



# PACIFIC DISABILITY FORUM

## TC HAROLD DISABILITY SITUATION

### REPORT

**Situation Report 1 (7 April to 28 April 2020)**

**Wednesday 29 April 2020**

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#### 1.0. Summary

- 2 Organisation of Persons with disabilities (OPD) offices were damaged by the cyclone
- Persons with disabilities are still in need of clean drinking water as water source may be contaminated in Vanuatu
- Persons with psychosocial disabilities on the streets may be left out of COVID-19 testing and awareness
- There is a lack of targeted disability response including the lack of disability disaggregated data, disability awareness and inclusion of disability specific needs in response pack.
- Persons with disabilities need awareness on protecting themselves from COVID-19 and the outbreak of leptospirosis, dengue and other TC Harold related outbreak.
- Persons with disabilities in Kadavu received psychosocial first aid and counselling from Empower Pacific and FCOSS conducted awareness on COVID-19 and inclusion.
- Disability EOC was activated for TC Harold

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*'We have members with psychosocial disabilities and I am afraid that if there are no fast responses to lighting, there might be abuses occurs at night.'*

*Aureline Konkon, VDPA Staff, Vanuatu*

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## 2.0. Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPD)

### 2.1. Office Operation

#### **i. Vanuatu Disability Promotion Advocacy Association (VDPA)**

- There were some leakages and damages to parts of the building that the office is part of.
- Office equipment, computers, cabinet, and stationaries are safe and not damaged.
- The staff are back in the office with no power

#### **ii. Fiji Disabled People's Federation**

- There were no damages to the office building
- All staff are working from the office with scheduled arrangements working on alternate days
- All office equipment, computers, furniture and office supplies are safe
- Fiji OPD's is also affected by COVID-19 as Government grants to organisation for persons with disabilities still to be received for the third and fourth quarter of the financial year. FDPF and its affiliated OPDs who are accessing these grants are uncertain whether the support will be there next financial year. Grants covers mostly human resources, project activities among other costs.

#### **iii. Psychiatric Survivors Association (PSA)**

- There were no damages to the office building
- All office equipment, computers, furniture and office supplies are safe
- All staff are working from the office

#### **iv. People with Disabilities Solomon Islands**

- The office is open with no damages
  - All office equipment, computers, furniture and office supplies are safe
  - All staff are working from the office
- v. **Tonga National Visual Impairment Association (TNVIA)**
- The TNVIA Office's front porch has been damaged by the cyclone, however, the office remains in full operation.
  - No damages were done to the office equipment.
  - Office operations are in need of support and if there are any funds that they can write to for this.
- vi. **Naunau 'o e 'Alamaite Tonga Association Inc (NATA)**
- The NATA Office is still open and in full operation.
  - Office equipment were not damaged and are still intact.
  - They are well prepared and there currently are no reported cases of COVID-19 yet in Tonga.

## 2.2. OPD Staff

- i. **Vanuatu Disability Promotion Advocacy Association (VDPA)**
- Out of the five staff in the office, three had the roofs to their homes completely damaged and two other staffs had the roofs to their homes leaking.
  - All five staff plantations were damaged as crops were completely destroyed.
  - There was no injury or death reported from DPO staff.
  - Immediately after the cyclone the staffs were rebuilding their homes and recovering what is left of TC Harold.
- ii. **Fiji Disabled People's Federation**
- As a result of the reduction or non-transfer of grants OPD staff who have been paid through the Government's NGO grants have not been paid, which might result in some losing their jobs.
  - While majority of the staff are safe with no damages to their homes or properties, a few together with branch leaders who live in affected areas were affected by the cyclone.

- Roof and walls of some staff and some branch leaders' homes were blown away;
- household items were damaged;
- Loss of family's livelihood source;
- farms and farming equipment were destroyed;
- For those that were not directly impacted by the cyclone they were impacted psychologically being concerned about their families in affected areas.
- Some staff are mobilizing family members outside of the affected areas to support family members in affected areas to rebuild and recover property and livelihood losses
- Staff are replanting farms and seeking new seedlings

**iii. Psychiatric Survivors Association (PSA)**

- Few staff experienced anxiety and panic attacks
- One staff member was not able to attend work due to debris blocking the road and flooding in the area they live in.
- PSA is supporting staff to cope with the effect of the cyclone through peer to peer support.
- Encouraging and ensuring a health working environment during this time of emergencies as coming to work is a coping mechanism for staff.
- COVID19 has affected the wages of the three staff members of PSA

**iv. People with Disabilities Solomon Islands**

- During TC Harold, staffs are being affected due to very strong wind and heavy rain, which had caused disruption to movements, transport, livelihood such as gardens have been away

**v. Tonga National Visual Impairment Association (TNVIA)**

- All Staff are fine and safe, however, only one Staff's entire house was damaged.
- At the moment, only Luck and Tina are still working whilst, Hola is in Va'vau.

**vi. Naunau 'o e 'Alamaite Tonga Association Inc (NATA)**

- All Staff of the NATA Office are safe and there were no damages to their homes, neither were their families affected.

- **OPD Response**

**i. Vanuatu Disability Promotion Advocacy Association (VDPA)**

- VDPA and VSPD volunteers are currently conducting disability inclusion assessment in Luganville constituency. This is to ensure that VDPA and its partners have accurate disaggregated data for people with disabilities to ensure distribution of relief supplies are fair, and this will help VDPA to reach out to all its members. VDPA in partnership with Vanuatu Society for people with disabilities, Medical Santo, National Disability Desk under the Ministry of Justice and community services are co-implementing this project with funding support from the Vanuatu Skills Partnership for funding this project.
- VDPA as the lead organisation, organised the first disability sub-cluster meeting attended by VSDP, VSP, ACOM and Medical Santo to assess what resources are in place and how they can mobilise and organise themselves to use the resources and efforts to support recovery for persons with disabilities.
- VDPA are involved in relief distribution as well as identifying persons with disabilities. A major part of this work is the awareness raising before they assess and distribute supplies.
- VDPA received a 20-foot container from FRIENDS to store donations for persons with disabilities.
- VDPA has developed an assessment form that partners could use to identify persons with disabilities with a lot of difficulties and high support needs.
- VDPA staff are mobilised to respond to partner's needs and provide technical advice on disability inclusion.
- VDPA staff joined various assessment teams including the Gender and Protection cluster as well as the Department of Women assessment teams.
- VDPA will need support in the coming months to reach their members/affiliates in the cyclone hit areas and support their recovery as well.

**ii. Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation**

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) were purchased and distributed to staff, affiliates and members.
- FDPF provided recharge cards top up to its staff and branch members during the lockdown and staff were told to work from home.

- FDPF in partnership with the Lami District Council of Social Services donated essential food items and toiletries to persons with disabilities in the greater Lami areas and conducted COVID-19 outreach.
- FDPF kept close contacts with its Branch Leaders and staff providing constant messaging on preparedness for TC Harold.
- Members from Naitasiri, Levuka, Rabi, and Rewa kept in constant communications and updating staff at the FDPF Headquarters.
- In terms of Health Text Messaging, FDPF worked with UNICEF in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Office by providing contact lists of DPO members and affiliates to be included in the RapidPro Text Messaging Platform.
- Supporting partners and stakeholders through provision of technical advice and reviewing of COVID-19 messaging to be disability inclusive.
- Constantly sharing of government advisories on COVID-19 and TC Harold on FDPF Facebook page.
- Virtual Scoping for members impacted by TC Harold
- FDPF Staff and branch leaders are talking with their community to build back better together.
- FDPF is facilitating referral for staff and branch leaders to access humanitarian service and contacting service providers and responders.
- FDPF is monitoring affected staff and branches on updates and progress of recovering from the cyclone
- FDPF is engaged in various cluster activities in particular the Safety and Protection Cluster to support the TC Harold and COVID-19 response to be disability inclusive.

**iii. Psychiatric Survivors Association (PSA)**

- Facilitate referral for staff to other service providers and responders
- Provide psychosocial support to all staff and volunteers
- Keep close contact with staff on updates and progress of recovering from the cyclone

**iv. TNVIA Tonga National Visual Impairment Association (TNVIA)**

- There was distribution of some food and sanitizers, soap before TC Harold.
- Cluster has conducted an assessment and TNVIA are working with some partners like Caritas, Red Cross, TFCS other NGO and DPO in response to TC Harold.

## 3.0. Impacts on Persons with Disabilities

### 3.1. Situation

#### **i. Vanuatu**

- While assessment are being conducted in Santo, other effected areas need to be assessed as well. Currently, there are no funding to support this work.
- 30 persons with disabilities were identified in the assessment conducted in Santo with the Ministry of Women assessment team.
- Most persons with disabilities homes were destroyed with roofs blown, bush kitchen, outside toilet and bathroom were completely destroyed.
- Food ration is running out and most persons with disabilities have food ration to last them for up to 1 week.
- Electricity is out in Luganville, only the hospital and water pump have the electricity back on.
- Persons with disabilities whose assistive devices were damaged, or need replacement they were referred to the Vanuatu Society for Persons with Disabilities (VSPD) and the Northern Provincial Hospital

#### **ii. Fiji**

- Persons with disabilities were affected by heavy rainfall, Flooding, Flash Flooding, Sea flooding during high tides and storm surges up to 2 meters, Landslide and very strong wind.
- Persons with psychosocial disabilities who live on the streets of Suva are not aware of how the Virus can be contracted and for two weeks of visiting them they were not screened.
- Rough Seas delays distribution of humanitarian aid to people in some of the islands.
- There was urgent request from the Central Division for counselling and psycho-social assistance for families whose houses were completely destroyed.
- There were water cuts, root crops damages, communication cut off and transportation routes blocked by fallen trees and power lines
- Houses were damaged and completely destroyed with people in the Red Zone recommended to receive 4 months' food rations with vegetable and kumala seedlings while those in partially red zone recommended to receive 2 months' food rations with vegetable and kumala seedlings.
- Bus fare concession has been reduced from \$40 to \$20.

### iii. Solomon Islands

- Persons with disabilities who live along coastlines were affected as sea flooding destroyed homes resulting in loss of properties and household items
- Deaf school at San Isidoro was partly damaged during TC Harold. Few houses including student's carpentry workshop was damaged.

## 3.2. Needs

### i. Vanuatu

- **Basic Needs** – Food, water and shelter
- **Women and Girls with disabilities** – Dignity packs including sanitary pads and torch lights for safety and protection
- **Adult diapers** – due to inaccessibility of their homes with their toilets and bathrooms destroyed
- **Assistive Devices** – replacement/repair of assistive devices. These devices include wheelchairs, crutches and walkers

### ii. Fiji

- **Basic Needs** – Food, Water, Shelter, Clothes.
- **Health** - Accessible information, Personal Protective Equipment (in particular masks and gloves), Health Care, Psychosocial Support, Medical supplies including Psyche Medication, Diapers, Catheters and Urine bags
- **Preparedness** - Disaster emergency kit, Accessible information,
- **Food Security and Livelihood** – Cash Transfers, Farming Tools, Fishing Tools, Seedlings,
- **WASH** – Dignity Hygiene Kits, Accessible Bathroom and Toilet Facilities  
Accessible information

### iii. Solomon Islands

- **Basic Need** – Food, Water, Shelter, Clothes
- **Health** - Health Care, Accessible information, Personal Protective Equipment (in particular masks and gloves), Medical Supplies (e.g. diapers, catheters and urine bags)
- **Food Security and Livelihood** – Cash Transfers
- **WASH** - Dignity Hygiene Kits, Accessible Bathroom and Toilet Facilities

- *Assistive Devices* – Need repair and replacement including wheelchairs, crutches and walkers

**iv. Tonga**

- **Health** - Need of support and resources for gloves, masks, sanitizers, etc.

3.3. Barriers

**i. Vanuatu**

- *Inaccessibility of distribution points* – Persons with disabilities are not able to reach the distribution points, hence, supplies are dropped off to their homes or a relative picked it up from the distribution points. DPOs is following up with persons with disabilities to ensure that they receive their supplies.

**ii. Fiji**

- *Location*
  - Location of humanitarian services is hard to reach due to no transportation;
  - WASH facilities are too far from homes of persons with disabilities
  - Sexual Reproductive Health Rights services are too far to reach and hard to be part off
  - Location of distribution points are too narrow and it's hard to enter and circulate around it
  - Cannot access GBV services because everyone is together
- *Information and Communication*
  - There are very little or no information received about the time and location of the different services.
  - Some persons with disabilities cannot communicate with those distributing the humanitarian aid
  - There is a need to ensure that all news and updates on TC Harold to have sign language interpretation.
- *Availability*
  - Services on gender based violence are not available
  - Aids distributed does not include assistive devices, medical supplies and other disability specific needs
- *Support Services*
  - There is lack of support provided to head of household with disabilities to access the services.
  - There is a lack of support provided to persons with disabilities to participate.

- ***Safety and Protection***

- Women with disabilities may not feel safe to be alone at the locations of some of these services
- Unpredicted moods can occur suddenly to people with psychosocial disabilities due to panic, fear, anger and side effects of medication or illness

**iii. Solomon Islands**

- ***Location***

- The location is hard to reach due to no transportation
- WASH facilities are too far from homes of persons with disabilities

- ***Safety and Protection***

- Women with disabilities do not feel safe to be alone at the locations of these services

- ***Availability***

- Aids distributed does not include assistive devices, medical supplies and other disability specific needs

- ***Information and Communication***

- Persons with disabilities cannot communicate with those distributing the humanitarian aid
- There are very little or no information received about the time and location of these services

- ***Support Services***

- There is a lack of support provided to head of household with disabilities to access the services
- There is a lack of support provided to persons with disabilities to access the services.

**iv. Tonga**

- Due to Tonga's lockdown in response to COVID-19, there challenges some persons with disabilities encountered as some panicked thinking of their safety during the COVID-19 and TC Harold.

**3.4. Support Services**

**i. Vanuatu**

- Persons with disabilities are more at risk without their support service. This includes there carers or family members that will support them receive humanitarian aid, communication support persons that will act as an interpreter between the person with disability and humanitarian responders

**ii. Fiji**

- Circle of support no longer available
- Personal assistance busy with other tasks
- Sign language interpreters' availability
- Carers are tired and busy with other tasks

**iii. Solomon Islands**

- Circle of support no longer available
- Less support from family members and caregivers

#### 4.0. Disability Inclusion Messages to Partners and Stakeholders

1. Work with organisations of persons with disabilities during response and early recovery.
2. Ensure collection of disability disaggregated data through the use of the Washington Group of Questions as a minimum standard for collecting these data.
3. Recognise the needs of persons with disabilities and remove barriers that is limiting them from accessing these needs.
4. Recognise the support services and assistive devices that persons with disabilities need to access Early Recovery and Response actions.
5. Recognise that Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPD) are experts in disability inclusion through sharing of their lived experiences. In order for OPDs to effectively support partners in their Early Recovery and Response work, it is crucial that partners and stakeholders mobilise support and resources to facilitate capacity building activities on Early Recovery and Response for OPDs to maximize their potential and rich experience.
6. Strengthen Social Protection mechanisms for persons with disabilities. This is to support them to recover from current cyclone and be resilient and prepared for future disasters.
7. Include disability indicators in funding and support provided in response and early recovery.
8. Ensure accessibility and inclusiveness of your services through your national counterparts who are providing services and responding to people at the community level.

#### 5.0. OPD priorities in the Next Month

**i. Vanuatu Disability Promotion Advocacy Association (VDPA)**

- Develop tools for partners and stakeholders on disability inclusion.
- Provide referral for DPO members to access humanitarian services.

- Conduct data collection on the situations of persons with disabilities in the communities
- Support partners with provision of disability inclusion technical support
- Represent persons with disabilities in TC Harold response and early recovery discussions.
- Monitor distribution of humanitarian aid to ensure persons with disabilities are not excluded.

**ii. Fiji Disabled People’s Federation (FDPF)**

- Develop tools for partners and stakeholders on disability inclusion.
- Provide referral for DPO members to access humanitarian services.
- Conduct data collection on the situations of persons with disabilities in the communities
- Support partners with provision of disability inclusion technical support
- Represent persons with disabilities in TC Harold response and early recovery discussions.
- Look for funding to support early recovery works for persons with disabilities.
- Mobilise partners to support early recovery of persons with disabilities.

**iii. People with Disabilities Solomon Islands (PWDSI)**

- Develop tools for partners and stakeholders on disability inclusion.
- Provide referral for DPO members to access humanitarian services.
- Represent persons with disabilities in TC Harold response and early recovery discussions.
- Conduct data collection on the situations of persons with disabilities in the communities
- Support partners with provision of disability inclusion technical support.

**iv. Psychiatric Survivors Association in Fiji**

- Support partners with provision of disability inclusion technical support
- Provide referral for DPO members to access humanitarian services
- Conduct data collection on the situations of persons with disabilities in the communities

**v. Tonga National Visual Impairment Association (TNVIA)**

- Conduct some assessment on their members and to correct some information on how they still need support and for the time being, they will refer to other partners in Tonga.

**vi. Naunau ‘o e ‘Alamaite Tonga Association Inc (NATA)**

- Surveys conducted after the cyclone need to include person with disabilities.
- Include DPO data on time of preparedness and response.
- Include persons with disabilities to take part as volunteers during times of food deliveries and other needs during response periods.
- The need for a fund that specifically focuses on disaster relief that can be an asset for the DPO to tap into during times of response.

## 6.0. DPO Contacts

**i. Vanuatu Disability Promotion Advocacy Association (VDPA)**

Ms. Nelly Caleb

National Coordinator

Email: [calebnellie14@gmail.com](mailto:calebnellie14@gmail.com) / [calebn.vdpa@gmail.com](mailto:calebn.vdpa@gmail.com)

Phone: +678 37997 | Mob: +678 7796946 / +678 5421040 |

Skype: Nelly Caleb

Facebook: Nelly Caleb

**ii. Fiji Disabled People’s Federation (FDPF)**

Ms. Lanieta Tuimabu

Office Manager

Email: [lanietatuimabu@fdpf.org](mailto:lanietatuimabu@fdpf.org) / [ltuimabu@gmail.com](mailto:ltuimabu@gmail.com)

Phone: +679 3311203 | +679 8679687 |

**iii. Psychiatric Survivors Association (PSA)**

Ms. Sera Osbourne

Office Manager

Email: [psa.fiji@gmail.com](mailto:psa.fiji@gmail.com)

**iv. People with Disabilities Solomon Islands (PWDSI)**

Mr. Davis Luabolana Ladofo'oa

Email: [pwdsimanager@gmail.com](mailto:pwdsimanager@gmail.com)

Phone: +677 7415289

**v. Naunau ‘o e ‘Alamaite Tonga Association Inc (NATA)**

Ms. Unaloto

Email: [alamaite\\_tonga@yahoo.com](mailto:alamaite_tonga@yahoo.com)

- vi. Tonga National Visual Impairment Association (TNVIA)**  
Mr 'Ofeina Leka  
Email: [mr.ofa.leka@gmail.com](mailto:mr.ofa.leka@gmail.com)  
Phone: +676 7747065/ +676 8408410