



#ResilienceForAll #BreakTheCycle

TABLE OF CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	4
BACKGROUND.....	6
OBJECTIVE.....	6
ACTIVITY 1. ANNOUNCEMENT OF 2023-2024 CYCLONE SEASON OUTLOOK	7
ACTIVITY 2. NDAW-23 OPENING	8
ACTIVITY 3. EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI RESPONSE NATIONAL SIMULATION EXERCISE (SIMEX)	11
3.1. Rationale.....	11
3.2. Methodology	12
3.3. General Scenario	13
3.3. Preparatory Activities & Trainings.....	13
3.3.1. Referee Training	13
3.3.2. USAR First Responders Training	15
3.3.3. Academic Session	17
3.3.4. Communications Sub-Exercise	19
3.3.5. Technical Session.....	19
3.4. Conduct of the SIMEX.....	20
3.4.1. Table-Top Exercise	20
3.4.2. Command Post Exercise	22
3.4.3. Tsunami Drill.....	26
3.4.4. Marine Search and Rescue	27
3.4.5. Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Simulation Exercise	29
3.4.6. Medical Response Simulation Exercise	32
3.4.7. Oil Spill Response Simulation Exercise	33
3.5. Key Documents Produced	34
ACTIVITY 4. DRR EXHIBITION & MEDIA CAMPAIGN	36
4.1. DRR Exhibition	36
4.2 Media Campaign	40

ACTIVITY 5. AFTER-ACTION REVIEW	41
PARTICIPANTS.....	42
FINANCE	43
KEY LEARNINGS.....	45
National SIMEX.....	45
DRR Exhibition.....	46
RECOMMENDATIONS	46
ANNEXURES	47
ANNEX 1 List of Participating Organizations	47
ANNEX 2: REFEREE REPORT	51

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management extends sincere appreciation to all partners including government, development partners, non-government organisations (NGO's), and the private sector that have contributed to the successful execution of the 2023 National Disaster Awareness Week (NDAW). This year's NDAW celebration would not have been possible without the support from the following agencies;

1. Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
2. New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT)
3. Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)
4. Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
5. UN Women
6. International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
7. United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
8. International Federation for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
9. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
10. United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)
11. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)
12. World Food Programme (WFP)
13. Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council (FBDRC).

The Ministry also acknowledge the participation of the following Regional and International NDMOs, Red Cross and specialized response teams;

- Emergency Management, Cook Islands
- National Disaster Management Office, Nauru
- National Disaster Management Office, Kiribati
- National Emergency Management Office, Palau
- National Disaster Management Office, Federated States of Micronesia
- National Fire Authority, Samoa
- National Emergency Management Authority, New Zealand
- Tuvalu Red Cross
- Samoa Red Cross
- Solomon Islands Red Cross
- Vanuatu Red Cross
- Papua New Guinea Red Cross
- Cook Islands Red Cross
- Kiribati Red Cross
- Australia Disaster Assistance Response Teams 1 & 2 (AUS DART)
- Australian Civil-Military Centre
- Department of Defence – Centre of Excellence, Hawaii
- United States Forest Service
- Australian Medical Assistant Team (AUSMAT).

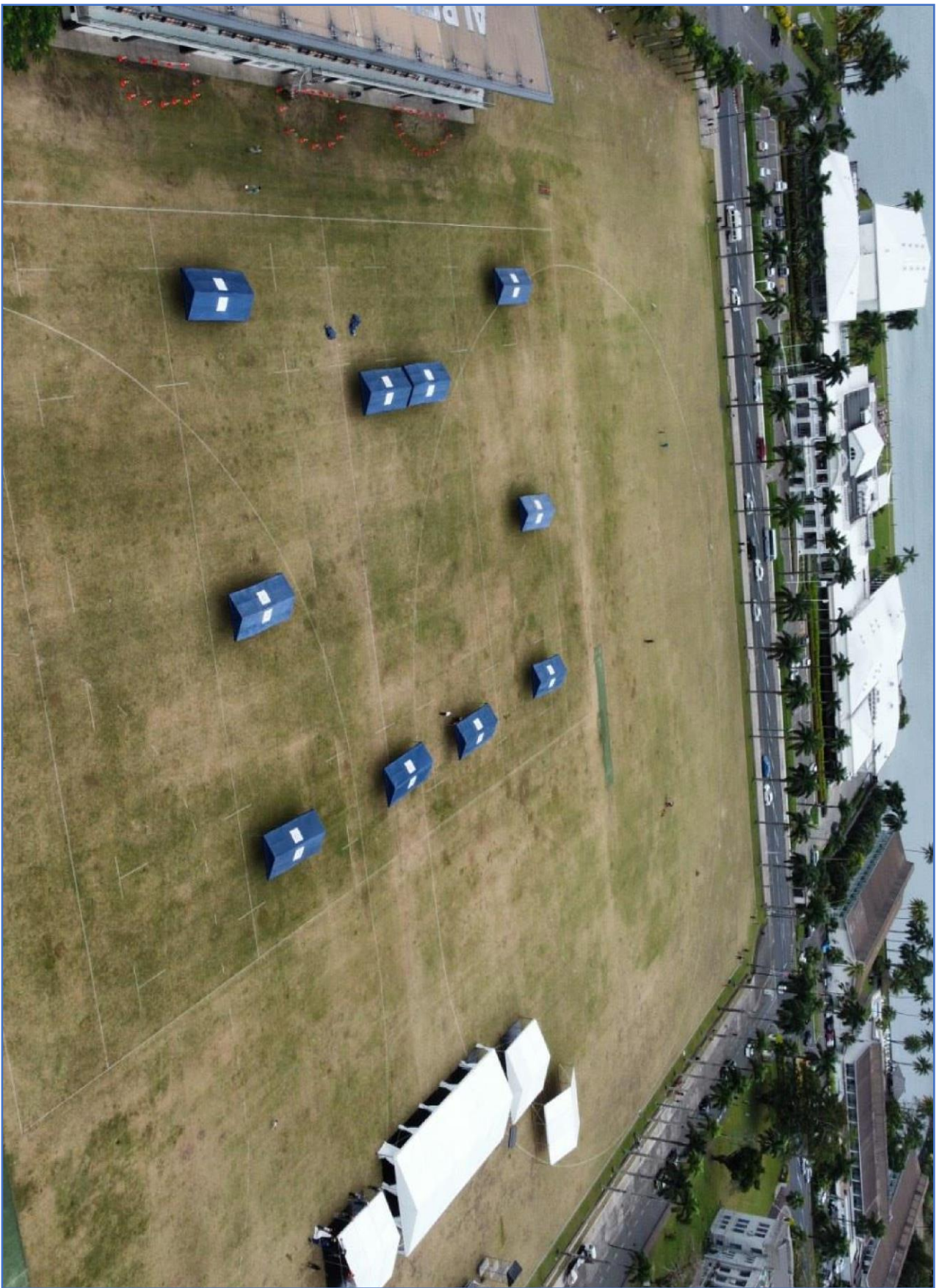


Figure 2: Bird's eye view of NDAW23 ground set-up

BACKGROUND

Mandated by the Natural Disaster Management Act (1998), the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) annually conducts the National Disaster Awareness Week (NDAW). This is aligned to the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDRR), annually held on October 13th to promote a global culture of disaster risk reduction (DRR). The IDRR aims to enhance the level of disaster preparedness amongst stakeholders and communities, and anticipate reduction of damages and losses that may occur if a disaster strikes.

The NDAW is celebrated annually to promote a behavioral change toward DRR for all members of the society. This is done by creating awareness at all levels both in the public and private sector and the community, ensuring that the nation is well-informed, with an equal good state of readiness and resilience.

So that the NDAW would reflect the objectives of the IDRR, and to shape the communication and media tools, a theme is determined by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. IDRR 2023 theme focused on the reciprocal relationship between inequality and disaster vulnerability: while unequal access to services such as finance and insurance leaves the most at-risk people exposed to danger, the impacts of these disasters exacerbate inequality, pushing the most at risk groups deeper into poverty.

OBJECTIVE

The National Disaster Awareness Week objective was to;

- Enhance public awareness towards the progress being made toward preventing and reducing disaster risk and losses in Fiji.
- To strengthen government's preparedness to respond to earthquakes and tsunamis.
- To test the implementation of the National Tsunami Response Plan and interoperability between relevant agencies' Tsunami Response Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on tsunami.
- To familiarise agencies involved with their roles and responsibilities.
- To enhance National Emergency Response Teams (NERT) readiness in supporting the national and sub- national levels government in responding to earthquakes and tsunamis.
- To provide recommendation in updating the National Tsunami Response Plan and SOP.

Key activities conducted as part of NDAW-23 are outlined in the following sections.

ACTIVITY 1. ANNOUNCEMENT OF 2023-2024 CYCLONE SEASON OUTLOOK

On 12th October 2023, a joint press conference by the Honourable Sakiasi Ditoka, Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management, and the Honourable Ro Filipe Tuisawau, Minister for Public Works, Transport and Meteorological Services, announced the 2023-2024 Tropical Cyclone Seasonal Outlook and the planned 2023 NDAW activities. The joint press-conference was a 'call to action', signaling the upcoming cyclone season and alerting members of the public to make the necessary preparations.

The following was announced for the 2023-2024 TC Outlook;

1. Two to three tropical cyclones (TCs) are likely to pass through Fiji's Exclusive Economic Zone during the 2023-24 TC season.
2. Of these, one to two TCs are likely to reach severe Category (Category 3-5).
3. There is equal risk of TCs affecting any part of the Fiji Group.
4. While the peak TC activities are usually from January to March, TCs can form at any time during the season. Out of season TCs cannot be ruled out.
5. It does not take a direct hit or a severe TC to cause considerable damage or life-threatening weather. Tropical disturbances or depressions that do not attain TC intensity can also cause strong winds/gusts, widespread heavy rainfall, landslides and flooding.
6. All communities should remain alert and prepared throughout the TC season and take heed of all advisories whenever issued.



Figure 3: Announcement of 2023 NDAW activities by the Minister of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster



Figure 4: Group Photo at the joint press conference

ACTIVITY 2. NDAW-23 OPENING

The NDAW 2023 was held in the Central Division at the Albert Park in Suva on the 17th of October 2023. The Chief guests for the event were;

1. Her Excellency Mami Mizutori, the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction,
2. Her Excellency Ms. Charlotte Darlow, High Commissioner for New Zealand in Fiji;
3. Ms. Clair McNamara, Deputy High Commissioner for Australia in Fiji, , and
4. Honourable Mr.Sakiasi Ditoka, Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management.

The Hon. Mr. Ditoka hosted a welcome dinner for the guests and international participants at a designated marquee on the Albert Park grounds on the evening of 16th October.



Figure 5: Chief guests delivering speeches at the NDAW Opening Ceremony



Figure 6: Group photo NDAW Exercise participants

ACTIVITY 3. EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI RESPONSE NATIONAL SIMULATION EXERCISE (SIMEX)

3.1. Rationale

Fiji is located between two major tectonic plates - the Pacific Plate and the Indo-Australian Plate. Due to subduction zone movements of tectonic plates around Fiji, earthquake activity is occurring regularly. Earthquakes around the Pacific Ocean rim, including for instance South America and Japan, can also generate tsunami wave threats for Fiji. As an island nation with numerous maritime islands, coastal communities, coastal roads and structures, Fiji is extremely vulnerable to tsunamis. Due to large earthquakes in the region, five tsunami alerts were issued for Fiji in 2016 alone, although none of these ultimately posed a threat. An earthquake-generated tsunami can reach Fiji between minutes or up to 8 hours. If the earthquake epicenter is close, there may be insufficient time to issue an official warning¹.

The exposure assessment indicates provinces in Viti Levu and Vanua Levu are likely to be susceptible to various tsunami inundation heights, concluding that people and assets in provinces such as Macuata and Tailevu are more vulnerable to tsunami². As a result, it becomes imperative for the Fiji government and relevant stakeholders to prioritize disaster preparedness and response strategies to prepare for the earthquake and tsunami.

As one of the preparedness and mitigation strategies, the National Tsunami Response Plan was developed in 2017. The Plan covers tsunami warning systems, evacuation, response, education and awareness, and response plan review. It is also mandated that the plan shall be reviewed regularly to incorporate changing national circumstances, lessons learnt and inputs from the simulation exercise.

In addition, the Fiji government established a National Emergency Response Team (NERT) and conducted the 1st NERT Induction Training on 2-9 July 2023. A total of thirty-four personnel from relevant agencies are certified as NERT members. The team is ready to be deployed to support the national and sub national government to respond and mitigate impact of a disaster.

In conjunction with the NDAW 2023, the National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC) conducted an Earthquake and Tsunami National Simulation Exercise (SIMEX). It aimed to mitigate the potential impact of disasters through strengthening coordination and improving overall disaster management capabilities among relevant stakeholders.

¹ Fiji Tsunami Response Plan, 2017

² Fakhruddin, B., Kintada, K., & Tilley, L. (2021). Probabilistic tsunami hazard and exposure assessment for the pacific islands-Fiji. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 64, 102458.

3.2. Methodology

The National SIMEX component of NDAW will be conducted through the following methods:

1. Table-Top Exercise (TTX) will be conducted to review the procedures and decision making at the strategic and operational levels of all components of exercises.

A TTX is an exercise that uses a progressive simulated scenario, together with series of scripted injects, to make participants consider the impact of a potential incident on existing plans, procedures and capacities. It is useful to commence with a TTX to build or test the plan and familiarize stakeholders with roles, responsibilities, planning elements and objectives.

2. Command Post Exercise (CPX) aims to test coordination, communication, integration, and interaction among stakeholders, within the tsunami response plan. Components of the CPX are illustrated below.

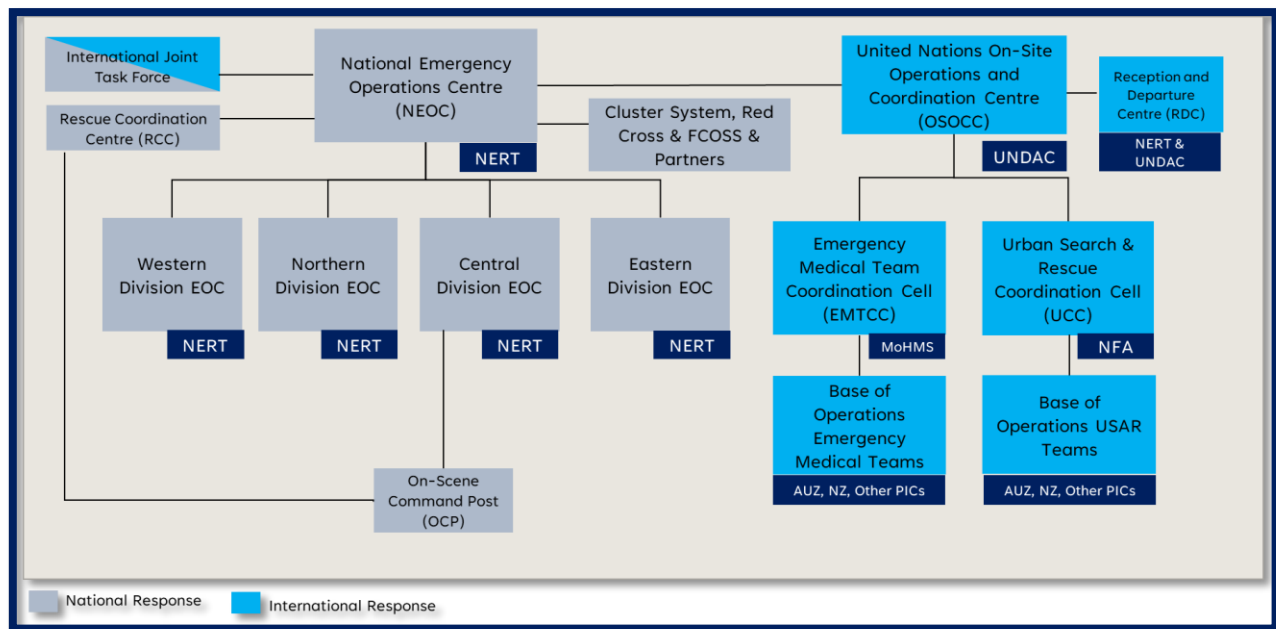


Figure 7. Command Post Exercise Components

3. Field Simulation Exercise (FSX) includes the mobilization and movement of emergency personnel, equipment and resources. Ideally, an FSX tests and evaluates most functions of the emergency management plan or operational plan. FSX components consist of:
 - a. Marine Search & Rescue (SAR) for tsunami victims and coordination of SAR operations through On-Site Command Post (OCP) and Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC)
 - b. Urban SAR for earthquake survivors and people trapped in collapsed buildings.
 - c. Medical Services

- d. Management of Dead Bodies/Disaster Victim Identification (DVI);
- e. Community and School Evacuation.

3.3. General Scenario

1. A significant earthquake occurred in the vicinity of Fiji and triggered tsunamis affecting all four divisions with a model developed by the Mineral Resource Department (MRD);
2. The earthquake and tsunami caused a significant impact on the population and vulnerable groups. A significant number of people are reported dead, injured, and missing;
3. People were trapped in collapsed buildings requiring Urban Search and Rescue (USAR);
4. Damage roads and bridges restrict access to the remote affected areas;
5. Mobile network and communication are down for the first three days;
6. International tourists are reported as victims;
7. People in need of support of water, sanitation and hygiene, food, shelter and non-food items, education, health and nutrition interventions;
8. Safety and protection issues are reported;
9. Industries in Walu Bay Central Business District (CBD) are affected and cause an environmental hazard;
10. Medical facilities, correctional facilities and education are heavily affected;
11. A report of a sinking boat due to a tsunami triggered A Mass Rescue Operations (MRO) incident;
12. Families are separated due to displacement;
13. The Fiji government activated it's National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC). NDMC member agencies and civil societies are responding to the disasters;
14. Cabinet declares a State of Natural Disaster;
15. NERT Is deployed to support the Divisional EOCs (DivEOC); and
16. The Fiji government welcomes international assistance. The UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Team, International Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Teams, Emergency Medical Teams, Foreign Military Assets, and bilateral assistance from Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are mobilised.

3.3. Preparatory Activities & Trainings

3.3.1. Referee Training

The referees are expected to observe the conduct of the National SIMEX closely and to provide evaluation points on the components of exercises as well as the logistical arrangements for the National SIMEX. In addition to the exercises, the Referee Team was tasked to observe and provide feedback on the conduct of the Disaster Risk Reduction Exhibition. Feedback from the referee team will be used as a basis to update the National Tsunami Response Plan and to improve future exercise.

The Referee Training was conducted on the 9th of October 2023 at the NDMO, to prepare the team to effectively carry out their task. The objective of training was to provide the referees with the following:

1. Overview of the NDAW-23
2. Overview of the SIMEX Task List
3. Evaluation Tools
4. Workplan (Division of task).

The training was participated by 10 referees as follows:

1. Dr. Viliamu Iese (UNIMELB) – Chief Referee,
2. Jowana Nabuci (Methodist Church of Fiji) – Referee for Command-and-Control component,
3. Mesake Mataitoga (USAID) – Referee for Command-and-Control component,
4. Martha Williamson (USFS/USAID) – Referee for Incident Command System component,
5. Taryn Ino (CFE) – Referee for Civil Military Coordination component,
6. Chandra Gilmore (WHO) - Referee for Health component,
7. Patrick Heines (SPC) - Referee for Regional and International component,
8. Merelea Dileba Drotini (Fiji Police Force) - Referee for Disaster Victim Identification component,
9. Dr. James Kalougivaki (Fiji Police Force) - Referee for Disaster Victim Identification component, and
10. Mr. Tito Elo (Former Fiji Police Force), Referee for Search and Rescue component.



Figure 9. NDAW-23 Referee Team

3.3.2. USAR First Responders Training

The objective of the training was to prepare the participants to conduct first response to collapse structure incidents. The training aimed to prepare the participants to perform the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) field simulation exercise. The training was conducted on the 11th, 12th and 14th of October. The training was the first of its kind for Fiji and the Pacific.

At the end of the training, participants were expected to be able to:

1. Describe the term USAR and the nature of the operations
2. Explain role of the First Responders
3. Assess the hazard and risk at a USAR worksite
4. Conduct a survey and reconnaissance of the affected area
5. Recognise warning signals
6. Identify collapse patterns
7. Apply victim and rapid clearance markings
8. Demonstrate moving safely across a 'rubble pile'
9. Access and remove a casualty
10. Apply basic USAR skills in practical environment

The training was participated by 51 participants (46 Male and 5 Female) from the National Fire Authority (NFA), Fiji Police Force (FPF) and NDMO. The three days training program divided into the following agenda:

Day 1: Wednesday 11th Oct

- First Responders Overview
- Sequence of USAR Operations

Day 2: Thursday 12th Oct

- Assessment Search + Rescue (ASR) Levels
- Practical Evolutions

Day 3: Saturday 14th Oct

- Group 1 : INSARAG Methodologies
- Group 2: Shoring / Practical Evolutions



Figure 10: USAR First Responders Training

3.3.3. Academic Session

The session was conducted on Friday, 13 October, at the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat at 09:00 - 16:00. This session provided an overview of the different components of the National SIMEX, Disaster Management Arrangement at the National, Regional and International levels and what to expect of them.

The academic session was participated by a total of 297 (203 Male and 94 Female) participants. Agenda of the Academic session is provided below.

Time	Agenda	Resource Person
08:00 – 09:00	National SIMEX Registration	NDAW Secretariat
09:00 – 09:15	Welcoming Remarks	Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management
09:15 – 09:45	Overview of the National SIMEX	Fiji National Disaster Management Office (NDMO)
09:45 – 10:00	Morning Tea	
10:00 – 10:30	Fiji Disaster Management and Emergency Response Arrangements	Fiji NDMO
10:30 – 11:00	Fiji Earthquake and Tsunami Risks	Mineral Resource Department
11:00 – 11:45	Tsunami Response Plan	Fiji NDMO
11:45 – 12:30	SIMEX Instruction	Fiji NDMO
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 – 14:15	Regional Disaster Management and Emergency Response Mechanism	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
14:15 – 15:00	International Humanitarian System	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
15:00 – 15:30	International Disaster Response Law	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
15:30 – 16:00	Afternoon Tea	

Table 1: Academic Session Agenda



Figure 11: Academic Session at PIFS

3.3.4. Communications Sub-Exercise

The Communication Sub-Exercise was held to ensure communication and connectivity between the NEOC, DivEOCs, DistEOCs, and the responding agencies. This included video conferencing connection test, email and phone calls test and radio check between NEOC and the responding agencies and EOCs. The Communication Sub-Exercise was conducted through Microsoft Teams, Email and Viber Instant Messaging.

An introduction to the Comms Box was also conducted on the 16th of October 2023 for the exercise participants. The Comms Box is a portable satellite-based internet modem that provides internet connectivity for the participants.



Figure 12: Communication Sub Exercise - Comms Box Training at Albert Park in Suva

3.3.5. Technical Session

This session prepared the Command Post Exercise and Field Simulation exercise participants. The technical session was a follow up from the Academic Session to discuss more in detail the different components of the exercise. It was conducted on the 16th of October 2023, at the Albert Park ground and participated by 190 (132 male and 58 female) participants. Topics covered in the technical session is presented in the below agenda.

Program	Facilitator
08:30 Registration	NDAW Secretariat
09:00 National Emergency Response Team (NERT) Mechanism	Fiji National Disaster Management Office (NDMO)
10:00 International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) & UNDAC	United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
11:00 Morning Tea	
11:30 Medical Response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Medical Team (EMT) Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) 	WHO & FEMAT Fiji Police Force
12:30 Lunch	
13:30 Maritime Incident Response	Fiji Police Force
14:30 Afternoon Tea	
14:45 Civil-Military Coordination	NDMO & Republic of Fiji Military Force (RFMF)
15:45 – 16:15 Exercise Briefing	NDMO

Table 2. Technical Session Agenda

3.4. Conduct of the SIMEX

3.4.1. Table-Top Exercise

Conducted on the 16th of October 2023, the Table-Top Exercise (TTX) was participated by 99 participants consisting senior officials responsible for disaster management from relevant agencies. The TTX was conducted in a classroom setting and aimed to:

1. Identify recommendations to update the National Tsunami Response Plan
2. Map out existing coordination networks and capacities amongst stakeholders
3. Identify opportunities to strengthen collaboration and coordination amongst stakeholders.

It consisted of three moves which are:

1. **Early Warning and Evacuation.** Exercising response operations within 0-3 hours after the incident. This move particularly tests the Fiji Tsunami Response Plan.
2. **Initial Response Assessment & Declaration of Disaster.** Simulating response operations within 3 hours until 48 hours after the incident. This move focuses on testing the Fiji Natural Disaster Management Act, Fiji National Disaster Management Plan, and the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) SOP.
3. **Resource Mobilisation, Local Response, and International Response.** Simulating response operations within day 3 until day 7 after the incident. This move focuses on discussing the Fiji Natural Disaster Management Act, Fiji National Disaster Management Plan, NEOC SOP and NERT Guideline.



Figure 13: Technical Session at the Albert Park Pavillion

TTX moves and its corresponding plans is depicted in Figure 10 below.

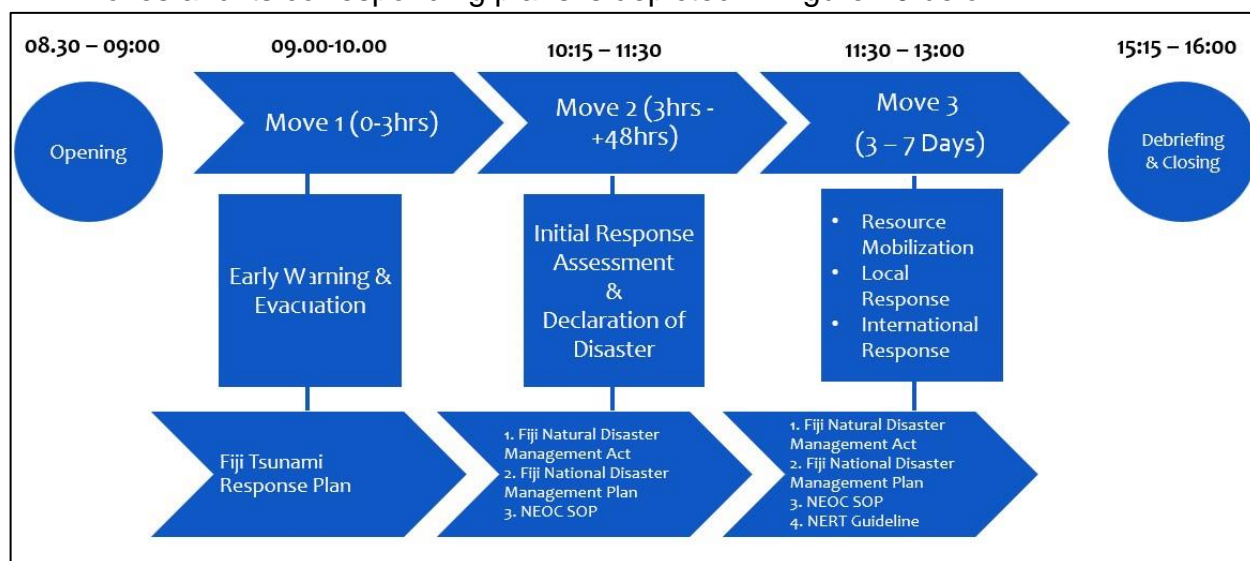


Figure14 . TTX moves and corresponding plans

3.4.2. Command Post Exercise

The Command Post Exercise (CPX) was held on the 17-18 October 2023. It physically simulated different components of the emergency response mechanism at the national and divisional levels. Key elements of the CPX covered the National EOC, Divisional EOCs, Police Command and Coordination Centre (PCCC), the Joint Task Force, On-Scene Command Post, and the UN On-Site Operations and Coordination Centre (OSOCC) (see figure 4 in the methodology section). It allowed the participants to interact with each other and exchange information in responding to the scenario and task given by the exercise controller.

It was participated by 190 participants comprising of National Responders, Regional Responders including Pacific NDMO's and Red Cross-National Societies, and international response team including the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team and International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) certified Team which are Australia Urban Search and Rescue Teams and WHO Certified Emergency Medical Team (EMT).

Some of the key aspects of the response that were tested during the CPX consisted of Situation Reporting, Situation Briefing, Response Planning, Civil-Military Coordination, Search and Rescue, USAR Coordination, Emergency Medical Team Coordination, Restoring Family Link, and Disaster Victims Identification.

The CPX is the core component of the exercises. Information simulated in the CPX was used to trigger the Field Simulation Exercise (FSX) which covered Tsunami Drill, Marine

Search and Rescue, USAR, Medical Services, and Oil Spill Response exercise. Different phases of the CPX and its simulated time is depicted in the figure below.

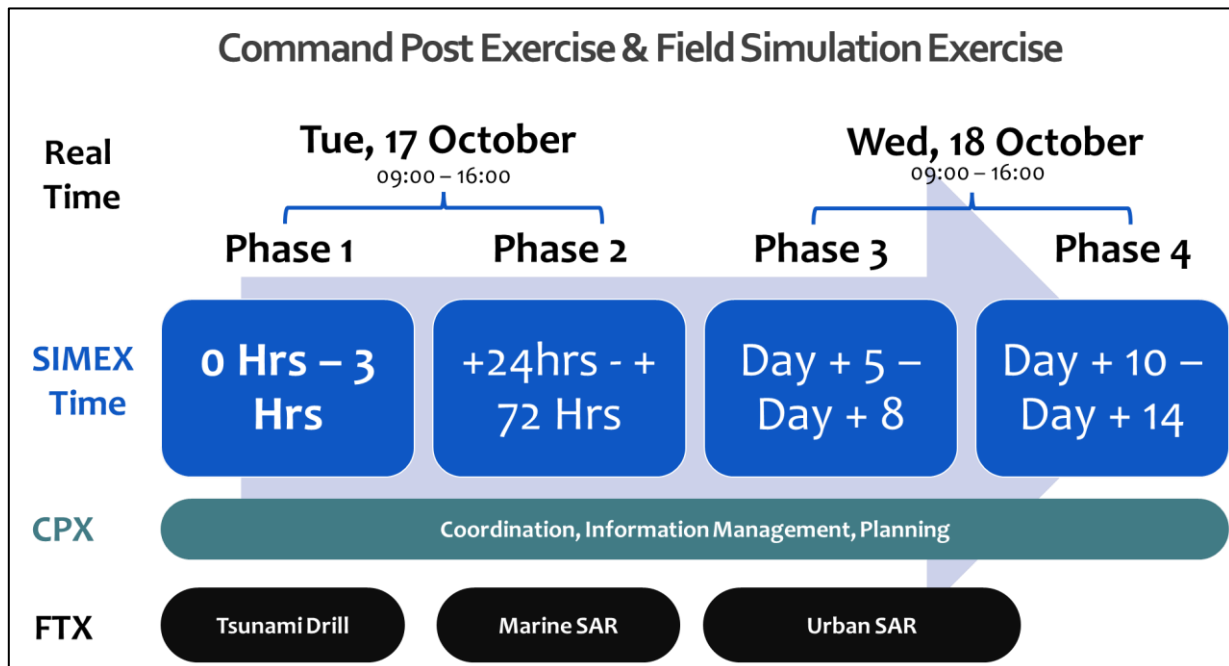


Figure 15: Command Post Exercise and Field Simulation Exercise Timeline



Figure 16: Table-Top Exercise at the Albert Park Pavilion



Figure 17: Command Post Exercise

3.4.3. Tsunami Drill

The tsunami evacuation was conducted simultaneously at different tsunami danger zones. The danger zones according to the Tsunami Response Plan are the coastal area coastal or maritime area under 10 meters above sea level and less than 1 kilometer from the shoreline. The evacuation was triggered by the Tsunami Warning Siren installed.

The objectives of the tsunami evacuation drill was to:

1. Test the tsunami evacuation procedures of the communities, schools, businesses, government and other essential facilities within the tsunami danger zones; and
2. Enhance public awareness on the tsunami risks and preparedness measures.

The tsunami drill was participated by 1,614 people from 16 organisations. The drill also participated by His Excellency, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere, President of Fiji, the Head of UN Disaster Risk Reduction, Ms. Mizutori, and the Hon. Sakiasi Ditoka, Minister for Rural & Maritime Development & Disaster Management.

Safe Haven	Target Group	Number of Evacuees
1. YMCA	Suva Market vendors, Fiji Port	130
2. St Annes	Westpac, St Annes Primary School	660
3. Metro Gym	Grand Pacific Hotels, Holiday Inn, Pacific Disability Forum	102
4. National Memorial War	Sacred Heart School, Stella Marist Primary School, Suva Grammar School, Draiba Primary, Veito Primary School, Pacific Theological College.	570
5. Raghwan Park	Sai Prema Hospital, Bright little ones	124
6 Vatuwaqa Primary	Community	28
Total		1614

Table 3. Number of evacuees during the Tsunami drill on the 17 of October 2023 (Source of Number of Evacuees: Fijii Police Force Report)

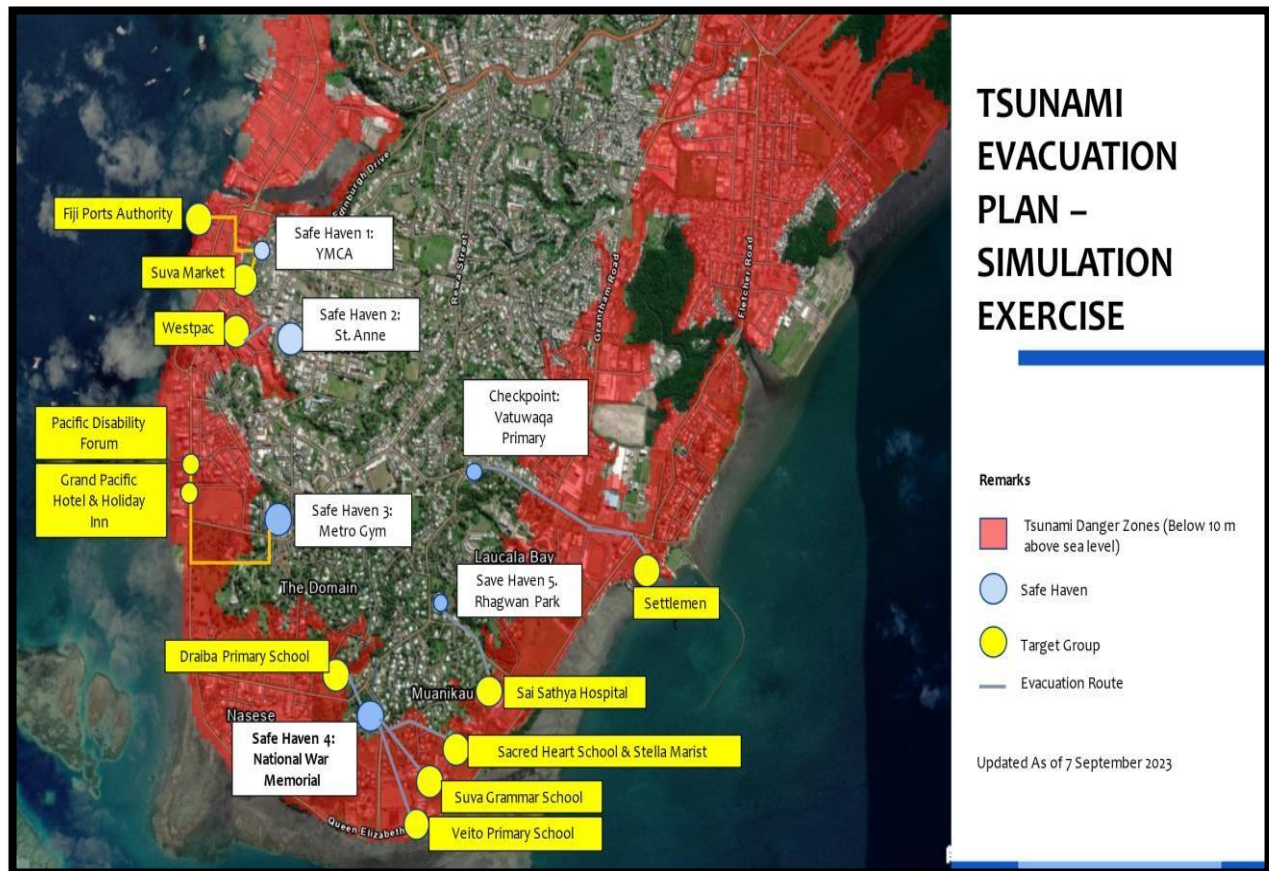


Figure 14. Tsunami Evacuation Plan – NDAW-23

3.4.4. Marine Search and Rescue

The marine search and rescue exercise conducted on the 17 of October 2023 by the Fiji Police Force (FPF) and the Life Flight Fiji.

The exercise focused on the practical component of the tsunami victims search and rescue operations. The FPF deployed 25 persons including 15 role players who acted as victims, 2 police rescue boat. NDMO Sea Legs was also deployed and used by the Fiji Police Force during this exercise. Life Flight Fiji, deployed a helicopter and rescue team for air rescue operations.



Figure 18. Tsunami Drill



Figure 19. Marine Search and Rescue

3.4.5. Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Simulation Exercise

The USAR simulation exercise was conducted on the 18 October 2023 involving personnel from the NFA, the FPF and NDMO. This exercise was supported by the AUS 1 & AUS 2. The team was also supported by the Medical Team from the Ministry of Health, NFA and St. John Ambulance. This exercise is linked to the Command Post Exercise where teams were required to conduct the Assessment Search and Rescue (ASR) 1 (wide area assessment), and ASR 2 (worksite triage) for collapse building due to an earthquake near Suva.

On the site, the exercise simulated a rescue operations of people trapped in a collapsed car park. The scene was simulated using a 20ft container that needed stabilising (using shoring techniques) before the team rescued the victims inside the container. Once the victims rescued, they were treated by the Medical Team evacuated to the field hospital.



Figure 20. USAR Worksite Assessment



Figure 21. Urban Search and Rescue Exercise

3.4.6. Medical Response Simulation Exercise

The medical response exercise conducted on the 17th and 18th of October by the Fiji Emergency Medical Team (FEMAT), the FPF, Fiji Red Cross, NFA and St. John Ambulance. This component tested coordination among the medical services provider to provide assistance to the tsunami and earthquake victims. It included establishment of Field Hospital by the FEMAT, coordination of International Emergency Medical Team, triage of the victims and Disaster Victims Identification (DVI) among other technical aspects of medical response.



Figure 22. Medical Service and Disaster Victim Identification Exercise

3.4.7. Oil Spill Response Simulation Exercise

This simulation exercise was conducted in responding to the scenario where there were oil leaks from the oil factories due to the tsunami. The exercise was conducted on the 17 of October 2023 by the Marine Safety Authorities of Fiji (MSAF) supported by the Fiji Police Force. During the exercise, the MSAF crew supported by the Water Police unit of the FPF deployed an oil boom and skimmer on the foreshore.

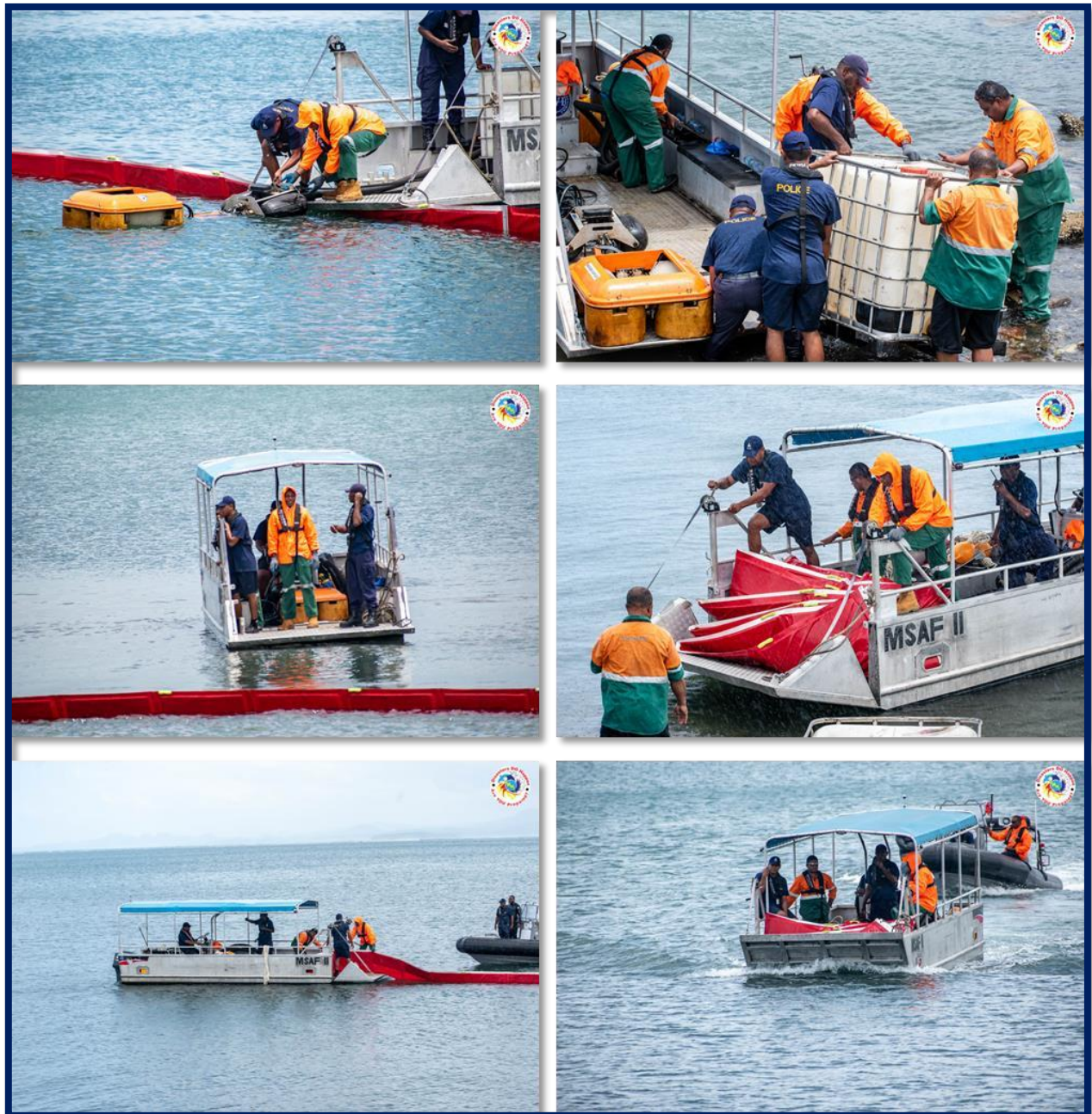


Figure 23. Oil Spill Response Simulation Exercise

3.5. Key Documents Produced

List of the key documents produced for the purpose of the National SIMEX consisting of:

1. Participants Handbook
2. National SIMEX Scenario
3. Master Scenario Event List (MSEL)
4. Referee Handbook
5. Academic Session Presentations
6. Technical Session Presentations

All of the above are available in the following link :

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1yRwZrRZrnlZYH-VP4er3_chMHKGtTPdA?usp=sharing

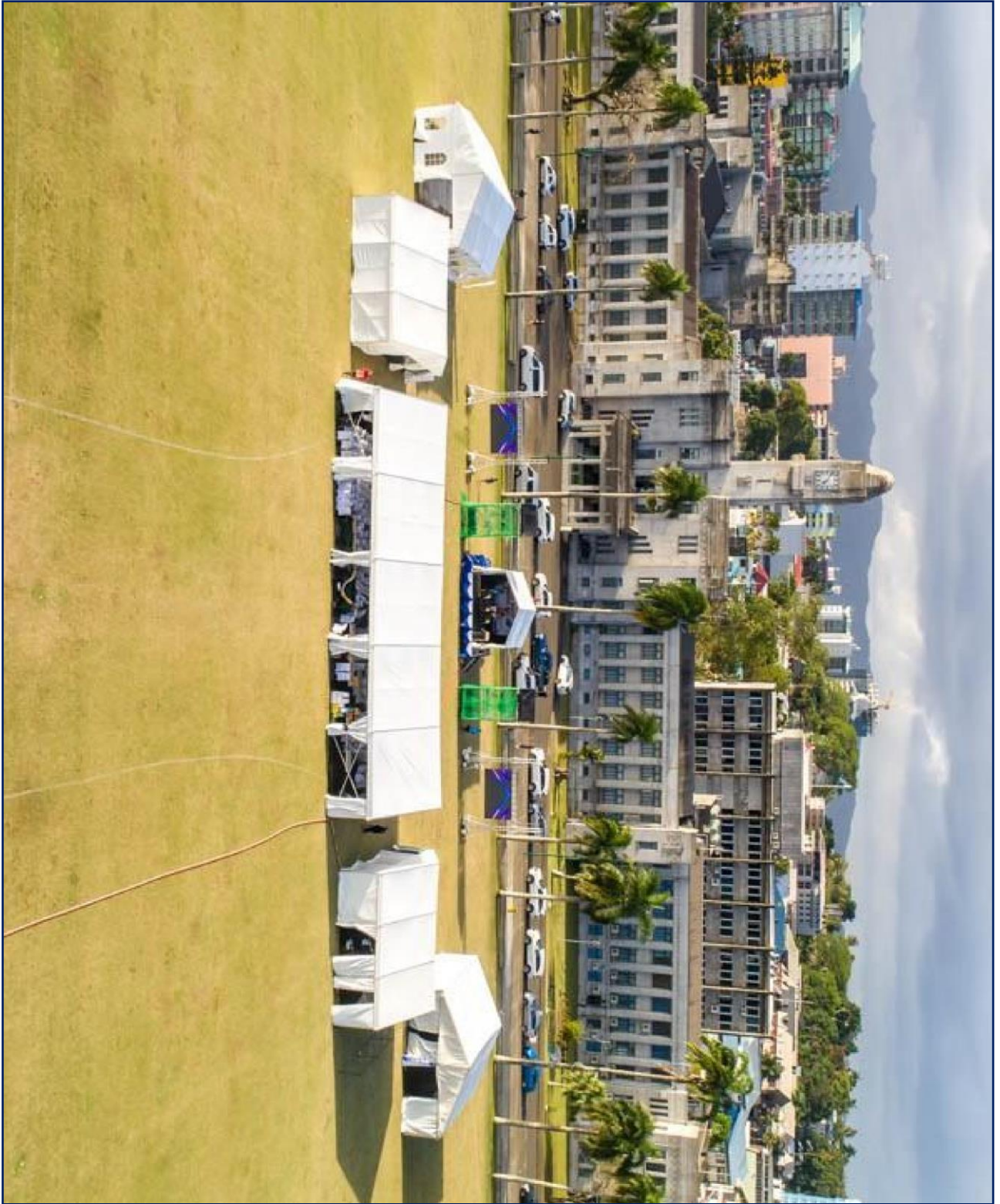


Figure 24: Birds eye view of DRR Exhibition set up- Albert Park

ACTIVITY 4. DRR EXHIBITION & MEDIA CAMPAIGN

4.1. DRR Exhibition

There were booths setup for agencies to display awareness materials according to the disaster management cycle, specifically

- 1) Hazard and Risk Analysis Hub
- 2) Mitigation and Preparedness Hub
- 3) Response Hub and
- 4) Recovery Hub.

Agencies were grouped into these hubs according to the type of disaster risk management work they are involved in. The DRR exhibition was from the 17th to 18th October. The following agencies were present in each of the hubs;

Hazard and risk analysis

1. Fiji Meteorological Services
2. Mineral Resources Department
3. National Disaster Management Office
4. University of the South Pacific's – Pacific Technical and Further Education (USP TAFE)
5. USP Pacific Centre for Environment & Sustainable Development (USP PACE)
6. Fiji Red Cross

Mitigation & Preparedness

1. Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance (PIEMA)
2. World Food Programme (WFP)
3. Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA)
4. Ministry of Women, Children & Poverty A
5. Fiji Disability Peoples Federation
6. Habitat for Humanity
7. Salvation Army
8. Fiji Red Cross
9. Fem-link
10. Sun & Tower insurance
11. Homes of Hope

Response

1. Habitat for Humanity
2. Empower Pacific
3. Methodist Church in Fiji
4. Fiji Revenue and Customs

5. Fiji Council for Social Services
6. Sai Prema Foundation
7. Save the Children Fiji
8. Medical Services Pacific
9. Fiji Red Cross
10. Saint John's Ambulance
11. Fiji Emergency Medical Team

Recovery

1. Police Pathology team
2. Fiji Red Cross
3. Ministry of Agriculture
4. LifeFlight Fiji
5. Habitat for Humanity

Over 240 students and 200 community members attended the DRR Exhibition. The following schools and community members participated in the exhibition;

Schools

Day 1: Tuesday 17/10/23 (0900 – 1100 hours)

- Gospel High School
- Suva Sangam High School

Day 1: Tuesday 17/10/23 (1200 – 1400 hours)

- Mahatma Gandhi Memorial High School
- John Wesley College

Day 2: Wednesday 18/10/23 (0900 – 1100 hours)

- Waikanake Primary School
- Seventh Day Adventist College

Day 2: Wednesday 18/10/23 (1200 – 1400 hours)

- Lami Primary School
- Lami High School

Communities

The following communities were part of the event;

1. Wailea settlement, Vatuwaqa
2. Kalokolevu village

3. Naboro settlement
4. Nabaka village
5. Lami village



Figure 25. DRR Exhibition

4.2 Media Campaign

The NDAW media coverage was a resounding success, thanks to the dedicated efforts of the Media Team, consisting of a single personnel who collaborated closely with the Planning Team. The strategic planning and execution ensured comprehensive coverage of various events throughout the week. It was a collaborative and well-executed effort, showcasing the commitment of the Media Team and their strategic partnerships. The extensive coverage not only disseminated information effectively but also engaged a diverse audience, contributing to the overall success of the event.

4.2.1 Events Covered

The Media Team facilitated coverage of key events during the National Disaster Awareness Week, including the Academic Session, Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Training for first responders, and subsequent activities at Albert Park in Suva. These included the DRR Exhibition, and the USAR, Marine Search and Rescue (MSAR), and Oil Spill Response Exercises.

4.2.2. Live Streaming Services

With funding support from the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFs), the media team secured live-streaming services from Jioji's Productions, enabling the event to reach a broader audience. The live stream, starting from the Academic Session and extending to the 2-day event at Albert Park, recorded an impressive average of at least 1,000 viewers per session.

4.2.3 Aerial Footage and Drones

In an innovative approach, the media team utilised drones to capture aerial footage of the events, enhancing the documentation and presentation of the inaugural National Simulation Exercise. This added a dynamic and insightful dimension to the coverage.

4.2.4 Press Conference and Collaborations

The Media Officer of NDMO facilitated a joint press conference featuring Ms. Mami Mizutori, Chief of UNDRR, and Hon. Sakiasi Ditoka, Minister for Disaster Management. This presser garnered coverage from local and regional media outlets, including Fiji Times, Fiji Sun, Fiji TV, FBC, Fijivillage, and Islands Business.

4.2.5 Print Media Coverage

Through collaboration with The Fiji Times, the NDMO Media Officer secured a one-page daily coverage of the event. This strategic alliance allowed for the provision of rich content for readers, ensuring a deeper understanding of the events as they unfolded.

4.2.6 NDAW Promotion

To promote the event and raise awareness on disaster preparedness, billboards were strategically placed across the country. This initiative, funded by UN Women, proved instrumental in reaching a wider audience and emphasising the importance of disaster readiness.

4.2.7 Website Setup

The Media team acknowledges the NDMO Technical Advisor – Training, Mr. Yos Malole, for successfully setting up a dedicated website for the event. The website served as a crucial tool for the general public and participants, providing easy access to information and schedules throughout the National Disaster Awareness Week.

ACTIVITY 5. AFTER-ACTION REVIEW

The After-Action Review was conducted on the 19 of October 2023 at Tanoa International, Suva. The AAR participated by 66 people consisting of Exercise Planning Team, Referee Team, Pacific Island Countries NDMO and National Societies. The AAR identified recommendation for updating the Tsunami Response Plan, room of improvement for the conduct of future simulation exercises, and improvement for DRR Exhibition. See 'Key Learning' section on the result of the AAR. The meeting also provided opportunities for the regional and international participants to share reflection from their participation in the NDAW-23.



Figure 26. After Action Review meeting

PARTICIPANTS

Various activities of NDAW-23 were participated by a total of 2,957 people (1,243 Female, 1,714 Male), from 125 organisations. Breakdown of the number of participants by activity is provided below. **ANNEX 1** illustrates the list of participating organisations.

No	Event	Date	Venue	F	M	Grand Total
1	Referee Training	09-Oct-23	NDMO	6	5	11
2	USAR First Responders Training	11,12 & 14 Oct 2023	NDMO, NFA	5	46	51
3	Academic Session	12-Oct-23	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat	93	203	296
4	Table-Top Exercise	16-Oct-23	Albert Park	41	58	99
5	Technical Session	16-Oct-23	Albert Park	58	132	190
6	Tsunami Drill	17-Oct-23	Suva City	710	904	1614
7	Command Post & Field Simulation Exercises	17-18 Oct 2023	Albert Park	58	132	190
8	DRR Exhibition	17-18 Oct 2023	Albert Park	240	200	440
9	After Action Review	19-Oct-23	Tanoa International Suva	32	34	66
	Grand Total			1243	1714	2957

Table 4. Number of Participants by Activity

FINANCE

The Summary of Expenditure for the National Disaster Awareness Week (NDAW) is shown in the table below;

Activity	Source of funding	Total Expenditure (FJD)
Field Simulation Exercise/Technical/TTX Exercises operation costs	Government through NZMFAT GFA	\$ 19,202.11
Logistics and Allowances for Divisional Team	Government through NZMFAT GFA	\$ 43,822.01
Welcoming/Closing Ceremony- NDAW	Government through NZMFAT GFA	\$ 21,040.05
Staff welfare (Overtime, meals)	Government through NZMFAT GFA (2022)	\$ 11,543.27
Deployment of USAR Team: AUS-1, AUS-2, and Emergency Medical team AUSMAT Procurement of the following services through Fiji facility; • hiring transportation for schools and students to participate in NDAW • ambulance services • Master of ceremony for NDAW • Sign language interpreters • Fuel	Australia Department of Foreign	\$ 20,000.00
Venue for Academic Session, Live streaming	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)	\$ 20,000.00
Referee and Exercise Controller	Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)	\$ 98,000.00

DRR Exhibition (hire of tents, chairs, sound system, purchase of stationary, billboard advertising) and printing of IEC materials	UN Women	\$ 100,000.00
Provision for NDAW t-shirts	International Organisation for Migration (IOM)	\$ 9,900.00
Mobilisation and participation of Pacific Islands Countries National Disaster Management Office and Red Cross National Societies	International Federation for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	\$ 163,560.13
Media awareness campaign for 6 months	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	\$ 112,090.72
Opening ceremony catering and provision of NDAW t-shirts	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)	\$ 20,400.00
Exercise Controller NDAW competition prizes NDAW closing networking event Provision of meals for DRR Exhibitors	World Food Programme (WFP)	\$ 13,398.00
Sponsored Refreshments (fruits and fun flavor) for 600 students participating in the Tsunami Drill	Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council	\$ 1,070.75
Deployment of Referees (2 Pers), Observes	USAID	IN KIND
Deployment of OCHA and UNDAC Team, Presenter in Academic Session and Technical Session	United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)	IN KIND
Deployment of Helicopter for Aerial Capabilities and training for Marine Search and Rescue Exercise, and DRR Exhibition	Life Flight Fiji	IN KIND
TOTAL		\$ 654,027.04

Table 6. NDAW23 Expenditure

A total of ~**\$654,027.04** was expended for the National Disaster Awareness Week.

KEY LEARNINGS

Summary of key learnings that were highlighted by the referees are listed below. The detailed Referee Report can be found **ANNEX 2**.

National SIMEX

1. Overall Design and Implementation of the Exercises (Tsunami Drill, Search and Rescue and Urban Search and Rescue, Oil Spill.)
2. Good Agency Coordination Mechanism.
3. Presence and participation of International, Regional Partners, Development Partners and working in collaboration with Local Partners and Agencies.
4. Strong political support and leadership at government, regional and international level.
5. Strong existing partnership at local and regional level.
6. The exercise is an educational opportunity for individuals and the organization as a whole.
7. Peer-to-peer learning opportunity for visiting NDMOs is excellent
8. Excellent to practice evacuating, even a small segment of the red zone
9. Siren was not audible inside the Pacific Disability Forum offices
10. Public awareness of evacuation routes, and most direct routes away from the water, likely needs to be increased
11. Seeing different agencies coming together and out of their comfort zones to coordinate with other agencies, sometimes in a support role is pleasing to witness and great for networking.
12. The evacuation drills involving people living with a disability and prominent leaders to help with advocacy.
13. Things started slowly but picked up good momentum as the day went on and into day two.
14. The importance of capacity and wide range of skills at the right point at the right time.
15. DVI as part of the national exercise. This is an achievement on its own.
16. Our homegrown NERT who have been trained and are being tested in this exercise.
17. Overall success of the Logistics Coordination
18. Good inclusivity during the Tsunami Drill, especially the evacuation.
19. Urban Search and Rescue was successfully done by local responders, NFA and Fiji Police. Control of the scene was properly coordinated by the On-Scene Commander and his Team.
20. During the TTX, agencies mentioned targeting based the most vulnerables and ensuring access for people with different disabilities. However, during the SimEx, few orgs acknowledged vulnerabilities
21. Who was not in the rooms? – Bureau of Stats, Private Sector, Suva City Council etc

22. Accuracy, details and timely distribution and use of data
23. Receiving mechanism that facilitates decision making in identifying, requesting and accepting of international assistance in a timely manner that will support clarity of response and transition to recovery.
24. Specifically medical request to practice from international teams. How Fiji will manage request for assistance – bilateral arrangements or carte blanche requests to the international community.
25. Logistical footprint that teams may still require for efficient SAR, transport, fuels, lumbar, heavy machinery.
26. Will Fiji accept all offers for assistance, how will you say no to an international team if not required.

DRR Exhibition

1. Tents are wheelchair accessible, school groups look engaged, range of exhibitors is engaging
2. Overall the concept to organize the exhibition in terms of phases of response was a great idea. The actual product maybe didn't work out so well.
3. Some orgs used a lot of resources to put tables in each phase but smaller orgs didn't have the resources to do so
4. It was a little confusing to see the same org with tables in each phase. The tents could have been labeled better to visually stimulate the concept
5. Perhaps if the concept is to be maintained, orgs could be supported to have a poster presentation (or something) in each phase and one table to hand out fliers and demonstrate supplies
6. Highlight the preparedness actions individuals/families need to take in the main hall. That is a primary message that got lost amid the other displays

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Review, write and training on SOPs – need for clearer roles and need to involve NDMO.
2. More targeted trainings – Capacity building is important but not just the technical people but also the decision makers (Keep it fresh)
3. Urgent need to look at Business continuity plan and action it.
4. Need to improve data, information management systems within Division, and government levels.
This includes improving the capacity and skills.
5. Too much use of plastics in response, need to consider greening the response.
6. Not just the know-how but how to work as a team, how to communicate better, coordinate better with who and WHY? - We do have the baseline now, need to do more simulations.
7. Agencies to develop/review their response plans.

ANNEXURES

ANNEX 1 List of Participating Organizations

No	Agency
1	MRMDDM
2	FPF
3	FRCS
4	NFA
5	PDF
6	MWCSP
7	ST JOHN'S AMBULANCE
8	USP
9	FRC
10	AUS- 1
11	CFE-DM
12	SPC
13	UNOCHA
14	MHMS
15	MOE
16	USAID
17	WHO
18	MRD
19	IFRC
20	MOFA
21	NDMO NAURU
22	MPWMS&I
23	UNDAC
24	IOM
25	AHC
26	DFAT
27	MOBIL OIL FIJI
28	AUS-2
29	FPCL
30	MCIF
31	MIN OF ITAUKEI
32	NDMO KIRIBATI
33	NES NDMO

34	UBP
35	FCOSS
36	HOLIDAY INN
37	VANUATU RED CROSS
38	FDPF
39	FRCA

40	UNESCO
41	AUSMAT
42	USP PACE - SD
43	METHODIST CHURCH
44	PYC
45	NEMA NZ
46	IFRC
47	NEMO PALAU
48	CBM AUSTRALIA
49	MOHA&I
50	GPH
51	EMCI
52	AUSAID
53	NZ POLICE
54	MSAF
55	NZHC
56	Nauru - NES
57	ACMC
58	SFESA
59	FCS
60	MOHA & I
61	FIJI PORTS CORPORATION
62	RFMF
63	MSM
64	TUVALU RCS
65	Kiribati Red Cross
66	UOM/USP
67	KOICA
68	WFP
69	NCDP
70	SAMO RED CROSS
71	NDMO

72	GOUNDER SHIPPING
73	NDMO COOK IL
74	MOF
75	NDMO COOK ISL
76	ACMC
77	LYNDHURST
78	MOHAI
79	Cook Islands Red Cross
80	Vanuatu RC
81	MET
82	COOK ISL RED CROSS
83	ASP
84	RUU
85	Methodist Church of Fiji
86	Samoa Red Cross
87	Chuuk Disaster of Emergency Operation Center
88	SOQOSOQO VAKAMARAMA
89	EMCI - NDMO
90	MOF
91	NZDF
92	Tuvalu Red Cross
93	MOA
94	FAD
95	MOAW
96	UNICEF
97	PNG RCS
98	UNWOMEN
99	PNG Red Cross
100	USAID
101	PSA
102	USAID/BHA
103	EMCI COOK ISL
104	MPWMS&T
105	QFES
106	WOAMALD
107	RED CROSS COOK ISL
108	WFP/ETC
109	RED CROSS KIRIBATI
110	INTERNATIONAL SOS

111	RED CROSS SOLS
112	MPWMST
113	Westpac
114	St Annes Primary School
115	Grand Pacific Hotels
116	Holiday Inn
117	Pacific Disability Forum
118	Sacred Heart School
119	Stella Marist Primary School
120	Suva Grammar School
121	Draiba Primary School
122	Veiuto Primary School
123	Pacific Theological College
124	Sai Prema Hospital
125	Bright Little Ones Kindergarten

ANNEX 2: REFEREE REPORT

NATIONAL DISASTER AWARENESS WEEK 2023
12 – 18 OCTOBER 2023

REFEREES REPORT

Call to Action



Disclaimer

The information in this report is the sole responsibility of the referees. The Fiji National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), National Disaster Awareness Week (NDAW) organisers and respective organisations represented by the referees are not liable or responsible for any errors or inaccuracies in this report.

This report presents the expert and technical feedback and reviews from the following referees.

Referees	Organizations
Viliamu Iese	The University of Melbourne; The Victoria Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub; The University of the South Pacific
Jowana Nabuci	Executive Support Officer, Methodist Church in Fiji
Patrick Haines	Program Coordinator – PIEMA, Pacific Community (SPC), Fiji.
Merelea Dileba	A/ASP Acting Deputy Director Forensic, Fiji Police Force
James Kalougivaki	Head of Forensic Pathology, Forensic Science Services, Fiji Police Force.
Tito Elo	Chief Security, Laucala Island.
Mesake Mataitoga	Development Assistance Specialist, Global Climate Change, USAID Pacific Islands.
Martha Williamson	Emergency Management Technical Advisor USAID/Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, and US Forest Service, USA
Taryn Ino	Climate Policy and Diplomacy Analyst Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance, Hawaii, USA.
Chandra Gilmore	Health Cluster Coordinator World Health Organisation, Division of Pacific Technical Support, Suva, Fiji.

The referees duly acknowledge the Director, Fiji NDMO Ms Vasiti Soko and her team, Yos Malole, Anthony Blake, Sainimere Veitata, Litiana Bainimarama and Margo Sollitt for all the support before, during and after the exercise.

Table of Contents

Disclaimer	51
1.0 Introduction	54
2. Recommendations	55
3.0 Highlights	57
4.0 Communications sub-exercise	59
5.0 Tabletop Exercise and Technical Session	60
6.0 Command and control	63
7.0 National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC)	63
8.0 Divisional EOC	64
9.0 Tsunami Early Warning System and Evacuation	66
10.0 Fiji National Emergency Response Team (NERT)	68
11.0 Search and Rescue	71
12.0 Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)	73
13.0 Medical	73
14.0 Disaster Victim Identification (DVI)	76
15.0 Cluster System	77
16.0 Civil-Military Coordination	77
17.0 Interoperability with International Response Teams	79
18.0 Cluster System	81
19.0 Disaster Risk Reduction Exhibition	83
20.0 CONCLUSION	83

1.0 Introduction

We, the referees of the exercise congratulate the Honorable Sakiasi Ditoka, the Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management, NDMO Director, the leadership of the Ministry and all who were involved in the planning, resourcing, implementing and reviewing the Tsunami, Earthquake and Oil Spill Respond Drill. As the Honorable Ditoka mentioned during the opening of the National Disaster Awareness Week, the activities during the NDAW, including the simulation exercise was a “Call to Action” and a commitment from the Government of Fiji to ensure Fijians and communities and organizations are well prepared to reduce the impacts of disasters and respond and recover better, to save lives and livelihoods.

The Referees were;

- expected to observe the conduct of the National SIMEX closely and to provide evaluation points on the components of exercises as well as the logistical arrangements for the National SIMEX.
- required to provide recommendations on the logistic matters related to the exercise, such as design of the events, organisation of the activities, etc. The focus of evaluation, however, should be on the substantive part of the exercise.

Given that this is the first time this exercise is done in its magnitude in any Pacific Island Country, the goal was not about testing the efficiency of the system in place, but more of understanding the components, the processes, the system in place and how different components interact with each other. Most importantly, the intention was to understand the existing system and how it responds to a multi-hazard crisis both triggered internationally and locally. The focus is on learning and improvement of processes, knowledge systems and urgent call to action recommendations.

There were ten referees, who are experts of different areas of disaster risk management, especially the humanitarian response actions to observe and provide recommendations. The structure of the report includes general recommendations, deeper dive into different components of the simulation exercise and response. The latter is framed into what went well, what needs to improve and specific recommendations.

2. Recommendations

These are overarching recommendations from the referees. Specific recommendations for each component are given under each sub-section of this report.

1. Review, write and conduct training on SOPs – need for clearer roles and need to involve NDMO.
 - Review and update sectoral SOPs, also the National Tsunami Plan and SOP, need to update it. NDMO should coordinate and train sectoral partners on what is needed to review, update, establish multi-hazards SOPs. Part of this includes the approval of the review of the Fiji National Disaster Management Act.
 - Need for the NDMO to increase awareness and distribution of information on the national Tsunami, Earthquake, Oil Spills SOPs with other government and non-government partners.
 - Establish or increase capacity of NDMO to coordinate, train, monitor and facilitate the interagency nature of SOPs, policies and legislations.
2. More targeted trainings – Capacity building is important but not just the technical people but also the decision makers (Keep it fresh) to understand the decision making process in the SOP and the associated actions. As shown across the report, there is capacity in each institution to operationalise SOPs and different sections or steps of the Humanitarian Response, but it is obvious that “institutional capacity and memory tend to lose” when staff move on or retired. Continuous upgrading of key skills are important for business continuity and sustainability of operation.
3. The presence of leaders, or key positions such as the Commissioners, DPOs at different at sections of the response is critical as it was shown during the operation. In the absence of leadership and right communication, the respond stalled and slowed down, even when SOPs and other parts are in place. In training modules, include good leadership and communication in both technical, operational and administrative of Disaster Response training.
4. Education institutions such as Universities should review relevant trainings and courses to accommodate the lessons learned from the simulation exercise to improve and sustain the capacity for all Fijians and other Pacific Island Countries. Part of the review of training materials include not just the technical response skills, but how to work as a team, how to communicate better, coordinate better with who and WHY?
5. There is a need to review and priorities the development of business continuity for major departments including Fire, Police, PWD, Health etc. Most of the critical infrastructures for effective and efficient response are in the tsunami red zone.
6. There is a need to improve data, information management systems within Division, and government levels. This includes improving the capacity and skills and resourcing.
7. The resilience of human and environment are intertwined and therefore, it is critical to implement the green humanitarian response framework in Fiji to reduce the importation, usage of plastics packaging, and other unsustainable practices during the response that could increase the exposure and vulnerability of people, environment and infrastructure

to more harm both in short and long term. There is a need to explore the integration in policy and in practice the Green Humanitarian Framework, the Humanitarian Advisory Group led the Production of a Green Humanitarian Framework that looks at how to operationalise “greening” of the humanitarian system in terms of reducing wastes, plastics, and green house gases footprint of the response.

8. This was a very successful initiative. Bringing together local and some international partners was a good practice. Other partners were inspired by the exercise and they wanted to apply the relevant components in their own countries.
9. We recommend to conduct simulations as part of future NDAW and shifts the goals from both awareness to testing the efficiency of the system.
10. We recommend increasing annual budget for NDMO to cater for the recommendation and part of this is to work collectively with other humanitarian partners to finance, resource the planning, implementation and review of the drill in the future.
11. The key recommendations for each component of the SimEx are provided under the respective sections of the Report.

3.0 Highlights

The Overall Design and Implementation of the Exercises (Tsunami Drill, Search and Rescue and Urban Search and Rescue, Oil Spill.) is commendable. There was evidence of good Agency Coordination Mechanism. The presence and participation of International, Regional Partners, Development Partners and working in collaboration with Local Partners and Agencies contributed to the overall success of the exercises. There was strong political support and leadership at government, regional and international level as well as strong existing partnership at local and regional level.

The exercise was an educational opportunity for individuals and the organization as a whole. The peer-to-peer learning opportunity for visiting NDMO's was excellent. It was also excellent to practice evacuating, even a small segment of the red zone. Seeing different agencies coming together and out of their comfort zones to coordinate with other agencies, sometimes in a support role was pleasing to witness and great for networking. The evacuation drills involving people living with a disability and prominent leaders helped with advocacy. The importance of capacity and wide range of skills at the right point at the right time contributed to the success of the operation.

The inclusion of DVI in the national exercise for the first time is an achievement on its own as well as our homegrown NERT who have been trained and were being tested in this exercise.

Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) was successfully done by local responders, NFA and Fiji Police and the control of the scene was properly coordinated by the On-Scene Commander and his Team. There was good inclusivity during the Tsunami Drill, especially the evacuation. The Logistics Coordination was an overall success despite minor hiccups.

The multi-hazard focus of the SimEx was very unique and the set up should be commended. This was a good practical session for both the Marine and Urban Search and Rescue Training that was conducted prior to the SimEx. This was the first Urban Search and Rescue Simulation Exercise conducted in Fiji, therefore it was one of the main highlights of the SimEx.

Whilst there was overall success, there were some important issues that needed to be considered and one notable is that the Siren was not audible inside the Pacific Disability Forum offices. Public awareness of evacuation routes, and most direct routes away from the water needs to be increased. During the TTX, agencies mentioned targeting based the most vulnerable and ensuring access for people with different disabilities. However, during the SimEx, few organizations acknowledged vulnerabilities. There was notable absence of key agencies including the Bureau of Statistics, Private Sectors, Suva City Council etc.

4.0 Communications sub-exercise

4.1 Overall conduct of the exercises

The National SIMEX started with a communications sub-exercise, designed to test video-conferencing, email, and phone (landline and mobile) connectivity between the National Emergency Operation Center (NEOC), responding agencies and Divisional Emergency Operation Centers (EOCs). This included a stated purpose to confirm and update the NEOC contact list. During the sub-exercise, the video-conferencing and portions of the email test were observed; the phone components were not. Only seven of 46 invitees participated in the Teams video conference; several test emails sent from the NDMO were returned as delivery failures.

4.2 What went well

The recognition of the need to test communication methods and update contact lists is commendable. Representatives from the Ministries of Information, Public Works, Civil Service, Women, Tourism/Civil Aviation; Fiji Red Cross; and Water Authority of Fiji attended the Teams video conference, which initiated successfully despite the connection dropping part way through the call. Viber worked well as an alternative method of communication.

4.3 What needs improvement

Needs for improvement come into three categories: technology, process, and participation.

- Technology: if video conferencing using Teams is the preferred platform for convening the Disaster Service Liaison Officers (DSLOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs), then internet connectivity needs to be stable. In addition, an alternate plan needs to be identified and communicated. In an actual event, having the full NEOC present would necessitate additional microphones so that all participants could be heard.
- Process: it was noted that introductions, an agenda for the call and a roster for roll call would facilitate the discussion.
- Participation: the need to update the contact list was known prior to the exercise. As mentioned above, only seven of 46 invitees participated. This could be a result of several factors, including incorrect contact information but potentially also uneven engagement from the affected ministries and CSOs, unclear assignment of appropriate point person within these organizations.

4.4 Recommendations

Several recommendations arose from the communications sub-exercise, one of which - to ensure SOPs are created, practiced, and maintained.

Develop a NEOC SOP for activation, to include platform, roster, standard call agenda, and alternate platform in case of lapse in primary platform.

- (i) Use shared document (Google document, for example) for roll call and standing agenda.
- (ii) Clarify roles and responsibilities within the NDMO for the following items:

- a. Maintaining an updated DSLO contact list
 - b. Sending out Teams meeting link
- (iii) Test operational readiness, including confirming contact information, more frequently during cyclone season.
- (iv) If Viber is identified as the alternate (or becomes primary) platform for convening and communicating with DSLOs and CSOs, consider the following:
 - a. Designating a steward for the Viber chat, including maintaining the participants and regularly downloading the chat log.
 - b. Determine and address any records management considerations.
- (v) Ministries and CSOs with responsibilities during disaster need to have SOPs that include pre-activation readiness activities such as updating the NDMO with contact information.
- (vi) Ensure that anyone expected to be able to use radios or the satellite communications boxes have known how to use this technology and have a radio communication protocol.

5.0 Tabletop Exercise and Technical Session

5.1 Overall Conduct of the Exercise

The aim of the Tabletop exercise was to review the procedures and decision making at the strategic and operational levels of all components of the exercises. It was designed to test the existing plans, procedures and capacities. The two sessions were conducted simultaneously, where senior level officers participated in the Tabletop and the Operational Officers attended the Technical Session.

5.2 Key Highlights

The key highlights as raised by the participants included the need to disseminate information and warning. In addition, there is also a need for agencies to know their roles according to the National Tsunami Response Plan. Many organizations have plans that are in draft form, awaiting the review of the Fiji National Disaster Management Act. The warnings need to be inclusive: - see, feel, hearing- e.g. blast horn for tsunami warning. Language barrier is a concern for information/warning dissemination. The need for consideration of tax concessions and greening the humanitarian system to prepare well for future response and recovery actions. These could be included in sectoral SOPs.

As demonstrated during the Academic Session, most of the participants including the key government and non-government humanitarian actors were not aware of the existence and details of the Fiji National Tsunami Response Plan. There is clearly a need to increase the awareness and understanding of different partners (government and non government agencies) on the National Tsunami Response Plan. National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) to collate all the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) available to help in their coordination of tsunami response.

5.3 What went well

It was encouraging to hear that some agencies like the Ministry of Infrastructure are pre-positioning equipments and stocks (like gravel and chainsaws) at the community level so they become first responders post disaster. It is encouraging to learn that the Education Cluster use of private sector like CDP to distribute relief supplies hence it would have been good to have the Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council be part of these simulation exercises or the Tabletop exercise would have been useful. One of the important information shared during the tabletop exercise was the different jurisdiction and locations between the police and development areas of coverage. Police have different divisions demarcations from the commissioners offices. This led to unclear lines of communication and especially double counting of impacts when reported by the development commissioners.

The technical session was a logical flow on from the academic session and provided a bit more detail around the NERT concept and various other components. It was encouraging to see agencies coming together to network and identify strengths and gaps to help shape future work. Participation and enthusiasm for the exercise demonstrated NDMO's convening power. There was great alignment of thoughts of what should be done and the NERT's role was covered in detail and that is it homegrown.

5.3 What needs improvement

The absence of key agencies during the Tabletop Exercise was noted and some of the queries and concerns could not be addressed. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) needs to cover multiple hazards and to be actionable even when communication networks (phone, internet, VHF) are down. There is a need to synchronise SOP's and to be known throughout agencies. The reason for the existence of SOP needs to be understood and to be made aware to all concerned.

It is noted with concern that most critical facilities (e.g. PCCC) are in the red zone and therefore there should be an action to prioritize business continuity of operations, especially for critical response agencies whose primary facilities may be impacted by disaster. This could be a trigger to activate alternate location and the status of alternate location. An example of this is managing the dead, which could be a big challenge as containers that can act as auxiliary morgue space are stored in tsunami red zone. There is a need for MoH to formalize a process for other designated officials to declare dead, especially in remote locations. Shelter cluster is currently focused on cyclone and there is a need to update the shelter plan for mass displacement in case of a tsunami or earthquake.

Poor awareness of Tsunami Plan and the contents of the plan needs to be upgraded. There is no common language for multi-hazard disasters response and awareness of connectivity. There seems to be uncertainty in the connectivity with NDMO. There should be increase in

social media platforms to create greater awareness and the need for good level awareness of inclusiveness e.g. disabilities.

The different boundaries definition could be disadvantage in operation, e.g., Police boundary and the divisional boundaries as it could disrupt the flow of operation. The engagement private companies is essential in business disaster resilience as it promotes public and private partnership hence better networking.

The possibility to have a restructure of disaster awareness and response in order to maintain continuous emergency watch. The inclusion of vulnerable groups and making information and services accessible is crucial ensuring no one is left behind and inclusivity.

Community Education: People need to know how to get to evacuation points. People would not want to leave valuable vehicles behind and in many cases, people will drive to evacuation points out of necessity such as the evacuation of those with different abilities, elderly, young children, pregnant women and the sick. Evacuation routes should be well identified and with signposts. People need to know where to evacuate to and where to park when they reach the location so as not to clog roads.

5.4 Recommendations

Key recommendations from the Tabletop Exercise and Technical Session are:

- (i) Given most agencies do not have SOPs, it might be useful to have series of workshops where NDMO and agencies come together to work on multi hazard SOPs as a collective rather than individually so there is shared learning. Another alternative is for NDMO to develop a generic SOP template and share amongst agencies to develop their respective SOPs that is then reviewed by NDMO.
- (ii) Design a multi-hazard SOPs.
- (iii) Community Education: An awareness campaign is needed around the signs of a Tsunami, evacuation procedures, evacuation drills, and the alert process from alert to all clear.
- (iv) Need for public education and awareness on tsunami actions.
 - a. Parents need to be trained to go to safe havens not schools.
- (v) There is a need to create a unit in NDMO to drive and establish uniformity in disaster responses across the agencies and all levels.
- (vi) Agencies to align SOPs to NDMO.
- (vii) Use of all social media platforms to create greater awareness.
- (viii) Re-structure of disaster awareness and response to maintain continuous emergency watch.
- (ix) Up-date the shelter plan for mass displacement (tsunami or earthquake).
- (x) Ideal: responsibility for maintaining, updating, practicing SOPs is included in job descriptions of key staff within Ministries.

6.0 Command and control

6.1 Overall conduct of the exercises

Command and Control is where the Exercise is controlled and the team is responsible for facilitating injects and monitoring progress during an exercise. The Controller is the first point of contact for any questions, clarifications or requests. The team consisted of local and international partners.

6.2 What went well

The exercises were well executed by the Command-and-Control team and the support rendered was superb. The team was flexible and accommodated advice and changes to ensure the success of the operation. The confidence in the team was evident and working consistently in coordinating, commanding and controlling the whole operation.

The coordination of the overall exercise was credible with clear directions and briefings. There was flexibility of commands to address needs for change and teamwork with all agencies (international, regional and national). Logistics coordination was well executed and confidence of those leading the exercise with terrific support roles.

6.3 What needs improvement

It is un-clear if this was an exercise improvement or a competency improvement, but the RDC was not established in time to catch some of the visiting international participants. Are agencies required to acknowledge receipt of warnings in some form during the exercise? If so, this was not evident at Joint Task Force (JTF) and something that could be improved in future. The tsunami cancellation message – is it ‘cancellation’ or ‘all clear’ as stated in the exercise master sheet? They could mean different things for different people and so being consistent could be useful. The operation at Divisional EOCs began on a slow start and picked up later in the day; tsunami is not a slow onset but a sudden on-set with minimum or no warning at all if it is locally generated. It would have been better if more injects were provided to Divisional EOCs so that they could pick up momentum from the beginning of the exercise. It was evident those responding to this exercise were in the Cyclone response mode with slow start and picking up later. It is either this or the way the exercise was designed, which did not prompt sense of urgency in responding.

6.4 Recommendations

More trainings and exercises to be conducted for sustainability of knowledge and skills in terms of the exercise design and implementation and participants would be more familiar with their role and responsibility.

7.0 National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC)

7.1 Overall conduct of the exercises

The National Emergency Operation Centre is the nerve center of the operation. Its role is to receive, action, process and disseminate information to the Divisional

Emergency Operations Centers (Div. EOCs) as well as all agencies and stakeholders.

7.2 What Went Well

The National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) was well set up with all functional areas. The support of the NERT and the DSLOs contributed to a better flow of operation and teamwork was obvious. The members of the team understood their roles and responsibilities and information management was well executed. Overall operation at NEOC went well with specific logs and status board and mapping. Computers were used to send email and receive information and communication worked well. NERT coordination and presence at NEOC together with the DSLO contributed to the outcome of the operation. Conversations and practice were happening and NEOC briefing hit key elements. Declaration of the State of Emergency.

Tsunami advisories and warnings was sent to all relevant agencies in a timely manner to trigger their respective actions, although it was delayed, but back on track by midday.

7.3 What needs improvement

During the NDMC meeting, it was unclear that it was the NDMC meeting, as one slide included having a NDMC meeting as a follow up item. Similar recommendation to have standard practice of announcing the name of the meeting, purpose and who should be there. Need clear task lists of specific needs for assistance- CivMil slide did that well. Timing of the injects was inconsistent and coordination with Div. EOCs could be improved. NEOC did not follow up on messages and actions taken on appropriate injects. At times the NEOC was quiet and it seemed there was no urgency in matters and that it was coordinating a tsunami response.

8.0 Divisional EOC

8.1 Northern

8.1.1 What Went Well

The EOC was well organized with excellent briefings, great presentation of data, plans and needs and information gathered was from the ground up. Health visit was conducted and data was provided by subdivision. Damage to health facilities, deaths/injuries and evacuation centers was discussed and also discussion of health service availability, referral, outbreaks, transfer and vulnerable people.

8.1.2 What Needs Improvement

The EOC was not well set-up initially at the beginning of the exercise, however it picked up later. There were no log books used to log messages and there was little evidence of coordination with other actors. This may have been done but it was not seen during the referee's visits. Evacuation of tourists will need to be considered

even though they are a small component of the response, their Embassies will ask for information and this could take a lot of time to process.

8.2 Central

8.2.1 What went well

The EOC was well set-up with functional areas clearly labelled. There was good organization of data and information on vulnerable groups. There was strong communication with clear needs and requests as well as clear goals. Food assistance, NFI and health services were well organized. The Team Leader was deputized extremely well; when the Team Leader was out, the deputy was able to brief incoming teams.

Priorities were clearly displayed and airport and port information were clear on Day 2.

8.2.2 What needs improvement

At the beginning of the exercise, there was little activity in the EOC, whilst waiting for instructions during Alert. While most vulnerable groups were identified in statistics, assistance was not targeted to the most vulnerable. Need to discuss stocks, availability of supplies, and outstanding needs. Perhaps due to proximity to NEOC, Central EOC appeared reliant on NEOC. Information was not readily shared with visitors; displayed data was inconsistent. There's room for a clear data-set and method of presentation.

Needs were not clearly articulated and for Health visit, need to provide consistent information on health facility damage, function, service availability, access, vulnerable populations.

8.3 Eastern

8.3.1 What went well

The EOC was well organized, needs were clear, coordination with other entities was evident, data displayed. Data, needs and response plan were organized according to the SitRep. and injects and needs were mapped. During the Health visit information was provided clearly on community assessments and the risk of disease outbreak.

8.3.2 What needs improvement

At the beginning of the exercise during the Alert stage, there was little activity whilst waiting for instructions. There was no discussion of operations in evacuation centers and no discussion of the most vulnerable groups or locations. There was no communications equipment, in reality, operations would be very difficult on outer islands.

There was no deputy team leader to lead the operation in the absence of the team leader. Health needs were unknown and there was no mention of vulnerable groups.

8.4 Western

8.4.1 What went well

The EOC was well organized by function and statistics were available. The most affected locations were prioritized and the needs were identified. Needs were clear, coordination with other entities was evident and data was displayed. Airport information was clear on day 2. A clear overview of the health context was provided including information on damaged facilities, deaths/injuries, the availability of transfer/referral services, service mobilization

8.4.2 What needs improvement

There was no discussion of vulnerable groups within affected areas and no comment on international airport. Since Western Division was less affected, discussion on assistance to other divisions could have been done. Needs and priorities were not clearly articulated. Vulnerable people could have been stated and consideration should be given to the tourists; even though they are a small population; embassies will need to know. The EOC could have considered expanding epidemiological surveillance services.

9.0 Tsunami Early Warning System and Evacuation

9.1 Overall conduct of the exercises

This planned event included the first move of the TTX, initiating tsunami response, activating a subset of pre-identified tsunami warning sirens in Suva and practicing the evacuation of several pre-identified businesses and institutions to designated safe havens.

9.2 What went well

The TTX provided visibility into the linkages between the organizations and ministries responsible during tsunami warning and evacuation. Practicing evacuation in peacetime, especially for school children and physically disabled people, is important for success during disaster. During the exercise, accountability for people was emphasized, including the Pacific Disabilities Forum calling roll when leaving their building and on arrival at the safe haven, and the police issuing forms to all present at the safe haven. Police were present to provide security and the Red Cross set up tents for shelter. Transportation was arranged for several Pacific Disabilities Forum individuals but evacuating wheelchair-bound individuals without other transportation was practiced. Holiday Inn staff had signage and vests identifying their roles.

9.3 What needs improvement

The currently-identified notification protocol relies on emails from the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center and Minerals Resource Department (MRD) to initiate response. This requires monitoring email, which may be challenging outside of business hours.

Cities, municipalities, towns, and villages are responsible for all aspects relating to the evacuation of populations under their authority; Suva City was not represented at the exercise. Several needs for improvement should be flagged for their awareness:

- Evacuation routes may be longer than necessary.
- Evacuation routes are not clearly signed and there is no information available to the public on what actions to take if the sirens sound.
- Safe haven site size may not be sufficient for the actual number of evacuees.
- Sirens were not audible inside some buildings; even when audible sirens do not warn the hearing impaired.

Specific to the conduct of the SIMEX, one safe haven did not provide a place for a pregnant woman to sit. Safe havens did not provide sufficient shelter or seating for the number of evacuees. There did not appear to be anyone in command at the safe haven. Finally, there was a disconnect between issuing and receiving the all clear: police and referees were cleared but the NDMO had not received notice from MRD yet.

9.4 Recommendations

The 2017 Tsunami Response Plan does not specifically address or assign responsibility for identifying, establishing, staffing and resourcing safe havens/evacuation centers. Under the Plan, Cities, Municipalities, Towns and Villages must “develop contingency plans for short- or medium-term care of populations during or after an evacuation.” Expanding that requirement to include the long term and clearly assigning mass sheltering responsibilities for evacuees should be considered. This connects to an observation made during the TTX that the shelter cluster is currently focused on cyclones and needs to update their plans to address the mass displacement that would result from tsunami or earthquake.

The TTX generated additional recommendations:

- Develop a public awareness campaign around the signs of a tsunami, evacuation procedures, safe havens, evacuation drills, and the alert process from alert to all clear.
- Identify and implement an initial warning notification protocol that is viable outside of business hours and resilient to individuals being unavailable (for example, out of the country).
- Consider Identifying alternates for the NDMO director with fully-delegated authority to act in the director’s absence and establishing a rotation.
- Some critical facilities (i.e. PCCC) are in the red zone: there is a need for business continuity/continuity of operations plans, especially for critical response agencies whose primary facilities may be impacted by disaster.
- Ensure that all ministries involved in response have SOPs for response.

10.0 Fiji National Emergency Response Team (NERT)

10.1 Background

In March 2023, the National Emergency Response Team (NERT) concept and mechanism was endorsed by the Cabinet and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) was tasked to coordinate the establishment of this mechanism.

The NERT aims to provide a mechanism to facilitate the rapid deployment of emergency response teams within and external to Fiji. Furthermore, the mechanism seeks to equip the team with standardized training, tools and methodologies to ensure interoperability between agencies and enhance their capacity to respond to disasters.

The role of NERT is to:

1. Provide surge capacity for the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) and government at the sub-national levels in managing and conducting emergency relief operations and preparedness activities.
2. Serve as a mechanism for the Government of Fiji to provide humanitarian assistance to other countries.

When deployed, the NERT will support the affected government in the following functions:

1. Assessment and analysis
2. Response planning
3. Response coordination
4. Facilitation of relief assistance

The inaugural NERT Induction Training was conducted in Lautoka from 2nd to 9th July 2023 with 36 participants (8 female and 28 male) from different agencies completing the training and being inducted as the first NERT cohort.

10.2 Overall conduct of the exercises

The inclusion of NERT in the simulation exercises to test the mobilization and utilization of this mechanism demonstrated Fiji's commitment to embedding this capability within the disaster management architecture.

From the outset and during the Academic Session, the NERT mechanism was shared as part of Director NDMO's presentation on Fiji's Disaster Management and Emergency Response Mechanisms. In doing so, she explained that how the NERT

fitted into the disaster management structure including the NERT's primary mission of providing immediate assistance during and after emergencies such as cyclones, floods, earthquakes, and other natural or man-made disasters. This mission was further reinforced by subsequent presentations by regional and international partners differentiating between future bilateral and regional deployments.

The Technical Session on Day 2 began with a dedicated session on the NERT including a focus on future plans for the NERT such as the NERT Classification and Criteria (*Level 1 – In-country Team; Level 2 – Regional Team and Level 3 – Team Leaders and Specialized Teams*) and associated training programs at these different levels.

For the exercises, the NERT was to be deployed using their agreed Mission Cycle:

1. **Personal Preparedness:** All members maintain their readiness for deployment.
2. **Alert:** The NDMO alert all members to standby for potential deployment.
3. **Activation:** The NDMO composes the team and develops ToR for the mission for the NDMC approval.
4. **Mobilization:** The NDMO confirms the team's deployment to the affected area.
5. **On-site Operations:** The NERT is carrying out its function as per ToR. The initial deployment period of the NERT is fourteen days and can be adjusted based on the situation upon direction from the NDMC.
6. **Stand-down:** The NDMO cancels the deployment of the team.
7. **Demobilization:** Documenting and/or handing over information and output of the NERT to the local government or the incoming NERT team in case of a rotation. Including conducting a team debriefing and compiling lessons learned for improving NERT Mechanism.
8. **After-Action Review:** the NDMO will invite representatives of NERT to be part of national after-action review meetings.

During the exercise NERT were expected to be partnered with the four Divisional Emergency Operations Centres (DEOCs), NEOC and the Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) members.

22 (5 female and 17 male) out of 36 members of the first NERT cohort participated in the exercises.

10.3 What went well

Overall, NDMO maximized the opportunity of the National Disaster Awareness Week (NDAW) and days 1 and 2 of the simulation exercise to showcase and educate people on the NERT mechanism and how it complements and fits into the disaster management structure. This was important given it had only been in existence for a few months and for most participants of this event, it was possibly the first time they were hearing of NERT.

This was the first time that the NERT was included in a national simulation exercise including within Divisional EOCs and interaction with incoming international teams. Despite being only a few months old, Fiji NDMO is to be commended for introducing and willing to include the NERT in the simulation exercises.

Some of the Divisional EOCs were set up in accordance with what was taught during the NERT training. This could be attributed to the NERT members but was not verified.

10.4 What needs improvement

Overall, this was a missed opportunity to test the NERT's mission cycle and the nine steps involved in preparing, mobilizing and demobilizing the mechanism.

There were a number of issues observed including:

- An email alert was sent to all NERT members to standby for potential deployment. Only 5 of 36 members responded positively to the alert indicating their ability to deploy even though from the statistics collected, 22 NERT members participated in the simulation exercises.
- There was no evidence of NERT team composition and ToR for the mission for approval by the National Disaster Management Council (NDMC).
- There was no evidence of the team being mobilized and briefed on their ToR for the mission including official notification of the team's deployment to the affected area.
- Only some of the team members were in NERT apparel making it difficult for anyone to identify them as NERT.
- There was a bit of confusion for NERT members who normally work at the Divisional Level and who would be expected to be part of the Divisional EOC during a disaster. Would they be deployed as NERT and have to come to NDMO as part of the mobilization phase and would they be in the Divisional EOC as a NERT member or Divisional staff?
- Due to the absence of mission ToR, it was difficult to ascertain whether the NERT was carrying out its function as per ToR.
- There was no evidence of the stand-down phase where the NDMO cancels the deployment of the team.

- There was no evidence of demobilization and handover phases of outgoing and incoming NERT teams.

There were only a few NERT members at the After-Action Review for the Fiji NDAW and simulation exercises.

10.5 Recommendations

Overall, and as mentioned above, the introduction of NERT mechanism is a positive step and those involved in its development should be commended and supported to continue improving the mechanism for future deployments.

- Due to the number of issues raised including on the NERT mission cycle, it is recommended that the NDMO convene a specific NERT After Action Review (AAR) with all NERT members (36 pax) and relevant partners to debrief on the NERT's participation in the national simulation exercises. In particular, a critical review of the NERT mission cycle and identify areas for improvement as we approach the 2023/24 cyclone season.
- The areas for improvement identified in the NERT AAR could be incorporated into a simple tabletop exercise to test the proposed improvements and reinforce the learnings. Any modification to the NERT mission cycle needs to be updated and shared with relevant stakeholders.
- If not already developed, it is recommended that SOPs be developed for NERT including templates for NERT Mission ToRs that can be rapidly adapted to suit the event on hand.
- If not already assigned, it is recommended that a NDMO staff member be assigned with the responsibility of coordinating the NERT mechanism.
- It is recommended that NERT members be equipped with appropriate apparels to make them clearly identifiable during disaster operations.
- Implement mandatory refresher training for NERT members before the cyclone season or future simulation exercises using free resources such as the nine-disaster risk management online courses available on the Pacific Community's (SPC) Moodle platform.

11.0 Search and Rescue

11.1 What went well

The Police fully participated in the exercise in their different roles, providing law and order, security and majority participated in the exercise and they were the only organization that had the largest number of personnel participating in the exercise.

PCCC had an SOP for all types of hazards, both natural and manmade and an organizational structure with critical post identified and their respective responsibilities. However, this was an unsigned version of the SOP, but is currently used by PCCC. Photograph taken on the SOP & Organizational structure.

The PCCC was well set up with equipment's, computers and CCTV where they were monitoring the exercise. Proper coordination and team work slowly came back as the operations progressed.

Exercise was done at low tide and that in itself created its own difficulties where boats had to be dragged by divers towards the shoreline from where victims were then carried on stretchers from the water to the waiting NFA support teams. This was well coordinated. Ops area was well managed and controlled by the Incident Scene Commander and his deputy. Area of operation was also properly cordoned off. Good coordination between rescuers and NFA support teams and getting victims to the Triage were efficiently done. DVI investigation had taken a bit of time as expected in their line of work but was ably led by Dr James and his team.

11.2 What needs improvement

A: National Police Coordination and Control Centre (PCCC)

- (i) The room set up had contributed to the disorganized and disjointed communication and coordination between PCCC and the Divisional Command Centers (DCC) at the very beginning of their operation. The room was too small and each DCC started doing their own without coordinating and taking direction from PCCC as it was supposed to. Majority of the Divisional officers were in agreement that DCCs should be separately located from PCCC.
- (ii) **Leadership was lacking/Absence from the beginning.** Lack of leadership to provide guidance and direction for ground operation utilizing all the resources on the ground.
- (iii) Post holders present were quite unaware of what was their individual responsibilities in this SOP but relied on their own experience of what was required of them generally under the circumstances. PCCC did not receive the 1st inject but kicked start their ops because they were aware of what was going to be done. The document was taken to the wrong office because the person taking the document did not know where PCCC was located.
- (iv) The officer in charge of PCCC was also overwhelmed by the number of officers both senior and junior who were in the room. OIC was trying to control both the PCCC & DCC at the same time. There was a need to provide direction and coordination from PCCC to divisional and not doing their work for them. This had led to complication of the tasks and his inability to think clearly and properly coordinate between Ops HQ(PCCC) and his five divisions. Lack of experienced officer to provide leadership at critical junctures.
- (v) Divisions were collecting and collating information in general and not according to the details required by the NEOC. For example, those walking into the Safe Havens were sent to take details and were to take into consideration all the critical details such as genders, children, adults and the physically challenged etc. Divisions were not aware that such details were important to be collected.
- (vi) A series of questions were posed to officers' present at PCCC and at different levels regarding the SOPs and their divisional responsibilities and it was clear that even though they were not aware of the presence of an SOP, they generally seem to know what is required of them under such circumstances. The team

were also asked about reservations that they had and again, concern was raised about the absence of their Senior Command in this exercise.

- (vii) Police was the only government agency that did not submit any report to NEOC on the Tsunami evacuation drill.

B: Marine Search & Rescue Exercise:

- (a) All relevant support team tents should have been included within the cordoned off area for better support team coordination. Triage and DVI were outside of the cordon off area.
- (b) Tent was not big enough to render proper assistance to victim as and when they were brought out of the water.
- © Unnecessary overwhelming the tent when all the support teams just rushing in but not all in there to assist the victims but just there as bystanders.
- (d) Senior government officials had also wanted to use the tent to watch the exercise.
- (e) There were some communication breakdowns between Police & NFA at the initial stage but was quickly rectified by good communication and mutual understanding. NFA were never part of the sea search and rescue team but is now being advocated by NDMO.
- (f) There was reservation raised on the absence of the Navy in the exercise today.
- (g) In terms of Safety & Security, a near miss (accident) by Police Ambulance could have resulted in serious accident due to over excited and anxious drivers. The road was not closed off when the ambulance was conveying victims from the shore to the hospital. Roads needs to be closed off for safety reasons.

12.0 Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)

12.1 Overall conduct of the exercises

Aus DART team were extremely impressed with the technical proficiency of participants within the first responder training. They were able to quickly adapt and consolidate these skills during the SIMEX. Additionally, the agility of the team to improvise and manage shortages of equipment allowed outcomes to still be achieved. Coordination between the RDC/UCC and NEOC would be greatly improved with more staff trained to utilise the Virtual Onsite operational coordination centre [GDACS - Virtual OSOCC \(unocha.org\)](http://unocha.org). Principles of the UCC were quickly adopted including knowledge walls, briefing and reporting. Demonstrates the robust training of the NERT team, coupled with interlinkages to PIEMA IMT frameworks. Successful coordination between Police for security of site, DVI and medical teams for handover of patients was a significant success of the USAR operations. Recognition of the dedication, commitment and professionalism of all actors involved in the exercise.

13.0 Medical

13.1 Overall conduct of the exercises

The inclusion of medical services as a key sector in the exercise speaks to Fiji's commitment to saving lives and protecting the vulnerable in emergencies. In the

aftermath of an acute emergency such as a tsunami or earthquake, there will be an initial caseload due to mass casualty and medical services will need to adjust with each phase of the response to restore essential health services and ensure that post disaster conditions do not lead to secondary public health emergencies.

Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) assisted in the planning of the simulation exercise alongside NDMO. MHMS participated in multiple levels of the exercise including: mass casualty triage through FEMAT, Emergency Medical Team Coordination Center, Health and Nutrition Cluster coordination and Divisional Emergency Operations Center support.

Fiji Emergency Medical Team (FEMAT) was joined by the Australian Emergency Medical Team (AusMAT) in the simulation exercise. During the mass casualty triage event at the sea wall, additional actors including Fiji Red Cross and Saint John's Ambulance joined in the triage.

13.2 What went well

Overall, MHMS had an opportunity to play multiple roles in the response and use the exercise as a learning opportunity. MHMS quickly adapted and conducted themselves professionally throughout each phase of the exercise.

Emergency Medical Team (EMT)

FEMAT tents were established in a timely way with unidirectional flow and obvious indications that they followed their SOPs in setup. FEMAT personnel donned gloves during the mass casualty exercise. Patients were triaged effectively at the sea wall and re-triaged on arrival to the tents. Patient forms were available at the tents.

Emergency Medical Team Coordination Center

Instead of exercising SOPs, participants had a fruitful conversation about EMTCC functions, responsibilities and guidance documents.

Divisional Emergency Operations Centers

When probed, Divisional EOCs were able to provide some information on damage to health facilities and the numbers of dead and injured. Clearly Divisional EOCs will rely on technical support from Divisional MHMS personnel for life saving activities and public health operations in the aftermath of an emergency.

13.3 What needs improvement

Overall, MHMS personnel were spread thin and could have delegated differently to exercise SOPs beyond FEMAT.

Emergency Medical Team

The organization of triage can be improved as triage zones were not labeled in either the tents at the sea wall or at the FEMAT tents in Albert Park. Triage was located away from the road, behind the main FEMAT tents in Albert Park. There was no discussion of onward transfer or referral of patients to higher levels of care indicating that FEMAT would have been working outside of their scope of practice for an EMT. Communication between the sea wall and the FEMAT tents appeared to break down as the FEMAT team did not appear aware of incoming mass casualties. Some individuals working in the FEMAT tent did not don PPE when receiving patients. There was not a clear understanding of how to coordinate with other agencies the deaths in the facility or dead-on arrival. Additional coordination for unaccompanied and missing persons was needed in the exercise.

Emergency Medical Team Coordination Center

Select FEMAT members may want to review EMTCC manuals and familiarize themselves with the concept.

Divisional Emergency Operations Centers

If MHMS personnel are not present in EOCs, then EOC leads need to have sufficient information on the status of health services in their division. At a minimum, EOCs need to know: the number of operational, damaged, destroyed health facilities; availability of power, water, communications to health facilities; population ability to access to services; service availability; service gaps; available stocks and needs. Divisional EOCs must consider public health and medical services for the broad population and always target resources to locations and groups that are most vulnerable.

13.4 Recommendations

Overall, with the restructure of the MHMS Health Emergencies team following COVID-19, an organization chart with clear delineation of duties will be useful to emergency actors to understand how the team is organized and functions. MHMS should identify training needs and work with partners to build capacities.

Emergency Medical Teams

The EMT concept is working well and has gained traction in Fiji. FEMAT has a robust capacity building plan. While FEMAT is self-sufficient, coordination with other agencies is needed to refer, transfer, manage protection cases and manage deaths.

Divisional Emergency Operations Centers

MHMS already uses the concept of Command Centers to organize public health data in peace time and transition into Public Health Emergency Operations Centers (PHEOC) working alongside EOCs during emergencies. MHMS has a plan to improve upon the PHEOC concept at the divisional and national level. The

coordination of PHEOC and EOCs in emergencies will be important as health requires multi sectoral support to function optimally.

14.0 Disaster Victim Identification (DVI)

14.1 Overall conduct of the exercises

DVI stands for Disaster Victim Identification, and this is an integral function of the Fiji Police Force Forensic Science Service (FPFFSS). Under our Director, SSP Margaret Marshall, we were instructed to be engaged in the Tsunami and Earthquake national mock exercise that was part of the National Disaster Week Awareness program. This mock exercise was an effective way of ensuring the DVI team actual activation and it tested all aspects of the capability of the team.

The FPFFSS DVI team consisted of: o Exercise DVI Commander – A/SP Merelea Dileba, Recovery Team Coordinator – Dr. James Kalougivaki, Forensic Doctors – Dr. Sylvia Singh & Dr. Laisani Seru.

Base team lead include: Ops Team lead, 2 Forensic Photographers, 2 Forensic Recorders, 2 Forensic deceased transfer officers, 2 Crime Scene Investigators, 1 Forensic Scene Sketcher. The entire DVI team attended the Academic Session and also the Technical sessions to understand the overall exercise.

14.2 What Went Well

Both the Exercise DVI Commander and the Recovery team coordinator were also the referees for the exercise. The following are some points for the DVI exercise:

- (i) Appreciation for engaging and recognizing the DVI team in the exercise that gave an opportunity to showcase DVI capabilities.
- (ii) Engagement of our DVI officers in the outer Divisions during the exercise is an eye opener to them and also gives them a feel of what to expect should reality arise from their divisions.
- (iii) Good Team coordination by DVI Team in the 3 days exercise.
- (iv) This was the first time that DVI teams were part of an exercise and it was a success from the Academic session to the end of the exercise
- (v) DVI team deal with the dead everyday and DVI is part of our everyday work but mass casualties is just an amplified form that can be managed.

14.3 What needs improvement

- (i) The DVI team expected dummies as dead bodies as was mentioned during the Tabletop Exercise but during the exercise dead bodies signified by pieces of papers.
- (ii) More priority needs to be place in the future to addressing the dead, whether from rescue, at disaster scene or from the FEMAT setup (Blue & Black coded deaths).
- (iii) Reports lodged by Mispers. relatives, DVI personnel should also be informed and engaged (like of Red Cross) as it is part of the Reconciliation process.

- (iv) The management of the Mispers. and Deceased families to be taken into consideration as it is part of DVI.
- (v) DVI team tent to be inside the cordoned area like FEMAT.
- (vi) Morgue services needs to be outsourced and managed by the Fiji Police Force as highlighted in this operation.
- (vii) Flow of information from FEMAT to PCCC to DVI Team needs to consistent.

14.4 Recommendations

- (i) Better clarity of injects for the dead and response from Fiji Police to activate DVI to allow for better coordination with all relevant stakeholder like FEMAT etc. and for Mispers. also.
- (ii) More realistic exercise.
- (iii) Morgues need to be managed during Disaster Situation by the Fiji Police Force.
- (iv) More connectivity with NDMO & NGOs to upskill and maintain links consistently.
- (v) DVI Team to be engaged for future NDMO exercises.
- (vi) Should NDMO conduct future trainings for DVI, Forensic DVI team needs to be informed. This will act as a Refresher and also engage those Officers in outer Divisions to attend the training

15.0 Cluster System

15.1 What went well

The overall conduct of the inter-cluster meeting as cluster needs came prepared with information and plans were discussed on priority needs. Central, Eastern and Western Div EOC were well organized and have all the appropriate data (disintegrated) captured, which was factors into their needs report. North Div EOC - had no log book and no clear organization of messaging. Habitat for Humanity was the only agency who mentioned that they checked on staff and exercised evacuation procedures. There was gap analysis, response plan and presentation

15.2 What needs improvement

There was a bit of a confusion on the cluster meeting section, as clusters were confused if the meeting is individual cluster meeting or inter-clusters despite it has been clearly stated on the briefs that individual clusters to meet and send reports to NEOC prior to the Inter-cluster meeting. This relates back to the need for a clear SOP for each cluster to know when clusters need to meet etc.

16.0 Civil-Military Coordination

16.1 Overall conduct of the exercises

The Fiji National Disaster Awareness week demonstrated significant achievements in civil-military coordination, but there were areas that needed improvement. The

overall conduct of the exercise reflected several positive aspects and identified key recommendations for future enhancements in disaster response efforts. The Fiji National Disaster Awareness Week demonstrated substantial progress in civil-military coordination, emphasizing active inter-agency liaison participation, recognition of the military's unique capabilities, and engagement and cooperation with foreign partners. The technical session successfully presented the elements of civil-military coordination but in practice during the simulation exercise, this was less successful.

16.2 What went well

The recent Fiji National Disaster Awareness Week exercises showcased several notable successes in civil-military coordination. The Joint Task Force had very good awareness of liaisons coordinating with both the police and NEOC. RFMF was present at the NEOC, showing willing participation and respect for civil-military coordination processes. It is great that an RFMF representative was staying involved with the NDMO and receiving situational updates to understand what was happening and what was needed. This indicates a positive step in terms of inter-agency coordination which is crucial during disaster responses. During the exercise, it was well understood that the military was able to provide unique capabilities and assets for disaster response assistance that civilian assets could not meet on its own. During the exercise, there was mil-mil coordination with foreign militaries, who were provided the latest situation update of infrastructure and population affected and it was determined that foreign military assistance could fill the needed gaps in civilian response. It establishes international cooperation and shows willingness to accept foreign military assistance to fill civilian response gaps.

16.3 What needs improvement

While there were notable successes, several areas were identified that can be enhanced to improve future disaster response efforts. Coordination clarity could be improved. While RFMF was present at NEOC briefings, there is a need for more in-depth discussion to better understand and identify JTF and broader RFMF roles and responsibilities during disaster response. Additionally, clearer guidance and task division for JTF and RFMF disaster response could be improved so there is a clear understanding of who undertakes what actions and where. Furthermore, when dividing tasks, it is essential to ensure that military assistance is complementary and supporting the work of humanitarian organizations and regulated by the Last Resort principle. During the exercise, there was mil-mil coordination with foreign militaries, but a request for military assistance needs to come from the Fijian government and not the RFMF. Proper authorization and coordination with national authorities are critical in such situations. Additionally, information sharing could be improved. There needs to be more specific and detailed requests for military assistance, for example if there is a request for engineering support to clear roads, the request should include what is currently being done, how long that can be sustained, and what the specific assistance needed is. Or if there is a request for food or water, the request should

include the rationing for how many people and how many days it is needed. Detailed requests are necessary to ensure that Fiji gets enough and what is needed.

16.4 Recommendations

While there were many successes, recommendations for improvement include:

- During a disaster event, if foreign military assistance is needed, it is important to begin getting DipNotes out as soon as possible. If the RFMF NEOC representative is based in Blackrock, and roads are down, it may be helpful for someone else based in Suva to represent and communicate for the RFMF to the NDMO and NEOC.
- Improve situational awareness across JTF and RFMF functions. Knowing what type of information available, what operational information is needed, and the methods of how to share information could be improved to build a better response. During the exercise, it was unclear what the role of logistics officers and planning officers was but they are valuable resources during disaster response and should be better incorporated into updates with the NEOC.
- Have military representatives embedded or represented to support clusters, especially in the logistics cluster, for better situational awareness. Military should also be represented at divisional levels to receive situation reports from each division.
- A civil-military coordination focal point within NDMO could help to improve relationships and communication and to ensure military coverage during disaster response.

17.0 Interoperability with International Response Teams

17.1 Overall conduct of the exercises

Several regional and international response teams were part of the Fiji National Disaster Awareness Week (NDAW) and simulation exercises. This was possibly a first for the Pacific and the Fiji NDMO should be commended for its part in inviting and involving these teams into its national event.

This was an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning for both the incoming and receiving teams with valuable lessons and networking experienced by all those involved. For the regional NDMOs, Fire Services, National Red Cross Societies and others, the exercises provided an opportunity to observe, learn, and take back valuable lessons and ideas to adapt in their respective countries and agencies. The Australian disaster assistance response teams (DART), Medical Assistance Teams, United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams used the opportunity to impart their knowledge and skills through some targeted training and support to their national counterparts to build capacity and also develop networks.

17.2 What went well

Overall, the interoperability between the international response teams and their national counterparts was coordinated and any issues were dealt with through improvisation and using what means were available given the context of the simulation exercises.

For the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) component, it was encouraging to see the DART come before the exercises and conduct training with the Fiji National Fire Authority (NFA) and Fiji Police Force (FPF) personnel that would be carrying out the USAR components of the simulation exercises. Of note was NFA and FPF's improvisation of tools and techniques in the absence of conventional ones used by the DART members while on deployment. This is particularly important and worth noting given the expensive nature of these specialized tools.

Other areas to mention were how the NERT members interacted and collaborated with incoming UNDAC teams to set up the Reception and Departure Centre (RDC) to receive incoming international and regional teams. This was the first encounter between the NERT and UNDAC teams, and it is worth noting the way in which the two teams worked together to set up the RDC with the latter using this as a capacity building exercise and imparting knowledge to the NERT members.

The DART team helped set up the Urban Search and Rescue Coordination Cell (UCC) and shadowed the national USAR teams as they went about doing a triage of collapsed buildings as part of the simulation exercises. In this particular instance, it was promising to see the national USAR teams practicing the skills they had learned in the training programs a few days earlier and the DART members playing a coaching and mentoring role.

17.3 What needs improvement

While there were a lot of positives to gain from an interoperability perspective, there is room for improvement in these areas:

- Ensuring the RDC's are set up early to receive incoming regional and international teams. The simulation exercise scenario was for NERT to set up two RDCs on Day 3 - one for Nausori Airport and the other as Nadi Airport. This did not happen and therefore incoming international and regional teams just simply entered Fiji borders without proper registration.
- The roles and responsibilities of incoming regional teams (mainly NDMOs, National Red Cross Societies and Fire Services) needs to be clearly defined. This will help all parties involved in the simulation exercises to better understand and appreciate their intended interventions.
- Using identifiers other than nametags and different coloured lanyards to identify the different international and regional teams would have been useful for all parties. This

would help referees and other partners to better monitor and witness the interoperability of these teams during the exercises.

17.4 Recommendations

If international and regional teams are invited to future national simulation exercises, here are some recommendations to consider:

- Clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of incoming international and regional teams, and involve them in the planning meetings so they fully appreciate and understand their interventions in the simulation exercises.
- Using identifiers like coloured vests, caps or jackets to assist with the international and regional team's visibility in the simulation exercises.
- Assigning the role of coordinating the involvement of incoming international and regional teams to a NDMO staff or partner. This includes their transport arrangements, briefings and other administrative issues while in-country.
- Include this component (especially setup of RDCs and level interoperability) in the proposed NERT After Action Review.

18.0 Cluster System

Overall conduct of the exercises

The cluster system in Fiji has been in existence since 2012 and has been evolving over the years through its experiences from past disasters including the COVID 19 pandemic. It is promising to observe that some agencies have taken the lead role in strengthening their respective clusters and leveraging the cluster approach to work with developing partners to formulate and implement risk reduction strategies and activities in their respective sectors thus enhancing preparedness and humanitarian response readiness.

In spite of the recognised gains in the Fiji cluster system, more still needs to be done to further strengthen its overall performance and impact at all levels. Governance coherence, minimizing operational bottlenecks and overall guidance of all lead agencies under the established disaster management structure will harness more collaborative efforts in planning, sharing resources, agency - private sector partnerships and overall coordination in preparedness and response.

18.1 What went well

The cluster system was observed to be performing its functions in the exercise especially in the areas of internal coordination (cluster leads and supporting agencies), information sharing and using targeted approach through the use of disaggregated data. It has been recognized that some cluster leads have taken the initiative to further develop their respective clusters to be more prepared through the formulation of standard operating procedures and leveraging the cluster mechanism to develop disaster risk reduction projects and activities with development partners.

18.2 What needs improvement

The simulation exercise (SIMEX) provided an ideal platform to have a snapshot overview of the cluster system in operations. At the onset, cluster operations appear to be working well, however it has been recognized that some clusters are contributing more than others, therefore there is a need for all clusters to perform with the same high standards and effort which will ensure an efficient and well coordinated humanitarian response. This can only be achieved through risk governance coherence and awareness within and between lead agencies.

Cluster leads need to take ownership of their respective clusters and develop it further to be more independent and forward looking in their sector of responsibility. It appears that some clusters rely heavily on the national lead, as the lead agency doesn't have the capacity and governance structure to foster leadership in the cluster, such conditions create operational bottlenecks at all levels. Furthermore, during the exercise it was observed that there is no clear linkage between the clusters and the sub-national level, this is one area that has the potential to unlock positive possibilities if approached correctly.

18.3 Recommendations

To further strengthen the Fiji Cluster System, the following recommendations need to be considered and contextualized to ensure robustness in humanitarian coordination across sectors during response and also be instrumental in disaster risk reduction.

- The Fiji Cluster System needs to be fully integrated and recognised in the disaster legislation frameworks, policies and plans at National level, where clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities of each cluster needs to be outlined with its respective cluster lead and supporting agencies, with adherence to established systems and processes.
- Each cluster lead needs to revise and update their legislative framework, policies and plans to include risk governance in the scope of their cluster. This will ensure budgetary allocations, improving human resources and the mandate to further develop their respective clusters to be response ready.
- The disaster management structure in Fiji already lays the foundations of a decentralized cluster system, where sub-national development priorities could form part of preparedness and disaster mitigation activities for each cluster. This will ensure that each cluster lead will be operating throughout the different phases of disaster risk management.

- Each cluster needs to formulate their respective Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) aligning to the intercluster lead policies, plans and SOPs. This includes channels of communications, information management tools, information sharing, and linkages to sub-national mechanisms

19.0 Disaster Risk Reduction Exhibition

19.1 Overall conduct of the exercises

This is the first time, the exhibition was divided into four segments:

- (i) Hazard & Risk Analysis
- (ii) Mitigation and Preparedness
- (iii) Response
- (iv) Recovery

19.2 What went well

Tents were wheelchair accessible; school groups looked engaged; range of exhibitors were engaging. Overall, the concept to organize the exhibition in terms of phases of response was a great idea. But due to the overlaps of the different phases of disaster especially the roles of organizations, it was difficult for them to identify which phase they should join and set up their displays.

19.3 What needs improvement

It was a little confusing to see the same organization with tables in each phase. The tents could have been labeled better to visually stimulate the concept. Some organizations used a lot of resources to put tables in each phase but smaller organizations didn't have the resources to do so.

19.4 Recommendations

Perhaps if the concept is to be maintained, organizations could be supported to have a poster presentation (or something) in each phase and one table to hand out fliers and demonstrate supplies.

Highlight the preparedness actions individuals/families need to take in the main hall. That is a primary message that got lost amid the other displays.

20.0 CONCLUSION

This is the first time for a National Simulation Exercise of such magnitude to be conducted in Fiji and the Pacific. The series of events demanded substantial resources with proper planning. The participants all enjoyed the event and had some takeaways with a lot of learning of new knowledge and skills happened in the 2023 National Disaster Awareness Week. Participation of International, Regional and Local actors complemented each other well which contributed to the overall success of the events. There is always room for improvement and the next exercise will

ensure that loose ends will be strengthened and should there be a real event, Fiji will be ready to respond and competently assisted by regional and international partners.
