



PRESS RELEASE

STRENGTHENING CENTRAL AGENCY LEADERSHIP CAPACITY FOR RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT

Nuku'alofa, Tonga; February 3, 2020 – Strengthening central agency leadership capacity for resilient development was the focus of a one-day workshop organized by the Government of Tonga through its Ministry of Finance in Nuku'alofa last week on Wednesday 29 January.

More than 20 participants from central agencies and line ministries, and other stakeholders across Tonga came together to share knowledge and develop strategies to strengthen central agency leadership capacity in order to implement the national resilient development agenda.

“It is critical that central agencies are equipped to lead Tonga’s resilience agenda as they are the key agencies that support the implementation of the Tonga’s Joint National Action Plan (JNAP) II on climate change and disaster risk management and other national commitment for resilience building,” said the Chief Secretary and Secretary to Cabinet (CSSC) at the Prime Minister’s Office, Mr. Edgar Cocker.

“We acknowledge that although substantial strides had been made addressing climate change and disaster risk through the efforts of sectoral and line agencies, central government support is also needed,” said the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) from the Ministry of Finance, Mrs Balwyn Fa’otusia.

In addressing this leadership capacity within the central agencies, Mrs Fa’otusia announced during her opening remarks that “a new Climate Change, Disaster Risk Financing and Resilient Development Unit is now established within the Ministry of Finance.”

This Unit will be responsible to oversee and coordinate climate change and disaster risk financing and the overall resilience building agenda.

She further added that “it is critical to ensure that resilience and risk considerations are firmly embedded within the national and sub national planning, budgeting and implementation systems if Tonga’s resilience goals are to be achieved.”

“The central agencies will need to be actively engaged and commit to the transformation of central systems and processes in order to effectively mainstream risk in the context of national development,” said Regional Coordinator, Pacific Resilience Program (PREP), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Mr Mosese Sikivou.

Mr Sikivou stressed that “in order for central agencies to be effective leading the resilience agenda they must also interact more regularly amongst themselves and with other stakeholders on the relevant issues.”

Echoing similar sentiments, the Governance for Resilience (Gov4Res) Deputy Project Manager of the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji, Mr Aminisitai Delai said, “central line ministries will need to adapt their decision making and governance systems towards more resilient development. This involves reforming internal budgeting, planning, implementation and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

systems to embed resilience as well as enhancing oversight and accountability of these reforms with the role of parliament committees and audit offices.”

The workshop builds on the results of the inaugural engagement with the Government of Tonga by PIFS and UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji in August 2019, where both organisations have agreed to combine their efforts and improve the delivery of technical support to enhance Government leadership of resilience building in the context of the national sustainable development agenda.

The consultations in August 2019 identified a strategic approach to strengthen the focus and capacity of central agencies in order that they can better lead and support Tonga’s resilient development agenda.

The workshop is expected to: finalise the scope of assistance that is required for the strengthening of central agency capacity for improved leadership of Tonga’s resilient development agenda; obtain perspectives on the scope of the resilience capability to be established in the Ministry of Finance and determine similar needs across other central agencies, and; identify the key elements of a change management strategy that will support capacity strengthening in central agencies.

This workshop was supported by PIFS through Pacific Resilience Program (PREP), DFAT/GIZ Climate Finance Readiness in the Pacific (CFRP) Project, and UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji through the Governance for Resilience (Gov4Res) Project.



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Programme/Project Background

The PREP is a ‘Series of Projects’, implemented in two phases at this stage, with the potential for more phases in the future, funded by the World Bank. PREP aim to improve the resilient and sustainable economic and social development of the participating countries and of the region and strengthen resilience to climate change and natural hazards. The PREP is initially providing funding to Samoa,

Tonga, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Vanuatu, and the regional Organizations - the Pacific Community (SPC), and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS).

The Climate Finance Readiness in the Pacific (CFRP) Project is funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and implemented by the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH*. Its objective is to strengthen the capacity of Pacific Islands Countries to access climate change finance, including national GCF accreditations.

The Governance for Resilience (Gov4Res) Project aims to mainstream climate change and disaster risk into development planning and budgeting across the Pacific region and builds on from the Pacific Risk Resilience Programme (PRRP). The Project is partnering with a range of partners including the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), the New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).