Operational Context

The Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) are among the most hazard-prone regions in the world, with 8 out of the top 20 nations with the highest average disaster losses being in the Pacific. In 2023, the Pacific Region continues to experience a series of significant natural hazards, including rapid-onset events such as the twin cyclones in Vanuatu. Despite the reopening of borders after the prolonged COVID–19 lockdown, the PICTs are reeling from the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic. The situation is further exacerbated by the impacts of the global food crisis, which pose imminent threats to food security and nutrition across PICTs.

Analysis indicates the PICTs are not on track to reach any of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030, including SDG 2 on Zero Hunger. This is in part driven by growing inequality, including gender inequality and public services that are insufficient to address poverty and improve education and health outcomes, against the backdrop of the climate crisis with increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events.

In July 2023, WFP Pacific Multi-Country Office will commence a new Multi-Country Strategic Plan (MCSP) 2023-2027, which is aligned with the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023-2027) and its related two-year country implementation plans. WFP will focus on its enabling agenda through strengthening the capacities of regional and national stakeholders from 14 PICTs for emergency preparedness and response in areas of logistics, emergency telecommunications and anticipatory action, as well as inclusive and accessible shock-responsive social protection systems that focus on those most at risk of being left behind. WFP continues to ramp up its efforts in supporting PICT governments in addressing the significant data gaps in food security and nutrition, which is reflected as a central theme of its new MCSP.

Highlights

WFP Pacific commemorated 60 years of WFP’s global operations in a high-level event attended by key government counterparts, Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP) agencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners, United Nations representatives and other relevant partners.

The WFP-led Emergency Telecommunications Cluster finalized the ICT Capacity Assessment in Tonga. In addition, the WFP-led Pacific Logistics Cluster has published logistics maps for Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau. WFP also completed the first round of remote data collection on food security indicators in Fiji and Tonga.

Operational Updates

Food Security

- WFP conducted a mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) enumerator training with Digicel Vanuatu from 23 to 26 May. The training sought to improve the quality of data collected by Digicel Vanuatu on food security indicators to enable better data-driven decision making. WFP also met with Digicel Pacific and discussed the expansion of the mVAM tool into Solomon Islands and Tuvalu.

- WFP met with the Vanuatu Ministry of Agriculture following the twin cyclones (Judy and Kevin) response to continue providing technical assistance with the WFP-designed non-food item (NFI) distribution tracking dashboard. Training needs for data collection, data visualization and the 72-hour post-cyclone response were also discussed.

- WFP completed the first round of mVAM data collection on food security indicators for Fiji and Tonga. Forty (40) percent of households in Fiji recorded reducing health expenses as a negative coping strategy. Meanwhile, 13 percent of households in Tonga reported selling household assets as a negative coping strategy.

- WFP has been requested by the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture to support with the monitoring of food security situation for the Ministry’s five-year Strategic Development Plan (2024-2028). WFP will provide technical support in the design of the questionnaire for a baseline face-to-face survey and to conduct training on Food Consumption Score and Nutritional Analysis (FCS-N) as an additional food security indicator.

- WFP has renewed its partnership with the University of the South Pacific to continue capacity strengthening on market assessments and the food security monitoring system through WFP’s vulnerability analysis and mapping tool.

Anticipatory Action

- WFP participated in inter-agency coordination meetings centred on the development and implementation of a Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) funded Anticipatory Action pilot in Fiji. The meetings looked at piloting cash distribution for selected Department of Social Welfare beneficiaries.
Strategic Result 1: Countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDGs (SDG target 17.9)

Strategic Outcome 1: Vulnerable people in the Pacific Island countries and territories receive appropriate, coordinated, timely and uninterrupted assistance to address food security and nutrition challenges following disasters

Strategic Outcome 2: Humanitarian Development partners in the Pacific have access to reliable services during crisis

Activities:
• Through the logistics cluster, provide national disaster management offices and other relevant national and regional institutions and partners with support for improving emergency logistics coordination and supply chain management.
• Through the emergency telecommunications cluster, provide national disaster management offices and other relevant national and regional institutions and partners with support for improving emergency communications infrastructure and coordination mechanisms.
• Through the food security cluster, support national disaster management offices and other relevant national and regional institutions and partners with support for improving emergency food security coordination and supply chain management.
• Through the food security cluster, support national disaster management offices and other relevant national and regional institutions and partners with support for improving emergency communications infrastructure and coordination mechanisms.

Logistics
• The WFP-led Pacific Logistics Cluster recently published general logistics maps for Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau. The maps are instrumental for NDMOs and other humanitarian partners to have a detailed picture of a country’s logistic assets and locations.
• WFP supported the Fiji NDMO in developing the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the National Logistics Cluster. The TOR was developed and submitted to the Fiji NDMO for review and finalisation.
• The Logistics Cluster completed the update of the TOR for review of the Logistics Capacity Assessment (LCA) for Tonga and Vanuatu, which were last updated in 2016 and 2017, respectively. LCAs are used to establish an up-to-date shared understanding of national and regional disaster readiness. Updates on LCAs can be found in this repository.
• WFP supported the review of the training manual and planning for the Fiji National Emergency Response Team (NERT) Induction Training. The Induction Training is scheduled for 2-9 July 2023.

Donors

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Photo caption: On his first visit to the Pacific, WFP Asia Pacific Regional Director – John Aylieff met with the US Ambassador – H.E. Marie Damour to thank the US and reaffirm WFP’s commitment to support the Pacific on crisis response, climate action, data-driven decision making and social protection.