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Climate Change Cook Islands

Office of the Prime Minister

Platform Meeting- 15th March



Stakeholders at the Platform meeting 15 March (Photo by Celine Dyer)

The first climate change and disaster risk platform meeting of the year brought together community representatives, individuals and stakeholders to hear on updates and presentations about climate and disaster management activities in the country. The loss & damage assessment being carried out by Emergency Management Cook Islands (EMCI) and the Cook Islands National Council of Women (CINCW) was a first in the Cook Islands. Vaine Wichman provided an update on the CINCW project with the EU USP GCCA where the Loss & Damage toolkit was trialled in Aitutaki. According to Vaine, the assessment would identify the level of loss and damage at the community level due to slow onset and sudden onset events (hazards) that cause disasters to affect agriculture, economic activities, and the environment among others. Loss in this sense means, the loss, on top of all efforts to adapt and cope.

The EMCI team has completed the assessment on the islands of Mangaia and Mauke and are completing the island of Aitutaki. The kit is a useful tool in preparing for disasters, speed up the recovery process whilst also providing valuable baseline data for loss & damage.



Causeway on Pukapuka knocked about by many cyclones with the final blow from cyclone Ula, reducing it to rubble Feb 2016 (Photo by Celine Dyer)

The Cook Islands is well on track with its preparation of the Third National Communication (TNC) according to Pat Tuara-Demmke, the National Communications Coordinator. In spite of the late start, the project is at the stage of identifying and setting up the technical working groups who will put together the different components of the report. A one day inception workshop is planned for the month of May which will see a weeklong workshop coinciding with other climate change and disaster management work areas. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) who is funding the project of USA\$480k over 3 years, confirmed they will send a representative to attend the workshop.



Pat Tuara updating on the TNC 15 March (Photo by Celine Dyer)

Ann Herman was contracted under the SRIC CC programme funded by the Adaptation Fund to review and put together the second Joint National Action Plan for Disaster Risk & Climate Adaptation for the Cook Islands (JNAP). According to Anne, two new

sections were added into the next JNAP, which is the Pa Enua (outer islands) and a Strategic Planning matrix. It was noted that although gender was mainstreamed in the previous JNAP, however, the implementation was lacking or inadequate.

Although the Cook Islands did not receive accreditation to NIE status, but according to Vanessa Jenner, the exercise has substantially strengthened and added value to the national systems. Under the Adaptation Fund, the Cook Islands is requesting for “streamlined” accreditation for smaller funds up to \$1m per proposal. This is another step in the right direction towards full accreditation.



Vanessa Jenner giving an update on the Adaptation Fund (Photo by Celine Dyer)

The Climate Change office has achieved a milestone after the Cook Islands received the first tranche of readiness support from the Green Climate Fund (GCF). According to Director, Ana Tiraa, the Cook Islands experience going through the NIE process has contributed to putting the readiness proposal to GCF. The Cook Islands received the first tranche of USD\$70k with the rest on completion of the project. Currently there are 7 agencies in the region accredited to receive GCF funding. Hopefully, the Cook Islands will be able to achieve this status in a year or so.

The SRIC team provided updates from the different activities under implementation in the Pa Enua. The Northern water project in partnership with GIZ is awaiting to receive the first tranche of funds from GIZ in order to employ a manager to manage the project. GIZ contribution will cover the islands of Manihiki and Rakahanga. The islands of Pukapuka, Nassau and Penryhn will be funded by SRIC. The water project is to repair existing community water tanks on these

islands to increase water storage capacity and to also conduct water management awareness.

The focal point of Manihiki John McLeod reported that the two villages on Manihiki will each receive a hydroponic. The cold press coconut oil project for Manihiki is undergoing final stages of planning.



John McLeod giving an update on the Manihiki projects (Photo by Celine Dyer)

According to Lucky Topetai from Pukapuka, the rest of the materials for the Pukapuka student's project have arrived from New Zealand and awaiting shipment on the next boat. The hydroponic project for Pukapuka is currently undergoing the three quote process which he hope will be completed before the next boat leaves for the island.

Melina Tuiravakai the Focal Point for Palmerston is putting a proposal for a hydroponics and a worm farm for the school on Palmerston island. This is besides the mooring project put together by the students last year.

Main challenges faced by the focal points is the uncertainty of the shipping services to the Pa Enu which causes delays in completing project



SRIC tag team updating the platform (Photo by Ana Tiraa)

The Southern Group Island schools workshop for years 9 and 10 students will be held from the 22nd – 29th April coinciding with the school holidays. This is in partnership with the Ridge to Reef (R2R) and a follow up from the Northern students workshop held last year. The workshop aims to strengthen the research skills of students, enhancing understanding on climate change, biodiversity and to identify potential projects resonating from areas of concern on their respective islands. Concept note ideas must address the climate change or R2R criteria to attract full funding for implementation from the two programmes.

Project manager Maria Tuoro updated on the Ridge to Reef. The programme has just over USD\$4m for projects targeting protected areas (Raui), strengthening traditional customs and management, biodiversity, marine and others. R2R invites partnering with other agencies for future projects and welcomes proposals from NGOs.

According to Marae Moana manager Jacqui Evans the Marae Moana policy has been finalised and ready to be submitted to Cabinet for endorsement. The policy under went wide consultations throughout the islands with the exception of Pukapuka and Nassau, due to transportation problems.

A climate change and disaster risk workshop is planned for the week of the 23-27 May. Rather than spreading workshops throughout the year, the workshop will be held in one week coinciding with the new mayor's orientation. One day is allocated to the TNC, 2 days for the JNAP, a day each for the GCF with SRIC and the mayors. More information will be disseminated once details are confirmed.



Preparing the land to erect fencing for the Uwi Kuru project on Nassau island 14 March (Photo by Poila Poila)

Nassau Uwi Kuru Project

Report and photos provided by the school principal Poila Poila shows the work carried out in Nassau on the school's Uwi Kuru project.



Excavator clearing the area around the taro patch 15 March (Photo by Poila Poila)

According to Poila there is much excitement on the island as the people look forward to start planting the Uwi Kuru again which has been left idle for a while. However, there is a setback when it was discovered the grease gun is broken and there is no grease on the island to lubricate the loader. Nassau is one of the most isolated islands, this incident will probably stall and delay the project for a few months until such time the boat arrives with the replacements.

Cook Islands Shines a Light on Earth Hour by Melina Tuiravakai

The Cook Islands community will celebrate Earth Hour on Saturday 19th March from 8:30pm to 9:30pm.

Climate Change Cook Islands, National Environment Cook Islands, Te Aponga Uira, Te Ipukarea Society, Marae Moana and Bank of the South Pacific are encouraging everyone to be a part of making climate change history and celebrate Earth Hour this year with millions of people around the world.

Along with other partners, Te Aponga Uira has confirmed its involvement in this Saturday's Earth Hour and will monitor the electricity usage by each village between the 8:30pm and 9:30pm.

Ana Tiraa, Director of Climate Change said "We encourage individuals and businesses to make a resolution to turn off their lights for just one hour."

The community is encouraged to conserve electricity by switching off non-essential lights and electronic appliances during the hour, through the Global Shine a Light on Climate Action Campaign.

Te Ipukarea Society believes every hour is earth hour and hopes that today everyone turns off the non-essential lights and electronic appliances for just one hour.

“As the world stands at a climate crossroads, it is powerful yet humbling to think that our actions today will decide what tomorrow will look like for generations to come,” continued Tiraa.

Climate action starts with individuals and today is our time to #ChangeClimateChange. Raise your voice for the planet and show that you care.

Each year the Cook Islands celebrates Earth Hour. Join the Global challenge and turn off the non-essential lights and electronic appliances for just one hour today.

Post your photos on Climate Change Cook Islands Facebook page of how you celebrated Earth Hour, <https://www.facebook.com/sriccookislands/?ref=bookmark>



Champions of Earth Hour Day 18 March (Photo by Melina Tuiravakai)



William Tuivaga at Manea Nui Plantation in Arorangi 22 March (Photo by Celine Dyer)

SRIC CC team visit Manea Nui Plantation

Thanks to Mel and her network we were able to visit the Manea Nui Plantation in Arorangi. Since SRIC has already embarked on agriculture projects in the Pa Enua, it was an eye opener to see the potentials could be harnessed by using expertise, experience and new knowledge to develop agriculture on limited space into a viable business venture.

Water Purification for Mitiaro



Assembling the water purification system in Mitiaro 21 March (Photo by Ben Parakoti)

SRIC CC delivered and assembled much needed water purification systems on Mitiaro this week. SRIC engineer Ben Parakoti spend a week in Mitiaro following through on requests from the island for water purification units. Ben supervised and worked with the admin workers on Mitiaro to assemble the units. The units were strategically placed around the island in places such as the school, hospital and community halls.

SRIC CC and Health achieve another milestone



Public health officer assembling equipment 23 March (Photo by Melina Tuiravakai)

Thursday 23rd saw the handover ceremony at the Public Health premises between the SRIC programme and the Ministry of Health. The SRIC programme funded the public health vector borne project to the tune of NZ\$230k which enabled the ministry to conduct staff training programs and purchase much needed new spray equipment and a tv screen at the arrivals area of the airport. Minister of Health the Hon. Nandi Glassie was on hand to receive the new equipment from the SRIC programme represented by Celine Dyer and Melina Tuiravakai. According to project manager Charlie Ave, the new equipment includes personal protection gear, natural pesticides and environmentally friendly mister sprays that runs on battery. The new mister spray eliminates the use of fossil fuel and runs entirely on battery that lasts for 6 hours. The two agencies are proud of the partnership and looking forward to continuing the relationship.



Battery operated mister sprays 23 March (Photo by Melina Tuiravakai)



Health Minister Hon. Nandi Glassie receiving the mister spray from Celine Dyer (Photo by Melina Tuiravakai)

Kura – Kuriri

We welcome our newest addition to our team, Melina Tuiravakai. Melina assumes the role of SRIC Focal Point for Palmerston Island. *Turou kia Melina!*



Till next time – Kia Manuia!