

Papua New Guinea Country Report 1999

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I . SETTING:

Papua New Guinea is a country of about 463,00Sq km area with a population of 4.5 million.

The country lies north of Australia and share common International Borders with Australia, Indonesia and Solomon Island.

The main Island is dominated by a rugged spinal mountain ranges rising to 4,300 meters on which, majority of the population live. Elsewhere the population is concentrated on the most fertile land. The society is extremely cultural and linguistically diverse, owing to its isolated development in steep highlands valleys and dispersal through many islands.

More than 700 languages are spoken in the country, with three (3) official languages being English, Tok Pisin and Motu, which helps to draw the country together.

The country is also economically diverse with coffee, tea, cocoa, Copra, timber, fishing, oil palm and mining farming the key expert commodities. Subistance farming is still a dominant features forming the main fabrics of living standards in rural settings.

For administrative purposes, the country is divided into 19 provinces plus the National Capital District in Port Moresby. The Provinces are divided into districts and district sub-district into local level government (LLGS).

For the purpose of Disaster Management, the country has a National Disaster Act and supporting National Disaster plan prepared in 1987. The Disaster Management system in so far as the preparedness and responses are

concerned is headed by a National Disaster Committee (NDC). NDC is responsible to the cabinet, the National Executive Council (NEC).

The NDC is composed of Secretaries of selected departments, chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs (DoLLGA). There are lower level disaster committees in Provinces and Districts.

A permanent National Disaster and Emergency Services (NDES) a headquarters organisation, constituted within the Department of Provincial & Local Level Government is responsible for the operational coordination of emergency responses including logistics and communication.

The country gained its independence from Australia in 1975.

II . DISASTER IN THE COUNTRY:

Papua New Guinea is one of the countries in the world prone to number of disaster hazards and vulnerabilities. She is also one of the countries serious struck by Natural Disasters in most recent years.

In 1994, the volcano totally destroyed the beautiful town of Rabaul in East New Britain Province. Thousands of people were relocated. A new town is now being built in Kokopo. International donor such as Japan and Australia assisted in the rebuilding of essential infrastructures such as airport, roads, hospitals etc.

In 1997/98, Papua New Guinea was seriously affected by the drought and Frost brought about by the global El-Nino Phenomenon. Again, International donors came to assist the country with Japan donating 8,00 tonnes of rice plus monetary donations.

In 1998, a Tsunami (Tidal Wave) struck the West Coast in Sandaun Province, causing the death of 2,022 people and destroyed entire villages and leaving thousands homeless.

There are four (4) main high risk volcanoes in PNG. These are located in West New Britain, East New Britain, Madang and Oro Provinces.

The country has number of potential geological hazards in the highlands and coastal zones, which can cause loss of life and great economic losses. The potential geological hazards identified are:-

- Earthquakes
- River Floods
- Landslides
- Landslides dam burst,
- Coastal Erosions
- Tsunmai and
- Submarine slope instabilities

III . NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT OFFICER (NDMO)

The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) is the new title for the Disaster Management Organisation in Papua New Guinea. Previously it was the National Disaster & Emergency Services (NDES). The changes was necessary to be consistent with the practices in the South West Pacific Region.

The core activities of the NDMO has been revised and these are to:

- Promote public awareness and education.
- Provide technical support to its sub-branches in the Provinces and District.
- Risk Management.
- Liaison and Co-ordinating role with other Government agencies and NGOs.

The National Disaster plan hand book which formed the basic blue print for managing disasters in Papua New Guinea is now being reviewed.

The NDMO has produced the draft Disaster Management Action Plans for Disaster Preparedness, Disaster response, Disaster mitigation and Disaster Recovery. Some

materials collected from other Asian Countries in forum like this (ADRC) assisted NDMO in preparing the Action Plans.

The draft Action plans has been circulated to other Government Departments, key NGO groups and Donor agencies, seeking their inputs. The Plans will then be presented to the National Disaster Committee for endorsement before it is submitted to the cabinet, National Executive Council for approval.

Once it gets cabinet approval, it becomes the National Government Disaster Management Plans.

IV. PAPUA NEW GUINEA DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROJECT:

Details of this project was highlighted in the 1998 country report. The final version of the project document was presented to the National Disaster Committee recently for endorsement. The NDC raised some concerns on the management components and at this point in time the consultant is looking at the concern raised with the view of making some amendments. It is hoped that the revised version will be presented to NDC in January 2000 for endorsement.

The Project is scheduled to commence in March 2000 which aims at:

- Institutional strengthening
- Disaster Educational and community awareness
- Disaster preparedness and
- Disaster training

V. COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Disaster Management Office in consultation with other key agencies and ADRC have programmed to undertake number of major community awareness and education in year 2000.

Some of the programs has been carried out and included the conduct of conferences and signing of agreement to facilitate the programes.

In September 1999, the PNG and Regional International Tsunami conference was held in Madang Province. The main objective of the conference were to:

- To bring together the different groups that worked on data from the Aitape Tsunami to exchange information, draw conclusion and discuss what further work needed to be done.
- To inform the PNG Authority and General public of the funding of the scientific team that carried out investigations into the cause of Aitape Tsunami.
- To inform the survivors of Aitape Tsunami the result of the scientific work and outlook for the future

Participants at the conference included the International scientists, key Government Departments representatives, NGOs and survivors. Over 100 participants attended the one week long conference.

In September 1999, PNG and ADRO signed an MOU to jointly undertake the Tsunami Awareness Project to be known as the "PNG Tsunami Awareness Raising Literature Project".

PNG is very grateful of the project and thank ADRC for its support. The objectives of the project is:-

- To provide enough knowledge for school students and resident of coastal/ Non coastal community in PNG on Tsunami Disaster Prevention and
- To provide enough knowledge for experts and leaders in PNG in order to promote future tsunami disaster prevention.

I must thank Mr. Yujiro Ogawa, Deputy Director of ADRC for travelling to PNG to sign the MOU.

In November 1999, NDMO and Geological Survey of PNG conducted a Public awareness in Lac City to disseminate the result of case study conducted in to the geology and natural hazards of Lae City and surroundings

In December 1999, a community awareness programs will be conducted in West New Britain Province on the Mt. Ulawun Volcanic hazards.

In January and February 2000, similar community awareness, programs on volcanic hazards will be carried out in Madang and Oro Provinces.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Revised NDMO organisation structure
- Copies of the coast plan studies on geology and natural hazards in Lae City
- Copy of booklet on Mt Ulawun Volcanic Cone collapse and Tsunami
- Tsunami awareness poster.

VI. LUDWICK KEMBU QPM

Director General

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Minister for Department of Provincial & Local Government Affairs

: Cohn Travertz OBE
Secretary for Department of Provincial & Local Government Affairs