

SOPAC NewsUpdate #010, 1 October 2002

1. Urban Search And Rescue (USAR) comes to the Pacific

A variety of organizations concerned with improving emergency management in the Pacific: the Australian Emergency Management Agency, the New Zealand Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and SOPAC came together with the Fiji National Fire Authority to deliver the first Pacific USAR Course in Suva from 24 to 28 June 2002. USAR is the mobilizations of resources required to safely and expeditiously locate and remove trapped and often injured victims from partially or completely collapsed structures or environments and providing emergency medical care while doing so. This first USAR Course reflects heightened awareness that the urban centers of some Pacific island countries are very vulnerable to structural collapse due to exposure to natural or man-made hazards. §

2. Pacific Small Islands Water Concerns travel to the Third World Water Forum, via the Caribbean

The Third World Water Forum (3WWF) acknowledges the vulnerability and particular needs of the small island countries, by having as one of its themes "Water in Small Island Countries". The Pacific Consultation, organised jointly by the Asian Development Bank and SOPAC, concluded on 3 August with a new Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Water Management supported by a Communiqué and Ministerial Declaration. East Timor and the Maldives also sent national delegations to the Pacific consultation. Delegates from the Pacific will also participate at a similar consultation in the Caribbean region this month. The presentation of small islands water concerns at the 3WWF will be a joint position between the Pacific and Caribbean region. The city of Kyoto in Japan will be host to the 3WWF in March 2003. The Water Forum is a global water conference that is convened every three years to bring together water policy decision makers, professionals and stakeholders to address water concerns. §

3. ESCAP/SOPAC Workshop on Energy & Water

Following hard on the heels of the consultation at 2 above, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and SOPAC hosted a 4-day workshop on Strategic Planning and Management of Water and Energy Resources Development from 5 to 8 August 2002, at the Outrigger Hotel. 44 participants attended the workshop, 20 in the Water Sessions and 22 in the Energy Sessions, with representation from a total of 13 Pacific island countries. Other organizations represented at the meeting were ESCAP-EPOC (Vanuatu) and the Pacific Power Association. The collaboration also marks the first joint undertaking between SOPAC and ESCAP after a ten-year lapse. §

4. Multibeam mapping of Majuro Lagoon, Republic of Marshall Islands

SOPAC completed a major multibeam mapping exercise in Majuro Lagoon, Republic of Marshall Islands, in July. The survey was to map existing sites of sand extraction and locate alternative sites. The mapping exercise completed 464 line kilometres over 7 survey days representing around 70 square kilometres of the lagoon. This data will be compiled against high-resolution satellite imagery of Majuro to provide up-to-date resource maps for the identification of existing and possible alternate dredging sites. The mapping also located some wrecks and a fish population map was generated based on the interpretation of the data collected. While further interpretative work is required, at first glance the dataset seems to show patches of the lagoon to be quite barren. Full story in SOPAC News 2002(3). §

5. SOPAC Sustainable Development Strategy View

SOPAC has published a view on sustainable development in the Pacific. The work was commissioned by the Director of SOPAC, Alf Simpson, to encapsulate the thinking of the Secretariat and document the result of a year of research into how SOPAC could meaningfully contribute to the sustainable development agenda of the Pacific. It was timed to be released in the same year as the World Summit on Sustainable Development which incidentally coincided with a corporate restructuring exercise under the Secretariat's new Corporate Plan. For the Secretariat it is an attempt firstly to demystify the concept or vision, then secondly to come to an understanding of where SOPAC fitted in the full picture, then finally to re-align its new Work Programme strategies so that SOPAC work really did contribute to the vision. The view was presented to its Governing Council during its 31st Session. §

6. SOPAC News back issues

For the latest and all the back issues of SOPAC News, check our website <<http://www.sopac.org>>. To receive SOPAC NewsUpdate, write to the address below. §

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