



# **NATIONAL HUMANITARIAN POLICY FOR DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT**



**NDMO  
DISMAC**

**Ministry of Rural & Maritime Development  
& National Disaster Management**

**Knolly Plaza, 1 Knolly Street, SUVA**

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## Minister's Foreword



In February 2016, TC Winston widely devastated the Fiji, affecting thousands of households and communities that had not yet fully recovered from TC Evans in December 2012. In the four years between these two tropical cyclones, the country experienced near drought conditions for over 3 years, torrential rain from other cyclones, seasonal floods, and numerous earthquake-related tsunami alerts.

Together, these events forced this Government to realize that climate change is already happening and natural disasters are the new norm. If Fiji is to remain strong and safe in the face of natural disaster and environmental threats, the Government and people of Fiji must change.

The way we live must change. We must address the risks of natural disaster by pro-actively reducing, mitigating, transferring and accepting or learning to living with them. Governance structures, systems, processes and attitudes must change and responsibility must be carried by individuals, communities and the nation. It is a collective responsibility.

We must change the way we do development, advocate on environmental and climate change issues and ensure that development is sustainable. We must change agricultural processes, crop selection, and revive traditional practices. Attitudes must change to ensure that stronger household structures are built and appreciated as a worthwhile investment.

We must improve the way we cooperate, domestically and internationally to fulfil our international obligations on disaster risk reduction and coordinate humanitarian action throughout the disaster risk management cycle.

This will all come at a cost. It will be expensive, but it is absolutely necessary to invest in a safer and more resilient future. Many issues must be addressed, but excellence must be pursued.

At the World Humanitarian Summit, Istanbul May 2016, I announced Fiji's Post-TC Winston Disaster Response Agenda to transform adversity into disaster and climate resilience through:

- (i) National Humanitarian Policy – to institutionalize humanitarian practices;
- (ii) National Fiji Cluster System – to endorse a national manual guide;
- (iii) Medium-Term Programme - to develop humanitarian capacities.

As the first part of the Agenda, this National Humanitarian Policy is the outcome of wide consultation with national and international stakeholders from Government, private sector, CSOs, FBOs, NGOs community networks, international humanitarian partners, UN, other Governments and donors.

I am certain that this National Humanitarian Policy will direct our collectively actions to promote Fiji's move from a culture of reaction to a culture of pre-emption and resilience.

**Hon. Inia Seruiratu**  
**Minister for Rural & Maritime Development**  
**& National Disaster Risk Management**

## **1.0 GUIDING DOCUMENTS**

The Policy aligns with national laws, policies, guidelines, and international and regional commitments, including in particular:-

- The Fijian Constitution, and the Bill of Rights contained therein;
- Natural Disaster Management Act 1998 and National Disaster Management Plan 1995 (which will be revised to incorporate the contents of this Policy and provide a national legislative basis for the Fiji Cluster System);
- National policies on gender, disability, vulnerability, child protection, discrimination, poverty-alleviation, health, education, rural development;
- National environmental, climate change and development policies, including the Green Growth Framework for Fiji;
- International and regional commitments for disaster risk reduction, climate change adaption, sustainable development and human rights, including the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030, Paris Agreement 2015, United Nations Goals for Sustainable Development, and Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific;
- Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, National Development Plan, and Disaster Recovery Framework;
- Other relevant national guidelines and recognised standards.

## **2.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES**

Fulfill the Fijian Government's sovereign and primary responsibility to initiate, organise, coordinate, and implement all aspects of national disaster risk management<sup>1</sup> and humanitarian action<sup>2</sup> on its territory and in line with its international agreements;

Govern and coordinate humanitarian action within the national disaster risk management cycle, with clear stakeholder roles and responsibilities, accountability, monitoring and reporting procedures, in alignment with Fiji's national development and climate change initiatives;

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<sup>1</sup> Disaster Risk Management includes preparedness, disaster readiness, disaster risk reduction, emergency/humanitarian response, recovery, rehabilitation, reconstruction, contingency planning, capacity building, education and awareness activities, and links to Fiji's national development and climate change initiatives.

<sup>2</sup> 'Humanitarian action' is defined as action intended to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity before, during and after natural disasters and man-made crises, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for when such situations may occur.

Develop strong national information and communication platforms that facilitate rapid collection, analysis, and dispersal of information on disaster risk management and humanitarian action;

Build Fijian national, institutional, community and individual capacity, resilience, self-reliance and inclusiveness in disaster risk management;

Strengthen transparent financial monitoring, reporting and accountability mechanisms and access to funding for national humanitarian actors during all phases of the national disaster risk management cycle.

### 3.0 KEY THEMATIC PRIORITIES

With the endorsement of the National Disaster Management Council<sup>3</sup>, the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development & National Disaster Management will lead and coordinate progressive realization of the following Key Thematic Priorities, with engagement of appropriate Government and humanitarian actors<sup>4</sup>.

#### 3.1 Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance

- (a) Develop national guidelines for humanitarian coordination at all Government levels<sup>5</sup> under the leadership of appropriate Government Authorities, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities of Government and humanitarian actors<sup>6</sup>.
- (b) Incorporate the national guidelines for humanitarian coordination into revised national legislation governing national disaster risk management.
- (c) At national level, establish permanent Fiji Cluster System Secretariats within designated Ministries to coordinate overall inter-cluster and sectoral cluster humanitarian action, and to ensure continuity based on local knowledge, experience, and national government priorities.
- (d) At sub-national level, develop humanitarian coordination systems which link to national coordination, based on further Government and humanitarian stakeholder consultations, and establish permanent divisional coordination secretariats.
- (e) Develop and implement annual national and sub-national coordinated humanitarian Work Plans to identify, fund and address national disaster risk management priorities covering diverse risks<sup>7</sup> and phases of the DRM cycle.

<sup>3</sup> In accordance with the National Disaster Management Act 1998 and the National Disaster Management Plan 1995, and the subsequent statutory revisions.

<sup>4</sup> See National Humanitarian Policy Matrix at page 9 of this Policy.

<sup>5</sup> National, divisional, provincial, and village/settlement levels.

<sup>6</sup> A humanitarian actor is any organisation, group or individual that is engaged in humanitarian action (as previously defined), whether or not humanitarian assistance is part of the usual activity of that organisation, group, or individual, and includes national and international NGOs, Faith-Based organisations, community networks, UN, donors and other governments.

<sup>7</sup> Risks include those associated with cyclone, flood, tsunami, drought, landslide, and earthquake.

- (f) Develop educational materials and deliver training on the Fiji Cluster System and subnational coordination system.
- (g) Develop and publish NDMO guidance materials on disaster risk management procedures, including humanitarian coordination, national procedures and standards, import/customs procedures, and policies for unsolicited goods.
- (h) Pro-actively engage and support community networks<sup>8</sup>, private sector<sup>9</sup>, and groups/people with vulnerabilities<sup>10</sup> in all aspects of humanitarian action, particularly at the divisional and local levels.
- (i) Clarify and align the role of Fiji Disciplined Forces and Fiji Red Cross in coordinated humanitarian action.
- (j) Review registration and reporting requirements for national and international humanitarian actors in Fiji, including work permits for international humanitarian actors.

### 3.2 National Information Management and Communication

- (a) Upgrade NDMO national information and communications systems and ensure qualified staff to rapidly gather, exchange, analyse, and transmit data and information between NDMO, Ministries, Divisions, and the Fiji Cluster System.<sup>11</sup> Integrate NDMO information management system with Ministerial sectoral information management systems.<sup>12</sup>
- (b) Develop guidelines for conducting joint assessments, monitoring and reporting, and sharing reports through the NDMO information management system.
- (c) Develop guidelines on the production of NDMO Sitreps<sup>13</sup> and public messaging as the official Government information source in disaster risk management, including guidelines to avoid confusion arising through non-Government reporting Agencies.
- (d) Examine and improve national warning, update, and communication systems to communities through Government Ministries and Authorities, media<sup>14</sup>, a national Public Emergency Broadcast system, and community messaging networks.

<sup>8</sup> Community networks include local NGOs, faith-based organisations, youth organisations, village committees, amongst others.

<sup>9</sup> Including through Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council, humanitarian coordination systems, and direct government engagement.

<sup>10</sup> Including vulnerabilities due to sex, gender, age, disability, and unemployment.

<sup>11</sup> This may include development of standard reporting formats, adoption of hand-held data collection systems and standardised software, SOPs on information sharing, and data analysis HR capacity to deliver real-time update on humanitarian action.

<sup>12</sup> Including Health MIS, FEMIS, Ministry of Economy, etc.

<sup>13</sup> Situation Reports.

<sup>14</sup> Media includes any organisation or person disseminating information, news, entertainment, opinion, advertisements, and communications to the public, and includes newspapers, magazines, television, audio visual and radio broadcasts and electronic means of communication.

- (e) Develop a media strategy and guidelines to harmonise national community and public warnings, messaging, advocacy and awareness building on disaster risk management and humanitarian action, and gather feedback on community concerns.
- (f) Strengthen Government warehouse management, tracking, reporting and security systems for relief supplies to facilitate real-time coordination and monitoring of humanitarian distributions.
- (g) Include humanitarian actor assistance into Government real-time coordination, distribution, tracking, monitoring and reporting systems.
- (h) Pro-actively engage community networks, private sector, and groups/people with vulnerabilities in all aspects of national information management and communication, particularly at the divisional and local levels.

### **3.3 National and Local Capacity Building**

- (a) Prioritize local capacity building and national leadership in implementation of all disaster risk management and humanitarian actions, and promote sustainable traditional farming practices.
- (b) Map communities to ensure they have reliable disaster risk management plans and systems, including warning and communication systems, evacuation sites/centres, contingency plans, protection and referral mechanisms.
- (c) Develop and implement annual national and sub-national plans<sup>15</sup> to conduct disaster risk management training, awareness and simulation exercises, and to address gaps in community disaster risk management systems.
- (d) Conduct a national train-the-trainer program to progressively ensure that all communities have access to adequate local psycho-social assistance.<sup>16</sup>
- (e) Pro-actively engage community networks, private sector, and groups/people with vulnerabilities in all aspects of national and local capacity building, and to participate in National Disaster Awareness Week, and national simulation exercises<sup>17</sup> particularly at the divisional and local levels.

### **3.4 Funding and Financial Monitoring**

- (a) Ensure adequate funding for Fiji Cluster System and sub-national coordination system staff and administration costs through Ministry Annual Corporate Budgets, and raise finance for Cluster programs/projects through Government or donor project funding.
- (b) Encourage the Fijian Government and donors (regional, international, bi-lateral, government, and national) to prioritize humanitarian funding to support Key

<sup>15</sup> Extended from national through to grass-roots levels.

<sup>16</sup> At national, sub-national and grass-roots level.

<sup>17</sup> Held annually in October and co-ordinated by NDMO.

Thematic Priorities and humanitarian programs/project implementation under this Policy, particularly to build capacity of national humanitarian actors and networks.

- (c) Strengthen national financial monitoring systems to facilitate maximum transparency, reporting and accountability to donors, communities and the government on humanitarian cash and in-kind donations.

#### **4.0 FIJI CLUSTER SYSTEM**

The Fiji Cluster system is the Government-led humanitarian coordination mechanism in Fiji. It operates at the national strategic level throughout the disaster risk management cycle. It will link to a sub-national level humanitarian coordination mechanism led by Divisional Commissioners, which has primarily an implementation focus, and the format of which will be determined through wider national consultations in early 2017.

The Inter-Cluster is the overarching mechanism for humanitarian coordination in Fiji, and is the forum for inter-operability between sectoral Clusters<sup>18</sup>, sub-national humanitarian coordination and the Fijian Government. The Inter-Cluster Secretariat is based in Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management, of which the Permanent Secretary is also the Inter-Cluster Lead<sup>19</sup> and the Disaster Controller under the Natural Disaster Management Act 1998.

Each sectoral Cluster is led by the Permanent Secretary of an appropriate Ministry<sup>20</sup>, who will be supported by a Cluster Secretariat to coordinate humanitarian actors within the sector. Funding for Cluster Secretariat staff and administration will be included in Ministry Annual Corporate Plans<sup>21</sup>, while funding for Cluster programs/projects will be raised by the Cluster Secretariat through Government or donor resources.

Detailed Fiji Cluster System and sub-national humanitarian coordination Guidelines on roles, responsibilities, and priorities will be determined through wide consultation and endorsed by Cabinet. The Guidelines will incorporate inputs from national and international NGOs, community networks, Faith-Based Organisations, private sector, international organisations, donors, and regional partners.

#### **5.0 COMMENCEMENT & ADMINISTRATION**

This policy will be effective from the date of Cabinet approval for a period of 3 years.

<sup>18</sup> As of January 2017, the Inter-Cluster has overall coordination responsibility for nine sectoral Clusters (Education; Food Security & Livelihood; Health & Nutrition; WASH; Shelter; Safety & Protection; Logistics; Communication; and Infrastructure). However, the sectoral Cluster configuration may change during the development of the Fiji Cluster Guidelines (see 3.1(a)).

<sup>19</sup> In the alternative, a delegated representative of the Permanent Secretary.

<sup>20</sup> In the alternative, a delegated representative of the Permanent Secretary.

<sup>21</sup> Exact mechanisms to be determined during national consultations for Fiji Cluster System.



The Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development & National Disaster Management will be responsible for overall administration of the Policy under the guidance of National Disaster Management Council and will conduct annual reviews to ensure progressive realisation of the Policy Objectives and Key Thematic Priorities.

# ANNEX 1

(Endorsed by the Mitigation & Preparedness Committee of the National Disaster Management Council 31 Jan 2017)

## NATIONAL HUMANITARIAN POLICY MATRIX

Policy Objective	Key Thematic Priority	Responsibility
<p>Fulfill Fiji's responsibility to initiate, coordinate, and implement DRM &amp; humanitarian action in Fiji, in line with international Agreements.</p>	<p>Develop and endorse National Humanitarian Policy, and guide progressive realisation of Key Thematic Priorities.</p>	<p>Fijian Government, Cabinet, National Disaster Management Council, MRMD&amp;NDM.</p>
<p>Govern and coordinate humanitarian action within the national disaster risk management cycle, with clear stakeholder roles and responsibilities, accountability, monitoring and reporting procedures, in alignment with Fiji's national development and climate change initiatives.</p>	<p>(a) Develop national guidelines for humanitarian coordination at all Government levels.</p> <p>(b) Incorporate national guidelines for humanitarian coordination into revised legislation governing national disaster risk management.</p>	<p>MRMD&amp;NDM leading public consultations with Government and humanitarian actors at national and sub-national levels.</p> <p>MRMD&amp;NDM and consultant legal firm.</p>
<p>(Key Thematic Priority 3.1)</p>	<p>(c) At national level, establish permanent Fiji Cluster System secretariats within designated Ministries to coordinate overall inter-cluster and sectoral cluster humanitarian action, and to ensure continuity based on local knowledge, experience, and national Government priorities.</p> <p>(d) At sub-national level, develop humanitarian coordination systems which link to national coordination, based on further Government and humanitarian stakeholder consultations, and establish permanent divisional coordination secretariats.</p>	<p>Fiji Government, Cabinet, National Disaster Management Council, MRMD&amp;NDM.</p> <p>MRMD&amp;NDM leading public consultations with Government and humanitarian actors at national and sub-national levels.</p>
	<p>(e) Develop and implement annual national and sub-national coordinated humanitarian Work Plans to identify, fund and address national disaster risk management priorities covering diverse risks and phases of the DRM cycle.</p>	<p>MRMD&amp;NDM with Fiji Cluster System and sub-national humanitarian coordination system.</p>

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	(f) Develop educational materials and deliver training on the Fiji Cluster System and subnational coordination system.	MRRMD&NDM and NDMO
	(g) Develop and publish NDMO guidance material on disaster risk management, humanitarian coordination, national procedures and standards, import/customs procedures, and policies for unsolicited goods.	NDMO, Ministry of Economy.
	(h) Pro-actively engage and support community networks, private sector, and groups/people with vulnerabilities in all aspects of humanitarian action, particularly at divisional and local levels.	NDMO, Fiji Cluster System and sub-national coordination mechanisms, community networks, private sector organisations, disability & gender actors.
	(i) Clarify and align the role of Fiji Disciplined Forces and Fiji Red Cross in coordinated humanitarian action.	Fijian Government, Cabinet, National Disaster Management Council, MRRMD&NDM, Fiji Disciplined Forces, Fiji Red Cross, and consultant legal firm.
	(j) Review registration and reporting requirements for national and international humanitarian actors in Fiji, including work permits for international humanitarian actors.	MRRMD&NDM, Solicitor General.
Develop strong national information and communication platforms that facilitate rapid collection and dispersal of information on disaster risk management and humanitarian action.  (Key Thematic Priority 3.2).	(a) Upgrade NDMO national information and communications systems and ensure qualified staff to rapidly gather, exchange, analyse, and transmit data and information between NDMO, Ministries, Divisions, and the Fiji Cluster System. <sup>22</sup> Integrate NDMO information management system with Ministerial sectoral information management systems.	MRRMD&NDM, NDMO, Cluster Ministries,
	(b) Develop guidelines for conducting joint assessments, monitoring and reporting, and sharing reports through the NDMO information management system.	MRRMD&NDM, NDMO, Fiji Cluster System and sub-national humanitarian coordination system, Fiji Red Cross, Fiji Military Forces.
	(c) Develop guidelines on the production of	MRRMD&NDM, NDMO, Communication Cluster,

<sup>22</sup> This may include development of standard formats, adoption of screen-based technology, SOPs on information sharing, and data analysis capacity to identify gaps in humanitarian action.

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	<p>NDMO Sitreps and public messaging as the official government information source in disaster risk management, including guidelines to avoid confusion arising through non-government reporting agencies.</p> <p>(d) Examine and improve national warning, update, and communication systems to communities through Government Ministries and Authorities, media, a national Public Emergency Broadcast system, private sector and community messaging networks.</p>	<p>Divisional Commissioners, Ministry of Communication.</p>
	<p>(e) Develop a media strategy and guidelines to harmonise national community and public warnings, messaging, advocacy and awareness building on disaster risk management and humanitarian action, and gather feedback on community concerns.</p> <p>(f) Strengthen Government warehouse management, tracking, reporting and security systems for relief supplies to facilitate real-time coordination and monitoring of humanitarian distributions.</p> <p>(g) Include humanitarian actor assistance into Government real-time coordination, distribution, tracking, monitoring and reporting systems.</p> <p>(h) Pro-actively engage community networks, private sector, and groups/people with vulnerabilities in all aspects of national information management and communication, particularly at the divisional and local levels.</p>	<p>MRMR&amp;NDM, Fiji Cluster System and sub-national humanitarian coordination system, community networks.</p> <p>MRMD&amp;NMD, Ministry of Economy, Logistics Cluster.</p> <p>MRMD&amp;NDM, Ministry of Economy, Fiji Cluster System, humanitarian actors.</p> <p>NDMO, Fiji Cluster System and sub-national coordination mechanisms, community networks, private sector Organisations, disability and gender actors.</p>
<p>Build Fiji national, institutional, community and individual capacity, resilience, self-reliance and inclusiveness in disaster risk management.</p> <p>(Key Thematic Priority 3.3)</p>	<p>(a) Prioritize local capacity building and national leadership in implementation of all disaster risk management and humanitarian actions, and promote traditional sustainable farming practices.</p> <p>(b) Map communities to ensure they have reliable disaster risk management plans and systems,</p>	<p>NDMO, Fiji Cluster System and sub-national coordination mechanisms, community networks, private sector Organisations, donors.</p> <p>NDMO, Divisional Commissioners, sub-national coordination mechanisms, community networks,</p>

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	including warning and communication systems, evacuation sites/centres, contingency plans, protection and referral mechanisms.	private sector Organisations.
	(c) Develop and implement annual national plans to conduct disaster risk management training, awareness and simulation exercises, and to address gaps in community disaster risk management systems.	NDMO, Fiji Cluster System and sub-national coordination mechanisms, community networks, private sector Organisations.
	(d) Conduct a national train-the-trainer program to progressively ensure that all communities have access to local psycho-social assistance.	MIRMD&NDM, Ministry of Health, Health Cluster, community networks.
	(e) Pro-actively engage community networks, private sector, and groups/people with vulnerabilities in all aspects of national and local capacity building, and to participate in National Disaster Awareness Week and simulation exercises, particularly at divisional and local levels.	NDMO, Fiji Cluster System and sub-national coordination mechanisms, community networks, private sector organisations, disability & gender actors.
Strengthen transparent financial monitoring, reporting and accountability mechanisms and access to funding for national humanitarian actors during all phases of the national disaster risk management cycle.  (Key Thematic Priority 3.4)	(a) Ensure adequate funding for Fiji Cluster System and sub-national coordination system staff and administration costs through Ministry Annual Corporate Budgets, and raise finance for Cluster programs/projects through Government or donor project funding.  (b) Encourage Fiji Government, donors (regional, international, bi-lateral, Government, and national) to prioritize humanitarian funding to support Key Thematic Priorities and humanitarian programs/project implementation under this Policy, particularly to build capacity of national humanitarian actors and networks.	Fiji Cluster Ministries, Ministry of Economy, Cluster partners, national humanitarian actors & networks, donors.
	(c) Strengthen national financial monitoring systems to facilitate maximum transparency, reporting and accountability to donors, communities and the Government on humanitarian cash and in-kind donations.	Fiji Cluster Ministries, Ministry of Economy, Cluster partners, national humanitarian actors & networks, donors.

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