

WESTERN SAMOA  
NATIONAL SUMMARY REPORT  
IDNDR

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SECTION A: PROFILE

1. Composition of National Committee (National Disaster Council: NDC)

<u>Government Departments</u>		<u>NGO's</u>
Prime Minister's Department	(2)	DSO of Western Samoa (1)
Police and Prisons Service	(1)	Red Cross Society
Treasury Department	(1)	of Western Samoa (1)
Department of Health	(1)	
Public Works Department	(1)	
Department of Posts and Telecommunication	(1)	
Department of Lands, Survey and Environment	(1)	
Department of Agriculture, Forests & Fisheries	(1)	
Ministry of Transport	(1)	
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	(1)	
 <u>Media</u>		
Department of Broadcasting	(1)	
Office of Information and Public Relations	(1)	
 <u>Public Services</u>		
Electric Power Corporation	(1)	
Meteorological Office	(1)	
Division of Internal Affairs and Village Pulenuu	(2)	
 <u>Others</u>		
Representatives of Foreign Governments as well as regional and international organisations accredited to Western Samoa.		

2. Internal Organisation of the Committee

The Prime Minister and Cabinet have overall control over disaster management. However, in the reconstituted (December 1991 during Cyclone Val) NDC, the four most senior Cabinet Ministers formally joined the NDC with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance assuming the chairmanship of the Council, and the Secretary to Government becoming the Deputy Chairman. The rest of the NDC was made up of the Heads of most of the Government Departments, members of the Diplomatic Corps and representatives of the two (2) NGOs (see list in 1). The reconstituted NDC was able to make decisions quickly and have them implemented immediately, in contrast with the cumbersome and time-wasting arrangements in place prior to Cyclone Val.

The NDC implemented its decisions through sub-committees it established and by instructing Government Departments and other agencies directly. The Committee members personally monitored the situation by frequent inspection visits throughout the country: regular written reports from Departments and other Agencies are submitted to the Committee.

### 3. Prevailing Hazards

Type	Location	Affected Population
Tropical Cyclone	All Islands	whole population
Earthquake	All Islands	whole population
Volcanic Eruption	Savaii Island	approx 25%
Drought/Bush Fires	West North regions of Large Islands	approx 25%

### 4. Recent Natural Disasters

Type	Location	Affected Population	Losses
Cyclone Ofa (February 1990)	All Islands	100%	Devastation of crops, forests, buildings and infrastructure
Cyclone Val (December 1991)	All Islands	100%	As above but even more severe following Cyclone Ofa

### 5. National Socio-Economic Conditions

* Population	:	170,000
* Gross-National Product	:	US\$129 million (1989)
* Per-Capita Income	:	US\$792.00 (1989)

### 6. Availability of Assistance to Other Countries in the Field of Natural Disaster Reduction

Assistance to other island countries would be available in the form of medical teams, relief food supplies and technical and manpower resources.

### 7. International Assistance Required for Natural Disaster Reduction

- i) Hazard/Risk mapping for tropical cyclones.
- ii) Preparation of specific and practical plans to mitigate against risks identified in (i) above.
- iii) Provision of financial and technical assistance to implement plans in (ii) above.

## SECTION B: STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

## 1. Steps towards achieving the 3 main Decade Targets

- (a) National assessments of risks from natural hazards particularly tropical cyclones and floods were made following Cyclones Ofa and Val. These assessments were comprehensive in the sense that they covered the whole country - the devastation was country-wide. The rehabilitation measures were included in the 3-year National Development Plan released in 1992, and their implementation has been included in the regular development programmes/budgets of the relevant Departments since 1990/1991.
- (b) The current rehabilitation programme contains a certain amount of mitigation features with long term implications such as the realigning of main roads (and villages) from the beach areas to higher ground, the construction of substantial waterbreakers and seawalls, and the strong enforcement of cyclone-proof standards in the construction of houses and buildings.
- (c) Western Samoa since 1992 has reliable access to global and regional weather forecasts and cyclone warning systems and also now has a reliable local radio broadcast system for warning the public regardless of the climatic conditions.

## 2. Present National Plan for Natural Disaster Reduction

The National Disaster Plan (NDP) which was adopted by Cabinet in May 1986 is the overall disaster management plan for Western Samoa. The NDP places much attention on the emergency period and the relief aspects of disaster management. This document is being reviewed at present.

- (a) 1986 onwards and subject to review and/or replacement.
- (b) & (c) Information provided under Section A1.
- (d) Recurrent and Development budget.

## 3. Legislation introduced and enacted in relation to Natural Disaster Reduction

No specific legislation, but the Lands and Environment Act 1989 with subsequent amendments, provides for the protection of the physical environment and the sustainable development of natural resources.



Implementing Agencies : Public Works Department  
Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs

\* Public Education and Information

Title of Project : Not applicable  
Status : Ongoing  
Participating Institutions: Red Cross  
Disaster Support Organisation (DSO)  
Department of Education  
Department of Health  
Village organisations  
Costs : Not known  
Sources of Funding : Red Cross  
AODRO (Australian NGO)  
Implementing Agencies : Red Cross  
DSO

## SECTION C: INTERACTIONS

## 1. Publication on IDNDR related subjects:

- (i) A manual in English and Samoan languages (with diagrams) on how to construct or strengthen houses to withstand cyclonic winds. It was a joint effort by Samoan and New Zealand Engineers with the New Zealand Government funding the publication of the manual in 1992.
- (ii) Red Cross pamphlet (1993) on preparations for cyclones, safe conduct during cyclones and what to do in cyclone emergencies.

## 2. IDNDR Meetings and Conferences held or planned

A. Regional/International

- i) Solomon Islands - May 1992
- ii) Vanuatu - August 1993
- iii) Berlin (Germany) - January 1994
- iv) Yokohama (Japan) - May 1994

B. National

- i) IDNDR Committee - September 1993
- ii) IDNDR Committee - January 1994
- iii) Review of Health Section of the NDP - March 1994

## 3. Current or Planned Partnerships and Cooperation Related to IDNDR with other countries

- i) Expansion of initiative for greater and effective cooperation between South Pacific countries on IDNDR related issues under the umbrella of the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP).
- ii) Cooperation with Fiji, Vanuatu and other South Pacific island countries on the cyclone warning system project.

## SECTION D: EVALUATION

1. Overall evaluation of national disaster mitigation programmes including, but not limited to, those initiated after IDNDR and achievements up to now.

There have been no national mitigation programmes specifically initiated as a result of IDNDR. However the rehabilitation programmes following the devastation by Cyclone Ofa (1990) and Cyclone Val (1991) contain significant mitigation measures such as the relocation of main roads and affected villages from the beach area to higher ground, the construction of substantial water breakers and seawalls, and the strong enforcement of cyclone-proof construction standards.

The inclusion in the regular National Development Plan (1993-1995) of disaster management strategies and projects, and the decisive strengthening of the decision-making group in the National Disaster Council at the highest level, are clear indications of the growing awareness and acceptance by the Prime Minister and Cabinet of the importance of disaster management in the overall development of the nation.

2. Review of the IDNDR

Until the IDNDR Vanuatu meeting in August 1993, the IDNDR meant little to Western Samoa and to the South Pacific as a region. Up to that time, the Australian IDNDR Committee has tried singlehandedly to promote IDNDR within our region, but it was itself operating within highly restricted parameters.

At the same time, the IDNDR initiative appeared to have crippled itself with an approach which focussed on the technical level of officials and operations on one hand, and on the other, offering no practical assistance or resources to help along the IDNDR inspired programmes in the individual countries and regions. There was indeed uncertainty, as we viewed it, as to the commitment of the United Nations to the IDNDR initiative.

Western Samoa fully supports the IDNDR initiative and is wholly committed to its central objective of reducing the impact of natural disasters on our human and physical environment. The status of IDNDR should be upgraded within the UN system and amongst the international community, focussing on political leaders and decision-makers, and the IDNDR initiative should be given practical support and resources commensurate with the importance of disaster management to people and Governments throughout the world.