationwide Early Warning System (NEWS) project implemented between Government of Japan and Government of Tonga is currently in the stage of an annual and final inspection of the sirens and RAR radio to ensure effective early warning system is available during a tsunami warning and processes including evacuation.
- High Frequency (HF) Radio are now available in the Emergency Ops Centers in Tongatapu, Vavaú, Haapai, and Eua to ensure effective emergency communication during disaster response.
- Satellites: All the EOC in the whole of Tonga have satellites internet access as a backup for the fibre cable in times of an emergency.
- Domestic fibre cable has been completely restored on Wednesday 12th July, 2023 around 8:00pm
 - **Food Security & Livelihoods- MAFF, Ministry of Fisheries**
- MAFF Extension Division conducted preparedness activities such provision of seedlings and agricultural tools to empower communities to farm during peace time to prepare to disasters.
- Advise on patterns of cropping to be used and the varieties that are more tolerant through drought seasons.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Also advised farmers on using of small-scale irrigations for non-tolerant crops during drought seasons. ○ Reconstruction/Housing- Ministry of Infrastructure - MOI acknowledge that reconstruction program is ongoing, however noted that resettlement of displaced communities from ‘Atata to their newly constructed houses is now completed. - MOI is also still looking at few remaining reconstructions from TC Gita as the HTHH volcanic eruption and tsunami contributed to delaying the reconstruction work. - The Ministry is also working on reconstruction of non-residential houses such as multipurpose community halls and government offices that has been affected by the aforementioned disasters. ○ Education- Ministry of Education & Training - Not presented at the meeting ○ Economic & Social Recovery- Ministry of Finance - Not presented at the meeting 	
<p>3. Other Matters</p>	<p>a. Disaster Risk Management Act 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recently obtained Royal Assen. A legal tool for multi-stakeholders’ proactive roles and responsibilities in managing risks before disasters even occur. This is mostly through the enactment of the Cluster system as a national coordination mechanism during disaster response in Tonga led by Government Ministries and Departments and supported by Non-Government Organizations and private sectors. <p>b. Revising of Clusters TORs to strengthens regular meetings, participation and information sharing;</p> <p>c. Finalizing the revised Initial Damage Assessment questionnaires for further digitization and further training for assessors and enumerators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two prioritize activities for the Inter Cluster Coordination Committee to be implemented in the next 3 months, hence request Cluster Leads support and participation to ensure preparations for the next disasters 	
<p>2) Closing Prayer</p>	<p>Before closing prayer, the Chairlady thanked everyone for their ongoing support and participation. The meeting adjourned with a grace by the Hon Chairman.</p>	

Endorsed by:

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