



NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Department of Provincial & Local Level Government Affairs

P.O. Box 4970, **BOROKO**, N.C.D, PNG - **Tel:** (675) 301 1111/1053, **Fax:** (675) 325 4186 - **Email:** pngndmo@daltron.com.pg

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A/O: P.Miria

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WEWAK EARTHQUAKE SITUATION REPORT. PAPUA NEW GUINEA

1. PURPOSE

This situation report summarises the earthquake which occurred in East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea. Information on the earthquake was provided by Professor Hugh Davies and the Provincial Disaster Committee.

2. BACKGROUND

On Monday 9th September 2002 an earthquake of moment magnitude (MW) 7.4, Richter magnitude (MR.) 7.7, occurred at 4.45 am local time at an epicentre about 70km west-north-west of Wewak, at or near 3°S 143°E. The earthquake was at relatively shallow depth (30km depth reported from Port Moresby Geophysical Observatory) and was strongly felt in the Wewak area. The earthquake was of significantly greater magnitude than that which caused a devastating tsunami at Aitape in 1998. A small tsunami was generated at the time of the earthquake.

3. DAMAGES AND LOSSES

According to the disaster damage report from the Provincial Disaster Office, the total population of the affected area was approximately 4788 and about 4 365 people suffered damage to their properties.

The damages and losses reported were as follows:

- Casualties - 5 deaths
- Admission to hospitals - 300 (approx)
- Houses - 1189
- Water tanks - 480
- Schools - 250
- Churches - 3
- Health Centres - 7

- Several roads and bridges reported to have cracks or depressions
- Major cracks on the east and west of the taxiway
- Major disruption to the water supply for Wewak township and as well as the electricity.

4. RESPONSE

Response from the National Government as well as the Provincial Government has been overwhelming. Donor Agencies and NGO's both nationally and internationally also came to the aid of the people affected by the earthquake.

5. IMMEDIATE NEEDS.

Based on the findings of the site visitation, at least some people in most villages were temporarily without shelter, or had their houses that needed repairing. In many villages water supplies were also disrupted. The people needed assistance with temporary cover (tent flies), building materials, water containers and restoration of water supply reticulation systems, tanks and wells.

As per the assessment of the Provincial Disaster Committee (PDC), the total number of tents required by the province for all affected families was 873. This was estimated according to the total number of houses destroyed.

Considering the water supply, the total water volume estimated to be required by the affected population was 87,300 litres.

The breakdown of water supply required is as follows:

1. Per person (WHO Standard).
20 litres per person x 4365/day x 30 days: 2,619, 000 litres
2. Per household (local standard)
20 litres per house x 873 houses/day x 30 days: 523,800 litres.

The PDC also recommended that at least 2,000-gallon tanks would be an appropriate option, which should be in stalled in the central locations of the affected areas for the communities to use.

7. CONCLUSION.

Based on the inspection carried out on 9-11 September, the indications are that, in the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami, no new risks or hazards are threatening the population.

The number of damages and losses may increase as reports on damages are still coming in from the outer islands and remote areas of the mainland. And people who voluntarily evacuated from the coast and islands are returning and rebuilding their lives once again.

Forwarded for your information.

HENRY J. MOKONO
Director General