

Proposal for Better Disaster Risk Management in my Country

Climate change and disaster risk management are major issues in the country of Solomon Islands. The Solomon Islands is one of the developing countries in the Pacific that experience natural disasters frequently such as flooding, cyclones, tsunamis, drought, dengue fever, and so forth. There are many challenges and problems that the Solomon Islands face in regards to climate change and disaster risk management. Firstly, the Solomon Islands lack preparation when a natural disaster strikes. People are unaware of when a natural disaster will strike. Responsible authorities lack advanced technology to give early warning for people to prepare in advance. Today, there are still many people that have less knowledge of what a natural disaster can do, how it will impact their lives, destroy properties, and impact the livelihood of people. “Communities, families, and individuals should know what to do in the event of a fire and where to seek shelter during a powerful storm. They should be ready to evacuate their homes and take refuge in public shelters and know how to care for their basic medical needs” (Deschutes County Sheriff’s Office Oregon, 2021).

Secondly, communication is another challenge. During a cyclone, means of communication can be broken or damaged e.g. electrical lines, network problems, phones, and broadcast systems may fail, system overload, and incompatibility between communication systems used by different agencies. When there is not enough communication, it is difficult to reach people in remote areas, places that are most affected, and call for emergencies and help to arrive.

Thirdly, transportation can be a challenge. In coastal areas in the province, boats and ships are accessible transportation. However, they can be damaged and destroyed by the tsunami, flash floods, and cyclones. During floods, vehicles cannot cross flooded bridges and rivers. This can be difficult to transport people to safety in time because of this challenge.

Other challenges include hazardous waste, property damage, structural damage to buildings, loss of utilities like electricity and water, debris cleanup and waste management solutions, and infrastructure-related problems such as closed roads and communication losses.

During floods and cyclones, problems and challenges that may occur include: floodwaters, septic systems, and wells contaminated with hazardous materials and/or raw sewage; water- and mold-related property and structural damage; taking inventory of materials and documents that are

salvageable, coordinating with professionals to start the recovery process; waste management in regards to getting rid of disaster debris, eliminating excess water and throwing away porous materials affected by water and mold; road closures; and supply chain problems such as delayed deliveries.

And since Solomon Islanders practice subsistence agriculture, food resources will be destroyed by floods and cyclones. Followed by a tsunami, the quake increases saline levels of the water resources in the affected areas along the coast. Those that depend on water and sea resources are affected as well since waters are contaminated with debris. Industries that help the economy of the country like fishing, logging, and mining industries are also affected. Factories, shops, infrastructure, and the livelihood of people are destroyed.

Lastly, delay of funds is also a challenge. The Solomon Islands government had set budget allocation for programs, also known as a warrant, at the beginning of the year's calendar. This is to provide government agencies with the flexibility to manage those funds and see if it fits throughout the year. As long as it is within the budget purchase can be made. However, this procedure can create difficulty with post-disaster finance, that is if a disaster occurs toward the end of the year. On the other hand, it can create risks for any events that may occur at the start of the year and exhaust the entire year's worth of funds. "This structure recognizes the need for the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MoFT) to be part of the decision-making process for disaster response purchases. MoFT staff, however, remain uncertain of their role in post-disaster finance; in the past, they have not adhered to the correct bid waiver process, which created unnecessary delays in purchasing needed goods" (PCRAFI, 2015, p. 10). Even though "the Solomon Islands has developed many policies to facilitate timely mobilization and execution of post-disaster funds for disaster response, these policies are little known outside the National Disaster Council (NDC). This situation has led to delays in the purchase and distribution of relief goods and has had a significant impact on both the budget for the NDC and the national contingency warrant (contingency budget)" (PCRAFI, 2015, p. 10).

Better disaster risk management (Solution)

There are varieties of Disaster Risk Financing and Insurance (DRFI) processes and procedures that the Solomon Islands has developed. Many strategies are implemented, ways, and solutions to overcome the challenges of natural disasters. However, these need to be strengthened and reconsidered since many people are still not aware of these natural disasters and their impacts. Below are numbers of strategies for better risk management:

Education and knowledge development disaster risk management. Awareness talks about the effects and impacts of natural disasters. This can be done formally and informally. Formally, is through an education system where it is taught to children from a syllabus, and informally can be done in villages through community talks or gatherings. By providing information about the risk of natural disasters, it can aware people in local communities to be advance in preparation for such crises.

Community-based disaster risk management is to teach and train people in rural communities on how to do first aids during the period of a disaster. It promotes the involvement of potentially affected communities in disaster risk management at the local level. This includes assessments of hazards in the community, vulnerabilities and capacities, and their involvement in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of local action for disaster risk reduction.

Preparedness disaster risk management. These are activities and responsibilities of the governments, professional response and recovery organizations, communities, and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to, and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent, or current hazard events or conditions. Such activities and responsibilities include installation of early warning systems; identifying evacuation routes, this is to aid communities with evacuation sites so that can evacuate to safety before a disaster can strike; and preparing emergency supplies. The government need plans on how to deliver relief goods in circumstances where bridges are damaged and vehicle cannot cross and too risky for boats during floods or tsunamis. By this, need standby helicopters for situations like these.

Mitigation/reduction disaster risk management is activities to lessen or limit the adverse impacts of hazards and related disasters. Since the Solomon Islands is more vulnerable to flooding, construction of flood defense or flood proofing need to be implemented to avoid severe damage

to properties, planting more trees to stabilize slopes, implementing strict land use, and building construction codes. Designing risk reduction measures such as storm surge protection.

Disaster risk financing and insurance management. This is for governments to provide, set aside, and reserve funds for immediate disaster response so that it would not spoil the budget for any upcoming activities in the future. When a disaster strikes, they know where to hold and get money to assist affected zones. And also, so that it would avoid delay of funds or wait upon approval.

Resilient reconstruction disaster risk management. This risk assessment is needed not just for aftermath events, but also to predict disasters before it strikes. Like it can provide initial and rapid estimates of human, physical, and economic loss so that responsible authorities can work towards the data and send warnings in advance.

Analysis

With the proposed solution, it is believed that Solomon Islands will improve a lot when it comes to disaster risk management. People will be aware of the impacts of natural disasters, will prepare ahead, and responsible authorities will give out warnings early so that people will be safe and secure during a natural disaster strike. Education will help people today and future generations to be educated about these hazards, aware of its impacts, and how to survive it. Community awareness and preparation is also important because it will help people in urban areas to be aware and prepare as well since that will lack early information from responsible authorities about natural disasters. Mitigation is important to lessen the damage that a natural disaster can cause, so it is important to uphold such solution. Lastly, finance budget and resilient can help Solomon Islands have enough money to help during a disaster strike and also give warnings in advance.