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# NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

1997

Prepared with the assistance of the  
South Pacific Disaster Reduction Programme (SPDRP)

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# FOREWORD

This National Disaster Management Plan has been produced through the efforts of the newly established National Disaster Management Office and National Disaster Management Working Group.

The plan updates the previous 1987 plan, and uses the lessons learned and experiences of Tropical Cyclone Hina (1997) to ensure the arrangements and procedures listed herein are viable and appropriate to Tonga's requirements.

An important aspect is that the plan identifies the institutional arrangements which will expand the disaster management emphasis from post impact relief, to a more comprehensive approach, with particular emphasis on disaster mitigation and preparedness.

A significant achievement of the planning process, has been the strengthening of linkages between government, NGO and Red Cross, with collaboration and mutual support for programme activities being a legacy which will continue on into the twenty first century.

This plan is effective by virtue of a Cabinet Directive. It replaces all previous disaster plans, and should be used by all Departments, Agencies and Organisations as a guide for the development of their own plans and procedures.

PRIME MINISTER

# AMENDMENTS

Chairman  
National Disaster Management Committee  
Ministry of Works - National Disaster Management Office  
Nuku'alofa, Tonga

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 GENERAL

This plan replaces the 1987 national disaster plan, and in doing so retains still relevant sections of that document. The planning approach contained within, focuses on a comprehensive disaster management strategy which clearly identifies and documents the essential organisational and procedural ingredients for effective mitigation of, preparedness for, response to hazards, and recovery from disaster situations.

The review process considered the establishment of the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and its key role as the Kingdom's focal point in the management and promotion of disaster management programmes and activities. Further, response procedures for major hazards have been included as a separate attachment to this plan.

The effectiveness of this plan as a management tool, will depend on the ability of organisations and departments to understand its components, their role within the disaster management process, and also their ability to implement actions in accordance with the procedures listed.

Government support for the development and strengthening of disaster management capacities is an essential ingredient also for the success of any strategies implemented under this plan, and in this respect, the adoption and approval of this plan by government is considered an essential first step.

## 1.2 AIM

The aim of this plan is to detail the government policy and management strategies for the design, development and implementation of effective disaster management programmes and activities, and includes the operational procedures for effective response to designated high risk hazards.

## 1.3 CONCEPT

The basic concept of this plan is based on the effective utilisation and co-ordination of government, NGO, private industry and donor resources in support of disaster management programming.

This concept will depend on a number of essential elements if it is to be successful:

- An effective organisational structure
- Effective management systems for programme activities
- A mechanism to facilitate exchange of information, and discussion on programme issues
- A broad organisational involvement in programme activities
- A broad base of commitment for programme activities, including the incorporation of disaster management into national budget considerations.

## 1.4 NATIONAL POLICY

The policy adopted by the Tongan Government is as follows:

- To recognise the problems associated with disasters as being part of total government responsibility and to make the best possible arrangements to deal with given available resources.
- To recognise the disaster management phases of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery as essential ingredients for national development planning.
- To encourage traditional self help within the community through education and awareness programmes.

## 1.5 RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS

This plan should be used by all government departments, outer island authorities, NGOs, private industry and diplomatic community, as a guide for the development of policy, programme support, and internal emergency procedures in support of disaster management and disaster response activities.

## 1.6 HAZARDS

Tropical Cyclones remain as the most likely and most consistent threat to the Kingdom, however, other hazards such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions can occur with significant impact upon the social and economic environments.

Whilst these remain as the major threats, associated hazards such as flooding to low lying areas, storm surge, high surf, wind blown sea spray, tsunami, drought and exotic disease for plants and animals, present equally high levels of concern to vulnerable communities and industry.



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## 1.7 STATE OF EMERGENCY

No disaster legislation has been prepared for Tonga, however the Minister may recommend to the Prime Minister to declare a State of Emergency when he determines that actions for the protection of life and property, and the relief of distress and suffering are necessary. A State of Emergency will be for a stated period of time, but shall not exceed 14 days. It can be extended only with the consent of Cabinet, with the declaration and/or extension to be Gazetted at the earliest opportunity.

## 1.8 DISASTER MANAGEMENT DEFINITIONS

A list of terminology and definitions used within this and other support plans is included in Annex One to this section. The terms represent uniform definitions which are applied to disaster planning within the South Pacific Region.

## 1.9 TESTING AND REVIEW

This plan is to be reviewed annually by the NDMO and National Disaster Management Working Group, with amendments being approved by the NDMC prior to inclusion and distribution.

## 2. ORGANISATION

### 2.1 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The disaster management organisational structure is attached in Annex One to this section. The structure identifies the day to day management mechanism with the NDMO as the key focal point and the operational response mechanisms which are guided by the National Disaster Management Committee.

### 2.2 NATIONAL DISASTER COUNCIL

The Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, will form the National Disaster Council (NDC) with overall authority and responsibility for disaster management programmes and activities, including response issues.

### 2.3 MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

The Hon. Minister for Works and Disaster Relief Activities, has specific responsibility for disaster management programmes and activities. In particular, the Hon Minister will:

- Advise the NDC on all matters related to disaster management.
- Ensure adequate measures are in place for disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.
- Advise the NDC on threats and make recommendation for the declaration for a state of emergency.
- Serve as chairman to the National Disaster Management Committee.

### 2.4 NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC) is responsible to the NDC for guiding and supporting the development and implementation of the Kingdom's disaster management programmes, and for the provision of resource support and technical advice to the Central Control Group (CCG) during disaster response operations.

The NDMC will, through the conduct of meetings, review and discuss disaster management plans and related programmes proposed by the NDMO, and ensure that the commitment of their respective departments and organisations is provided to facilitate the implementation and achievement of programme objectives.

The NDMC is also responsible for reviewing policy issues prior to forwarding to the NDC for approval.

#### 2.4.1 Membership of the NDMC

The NDMC membership shall comprise the following:

- Hon Minister for Works and Disaster Relief Activities (Chairperson).
- Director of Works (Deputy Chairperson).
- Commander, Tonga Defence Services.
- Commander of Police.

- Director of Health.
- Director of Agriculture and Forestry.
- Director of Central Planning.
- Secretary of Civil Aviation.
- Secretary for Foreign Affairs.
- Director of Lands and Natural Resources.
- Secretary of Finance.
- Secretary of Marine, Harbour and Ports.
- Chairman, TANGO.
- Director General, Tonga Red Cross.
- Director of Education.
- General Manager of Tonga Telecommunication Commission.
- General Manager, Tonga Water Board.
- General Manager, Tonga Electric Power Board.
- General Manager, Tonga Broadcasting Commission.
- Deputy Director Works, OIC NDMO (Executive Officer).

The Chairperson may co-opt other members as required.

## 2.5 NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT OFFICE

The National Disaster Management Office will serve as the Kingdom's key focal point for the management and promotion of disaster management programmes and activities. Reporting directly to the Director for Works, the Deputy Director - NDMO will have specific responsibilities for:

- Managing the development, testing and review of operational support plans
- Co-ordinating the development of education and awareness programmes related to disaster management
- The identification and conduct of disaster management training courses, including the selection of participants for regional and international courses.
- Providing technical assistance and advisory service to departments, NGOs and other agencies on disaster management matters.
- Assisting with the identification and implementation of disaster mitigation programmes and activities
- Serving as a focal point for regional disaster management issues and for IDNDR purposes.
- Developing a national resource register of government resources
- Other disaster management related duties as directed by the Minister or Director.

## 2.6 NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

Successful programme development and implementation requires ongoing and sustainable support from a broad base of organisations, including NGOs and the Private Sector. In many cases the high level membership of the NDMC negates the opportunity for such commitment, and therefore a National Disaster Management Working Group has been established to ensure that a reliable and available support mechanism for programme activities is in place. The main working group has been divided into three sub groups for existing programming purposes. Refer to section 8 for the list of working group members.

## 2.6.1 Planning Group

Is chaired by the NDMO and is responsible for the development and maintenance of the National Disaster Management Plan, and Operational Support Plans. Composition of this group is dependent upon the plan being developed, and will be determined by the NDMO.

## 2.6.2 Mitigation Group

Is chaired by the Ministry of Works, and has responsibility for the identification, research, design, development and implementation of disaster mitigation pilot projects. The composition is flexible and dependent upon the project being addressed.

## 2.6.3 Education and Awareness Group

Chaired by the TANGO President, and responsible for the design, development and implementation of education and awareness programmes in support of disaster management planning and disaster mitigation programmes.

Whilst the three groups each have a specific focus, they will meet as a whole at least monthly to enable briefings and exchange of information on the activities related to each programme. The Director, NDMO, is to ensure that the NDMC is briefed on the progress of programme activities related to each group.

## 2.7 DISTRICT AND TOWN OFFICERS

The District and Town Officers will have specific responsibility for the following tasks:

- supervising the preparation of village disaster plans;
- supporting the national disaster management working group in the identification and implementation of community mitigation and preparedness programmes;
- ensuring warnings and community alerts are received and understood by village leaders;
- supervising village preparedness in response to warnings and community alerts;
- supervising initial damage assessment following cyclones and other hazards and reporting the results of such assessment to the national emergency operations centre (refer to section 5).

## 3. MITIGATION

### 3.1 POLICY FRAMEWORK

Population growth and development particularly along the coastal zones will inherently result in increased losses from natural hazards unless mitigation measures are implemented.

### 3.2 MITIGATION PLANNING AND INSTITUTIONS

The Tongan National Disaster Management Plan, aims to detail disaster management mechanisms, calls on NDMC to recognise that effective mitigation management will depend much on institutions and agencies having the capabilities and authority to form clear statements of the problems and to implement prescriptive measures.

### 3.3 BUILDING CODES

Building codes which were developed in 1989/90 by an AIDAB funded project will be adopted and enforced with the assistance of the District and Town Officers. These codes will greatly improve building standards for the future and as a consequence provide a safer community against the threat of hazards such as cyclones and earthquakes.

### 3.4 MITIGATION WORKING GROUP

The mitigation working group will have responsibility for identifying and where possible implementing strategies aimed at disaster mitigation. The working group will be responsible to the NDMO as the managing agency of working group activities, and will provide technical support and advice to departments, NGO's and other organizations, provincial governments and private industry to ensure that disaster mitigation strategies are included in development plans.

#### COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

- Ministry of Works - (2)
- Ministry of Civil Aviation
- Ministry of Land, Survey and Natural Resources
- Water Board (2)
- Agencies which have specific portfolio's (agriculture, health etc) will be included for specific project activities.

### 3.5 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND FORMULATION

It will be the task of the Mitigation Working Group to identify, develop and have implemented, mitigation projects aimed at reducing losses and sustaining development efforts; and collating information to facilitate a better understanding of hazards mitigation shall be:

- part of planning to restrict developments that will be vulnerable to future damages
- part of efficient and effective recovery efforts following future hazard impacts, events or disaster situations
- part of making safer, existing developments against future damage risks.

### **3.6 CO-ORDINATING ROLES OF THE MITIGATION WORKING GROUP**

The wide ranging mitigation activities and operational requirements will demand on this working group to work in close cooperation with NGOs and community groups with tasks to:

- identify key institutions, organisations and committees to assist with project implementation and management;
- develop network mechanisms for operational management, by co-ordinating activities aimed at improving disaster management capabilities; and
- identify needs in education and public awareness strategies to underpin attitudinal changes and guide policy decisions.

### **3.7 BROAD PROCESSES**

Mitigation management, inculcating disaster impact assessments as a routine requirement in development planning or for retrofitting programmes, will be guided by systematically:

- assessing the hazards, determining vulnerability and vulnerable areas;
- assessing the risks and likely socio - economic damage costs on communities, strategic buildings, infrastructures, critical facilities and services; and
- formulating mitigation recommendations based on the level of risks from above assessments.

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### 3.8 COASTAL LAND USE PLANNING

The continuing growth in tourism development along the coasts, much subjected to storm surges and wind damages, has to be the target for proper foreshore land use and development controls to protect the environment and assist with sustaining economic growth.

### 3.9 LEGISLATION

It will be the joint responsibility of the NDMC, through the appropriate line Ministry, to seek enacting legislations and appropriate regulations such as building codes.

### 3.10 PROTECTION OF GOVERNMENT ASSETS

It is the responsibility of all heads of departments to ensure that government assets are protected from the effects of hazard impacts. This will involve the taking of pre-planned precautions for both, impact (earthquake, fire) and slow onset hazards (cyclone).

Such procedures are to be clearly identified in departmental emergency procedures and response plans.

## 4. PREPAREDNESS

### 4.1 NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Planning Working Group is responsible to the NDMC for the annual review and maintenance of this plan. Amendments must first receive the endorsement of the NDMC before being included and disseminated to holders of the plan.

### 4.2 OPERATIONAL SUPPORT PLANS

Support plans and/or operational procedures are required to facilitate effective preparedness and response to specific hazards which have the potential to cause significant impact on the social, economic and environmental sectors. Such plans or procedures are to include relevant policy, and specific roles and responsibilities which apply to the hazard or emergency situation. Support plans which have been identified as being required include, but are not restricted, to the following:

- Cyclone, Flooding, Storm Surge and Tsunamis
- Aircraft Accident
- Maritime (pollution and sea search and rescue)
- Earthquake
- Health - epidemic diseases
- Bush Fire
- Dumping of toxic waste
- Volcanic eruption
- Drought

### 4.3 ORGANISATIONAL PLANS

Every organisation which has a role either within the National Disaster Management Plan, and or Operational Support Plans is to prepare internal preparedness and response procedures which will detail action for the protection of assets and staff, and procedures for the effective response in accordance with allocated roles and responsibilities.

Such plans are to be framed against the stages of activation listed in section five to this plan, as this will allow a graduated and controlled preparedness and response action. An example of how to structure organisational plans is contained at Annex One to this Section.

### 4.4 TRAINING

The National Disaster Management Working Group, comprising all sub committee members, will assist the NDMO in the management of training in support of programme activities and professional skill development. In particular the working group will have responsibility for:



- The identification of training needs.
- The development of a training data base or resource register.
- The assessment of training course viability.
- The selection of candidates for regional and international training activities.
- To serve as a focal point for disaster management training activities.

## 4.5 EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Whilst the NDMO and the National Disaster Management Working Group have overall responsibility for the development of education and awareness programmes, specific responsibility rests with the education and awareness sub-group.

In determining programme requirements, the sub-group should base programme subject matter on information related to operational support plans, hazard characteristics, and mitigation and or preparedness matters. Specific responsibilities for the subgroup include:

- The identification of programme requirements
- The design and development of programmes
- The implementation and monitoring of programmes to determine effectiveness
- The review and refinement of programmes.

### 4.5.1 Suggested Education and Awareness Programmes

The following list is a guide to the development of programmes for the cyclone threat:

- pre-recorded radio broadcasts which describe the stages of the cyclone alerting system and the action that should be taken for each stage;
- pamphlets which support the pre-recorded messages by displaying the alert stages;
- posters and/or pamphlets which describe cyclones and highlight the associated dangers which usually come with them (ie. flooding, storm surge);
- visits to schools and to villages to discuss cyclones, community preparedness, and to identify major threat areas which villages should be wary of; and
- briefing sessions for District and Town Officers on the community alerting system and key preparedness activities.

## 5. RESPONSE

### 5.1 CONTROL

The Commander of the Tongan Defence Services (TDS) is the nominated disaster controller for all disaster and major emergency situations, unless otherwise stipulated within plans or legislation, or if directed by the Chairman NDMC. This includes the Kingdom being under threat from a hazard or major incident. The controller will be assisted in the performance of response duties by the Central Control Group (CCG).

In the absence of the TDF Commander, the Police Commander or a person appointed by the NDMC Chairman, will perform the duties associated with that of controller. These duties are listed within the specific operational response plans or procedures.

### 5.2 CENTRAL CONTROL GROUP

Is responsible to the Chairman NDMC for the implementation and management of disaster response operations. This includes both pre impact preparedness measures and post impact relief. In particular the CCG will:

- activate departments and organizations in response to the given threat;
- liaise with and guide Departments, NGOs and Community Groups in the execution of their disaster roles and responsibilities;
- activate disaster assessment systems;
- collate and prioritize disaster relief requirements; and
- manage the distribution of immediate relief supplies.

Committee composition of the CCG will be dependant upon the operation being conducted, and will be detailed within each operational support plan. The core membership will include:

- Tonga Defence Services
- Tonga Police Services
- Ministry of Works
- NDMO
- TANGO
- Tonga Red Cross
- Ministry of Finance

### 5.3 CO-ORDINATION

The NDMO will have specific responsibility for the co-ordination of resources during a disaster or emergency situation. This function will be performed in conjunction with CCG deliberations, with the co-ordinator located within the National Emergency Operations Centre.

## 5.4 NATIONAL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE

### 5.4.1 The primary location is:

Tonga Defence Service Headquarters  
Vaha'akolo Road, Nuku'alofa  
Telephone : 21099  
Facsimile : 23954  
Telex : 66235 (Tong Def)

### 5.4.2 Secondary Location:

Police Search and Rescue Centre  
Telephone : 23233  
Facsimile : 23266

### 5.4.3 Activation and Administration of NEOC

The Commander, Tonga Defence Services is responsible to the Minister for Works, and disaster relief activities for the provision of administrative and other support staff, and for the state of readiness of the NEOC including the availability of support resources.

## 5.5 WARNING, ACTIVATION AND ALERTING SYSTEMS

The key to achieving effective response from participating organizations and the community is to have reliable and equally effective warning and alerting systems in place. Advice of a developing or impact disaster situation will come from two main sources:

- Official source (meteo/police)
- Unofficial source or member of the public

It will be the responsibility of the NDMO and Lead Authority (responsible organization) to verify the accuracy of unofficial reports.

It is the responsibility of all departments and organizations to ensure that representatives are contactable at all times and particularly so during the cyclone season and after normal working hours.

It is the responsibility of the CCG to ensure that timely and appropriate messages are broadcast to the public advising of the degree of threat, and action that should be taken. Departments and organizations should assist in this process by ensuring that relevant information is forwarded to the EOC.

Details of the national activation system can be found in part five to this plan, whilst details on the warning system used by the Meteorological Service are contained within the cyclone support plan.

Care should be taken not to confuse the terminology being used in this section. The warning system does not refer specifically to Meteorological messages - it relates to the system in place that is used to warn the disaster officials and the community that a potential hazard exists. In the case of cyclones it would be the meteo warnings.

The activation system refers to the mechanism for informing and activating the departments and organisations, whilst the community alerting system guides the community by informing of the degree of threat and action to be taken. It is used specifically by the disaster officials and should compliment the warning system in place.

## **5.6 NATIONAL ACTIVATION SYSTEM**

The implementation of this plan will depend on the effective reaction by participating organizations. The following stages of activation are designed to achieve this goal through a graduated and controlled mechanism which, when utilized correctly, will ensure that the level of preparedness will equal the level of threat being posed.

The outline of action within these stages is listed below:

### **5.6.1 Stage One - Readiness**

Comes into effect when some form of information is received which indicates that the provisions of this plan, and/or associated plans, may be invoked. The NDMC will declare this stage in force and alert appropriate organizations of such action.

### **5.6.2 Stage Two - Standby**

Comes into effect when it is established that a threat exists to all or part of the island chain. It requires that all relevant organizations and personnel are placed on standby to begin operations or actions under this plan immediately they are called upon. The NDMC in consultation with the NDMO and disaster controller will determine when this stage becomes operative.

In some circumstances there may be no warning or insufficient warning of an impending threat and therefore it may not be possible to progress through stages one and two in a normal fashion.

### **5.6.3 Stage Three - Activation**

Comes into effect when the threat is imminent ;or in an impact situation where a disaster or emergency has already occurred. The disaster controller will activate this stage and call upon participating organizations to take action in accordance with planned procedures and /or as directed by the Controller.

### **5.6.4 Stage Four - Stand Down**

The order for organizations to stand down will be given by the disaster controller once a full assessment has been made, the threat has abated, and/or disaster relief operations are well advanced. This will be a gradual process with organizations which have limited involvement in the operations being stood down in the first instance.

This maximum protection – minimum disruption process will avoid over response, and serve as an effective means of regulating community action through ongoing communication. The stages will also serve as a guide for departments and organizations in the development of internal emergency procedures and response.

## 5.7 MEDIA BROADCASTS

The national radio serves as an important communications link with the community at large and more particularly with the outer islands. This link is critical for the relay of information and accordingly some control measures must be introduced to ensure that only essential broadcasts are made during periods of highest threat.

The Director of the Tongan Broadcasting Corporation and other radio stations, are to ensure that all messages are vetted and only urgent or essential service messages are broadcast once stage three – activation of this plan has been activated.

All broadcast requests related to the operational situation should be channelled through the EOC for authorization by the CCG. This will ensure that only accurate and relevant information is being broadcast and that the public are not being confused by an avalanche of messages. It also ensures that messages relating to those islands under most threat receive highest priority.

Cyclone warning messages issued by the Meteorological Service are excluded from this procedure, and they will continue to be broadcast as and when received.

## 5.8 AIRPORT CLEARANCE

The CCG is to liaise with Secretary Civil Aviation, to ensure that security clearance is provided for team assigned to assist with the unloading and transport of relief supplies. Where possible, the names of personnel involved with these activities shall be sent prior to the teams arrival at the airport.

## 5.9 CUSTOMS AND QUARANTINE

Once an official request for international assistance has been submitted, the Directors Customs and Quarantine are to make the necessary arrangements for the ongoing clearance of all donor assistance which is provided for “disaster relief purposes”.

This may include duty exemption for goods which are purchased locally with disaster relief funding.

The CCG is responsible for providing information on donor assistance to Customs and Quarantine to facilitate this process. This includes details on type, quantity, source, means of transportation, arrival point and estimated time of arrival. As for normal Customs and Quarantine situations, disaster relief operations should not in themselves cause a breakdown in established security and /or immigration regulations.

## 5.10 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The CCG is responsible to the Chairman NDMC for the management of all funds provided for disaster relief purposes, and prior authorization for the expenditure of such funds must be received.

Accounts which are charged to the disaster relief fund and have not received prior approval for such expenditure, will be returned to the ministry, department, organization or individual which has incurred the costs.

This procedure will ensure firstly, that the available funds are being committed to those requirements which are considered as high priority, and secondly, it will avoid unnecessary expenditure on items which may already be available from other sources.

## 5.11 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The allocated specific disaster management roles and responsibilities for departments and organizations can be found at Part Eight to this plan. The NDMC is to ensure that the allocation of roles for operational support plans is made on the basis of the departments/organizations capability to effectively execute the associated duties.

These roles are in addition to the normal functions of departments and organisations. Those departments which do not appear in this plan, should refer to the operational; support plans and or standby to provide assistance as directed by the CCG.

## 5.12 DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

Damage assessment will be undertaken following any hazard impact situation or major emergency. There will be three types of assessment undertaken:

**1. Aerial Surveillance:** usually conducted after a cyclone impact, with the aim being to identify the extent of damage and those areas worst affected by the cyclone. This assessment assists the CCG in determining the need for a state of emergency, and also in prioritising response action to specific areas or islands.

**2. Initial Assessment:** is initiated immediately following a hazard impact or emergency situation to determine the immediate relief requirements. This assessment will be undertaken by the Town Officers under the supervision of the District Officers, with the Tonga Defence Reserve Officers forming the main assessment teams. Information which should be gathered and passed to the CCG should be linked to:

- a. brief summary of damage and needs;
- b. shelter requirements;
- c. water and electricity; and
- d. immediate medical or health problems.

**3. Detailed Assessment:** should be implemented within 2-4 weeks of the hazard impact or emergency situation and is designed to provide the government with a more detailed damage and needs assessment in respect to infrastructure, agriculture, education, health and other long term issues which may have an adverse impact on social and economic environments. This assessment will be undertaken by the government departments under the supervision of the Ministry of Works.

The District and Town Officers will provide all necessary assistance to ensure that this process is not unnecessarily delayed. Operational and administrative procedures to support the conduct of effective damage assessment will be developed by the national disaster management working group. The NDMO is responsible for ensuring that appropriate training is available for the participants in the assessment process.

### 5.13 UNITED NATIONS DISASTER ASSESSMENT AND CO-ORDINATION (UNDAC)

The United Nations has established a regional UNDAC team which can be deployed in support of national responses to hazard impacts and major emergencies. Team members are drawn from other Pacific Island Countries, and are placed on standby for rapid deployment at the request of governments. Key support activities which can be undertaken by UNDAC Teams include:

- contributing to the collection and sharing of information among active donors in the region;
- facilitating co-ordination with and mobilisation of appropriate resources from donors who might not be operational in the region but are interested to assist;
- providing additional know-how and expertise to strengthen the national capacity and to increase the accountability and credibility of assessments and appeals presented to the donor community;
- strengthening national capacity by providing sectoral assessment expertise that might be required;
- assisting in the on-site management of the relief operation during the emergency response phase; and
- advising on the planning for medium term relief, transition to rehabilitation and future mitigation strategies.

UNDAC Teams are most effective when deployed early in an operation. The teams are activated by the UNDP Resident Representative, through the UNDHA Office in Suva.

## 6. POST OPERATION REVIEW

The NDMC is responsible that a thorough and accurate review of the operation and procedures used is conducted, to ensure that the experiences gained and lessons learnt can be applied towards improving future mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery procedures.

### 6.1 DEBRIEFING

Operational debriefings should be conducted as soon as possible after the event. These should be conducted in two stages:

- Firstly, Intra -Departmental (within the department) to review departmental operating procedures and to allow staff to submit their views on the operation.
- Secondly, Inter - Agency with all departments and organisations that actively participated in the operation.

### 6.2 REVIEW OF PLANS AND PROCEDURES

The NDMC is to review the findings of the debriefing and consider amendments or action to improve the disaster management arrangements of Tonga. Such action may include:

- Amendment to plans and procedures
- Restructuring of the disaster organisation
- Amending organisational roles and responsibilities
- Identifying and conducting training activities

Arranging and promoting public awareness and education within the communities.



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# 7. RECOVERY

The recovery process may [depending on the severity of damage] take many months or in the worst case many years to complete. In this respect, this aspect of disaster management is best tackled using the established national government procedures. The disaster management officials can assist in this process through the following action.

## 7.1 DETAILED ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Ministry of Works is responsible for providing a full report on the impact of the disaster situation in terms of social, economic, environmental, and structural damage. It should be forwarded to the Chairman NDMC within two weeks of the hazard impact or incident.

## 7.2 RECOVERY PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

The Chairman NDMC on submitting the damage report will make recommendation for the establishment of a recovery program management committee. The composition of the committee will be determined by the nature of the damage, and they will have responsibility for managing the recovery program and ensuring that the government is informed on the progress of the programs activities.

## 7.3 CONTINUITY OF RELIEF EFFORT

The CCG/NDMO is responsible to the Chairman NDMC for monitoring the requirement for disaster relief during the recovery period. In many cases this process is overlooked once the initial relief operations have been completed, and therefore the continuity of relief efforts must be assured.

## 7.4 DISASTER RELIEF - POLICY

The decision as to which communities receive disaster relief assistance will be made by the CCG following receipt of damage assessment reports from assessment teams. Relief efforts will at all times be applied on a fair and equal basis, and will adhere to the governments "self help" concept wherever possible.

Criteria by which the need for receiving disaster food relief will be judged includes:

- A recommendation by the department of agriculture that such assistance is required
- Severe damage has occurred to greater than 60% of all crops and gardens
- The community does not have the financial capacity to assist itself
- The community does not have access to alternative supplies or markets.

In the event of a cyclone, relief food supplies will not normally be considered within the first 2 - 4 weeks of impact. Communities will be expected to use available supplies and only critical cases, schools and hospitals will be exempt from this restriction.

With respect to shelter, the use of tarpaulins should be considered for government buildings, hospitals, churches and community buildings only. Assistance to community houses should be limited to the use of plastic sheeting, as this is seen as a positive measure to further encourage the self help concept among the communities.

## **7.5 INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE**

Requests for international assistance will only be submitted when it has become clear that the situation at hand is beyond the total capabilities of local resources.

The requirement for international assistance will be determined by the CCG, who will submit through the NDMC Chairman to Cabinet, a formal request for international assistance.

The CCG will be responsible for liaising directly with international aid agency representatives and diplomatic missions after a formal request for assistance has been submitted by the government, to determine the type, quantity and distribution of assistance required. All departments and organizations (including NGOs) which have determined that assistance is required must submit their needs to the CCG, and should under no circumstances make direct requests to aid agencies/donors or diplomatic missions without the prior approval of the CCG.

The CCG will also be accountable to the aid agencies/donors for ensuring that all relief assistance is distributed in accordance with the guidelines governing the provision of such assistance, and for the preparation of a report on expenditure/distribution of assistance provided by each agency/donor/diplomatic mission.

## 8. CONTACT DETAILS

### 8.1 NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Title	Telephone (Office)	Telephone (Home)	Facsimile	Postal Address
Hon Minister for Works and Disaster Relief Activities (Chairman)	23100		23102	
Director of Works	23100		23102	
Commander, Defence Force	32149		23934	
Commander, Police	23233		23266	
Director of Health	23200		24291	
Director Agriculture and Forestry	23038		24271	
Director, Central Planning	21366		24260	
Secretary Civil Aviation	24045		24145	
Secretary Foreign Affairs				
Director, Lands and Natural Resources	23611		23216	
Secretary, Finance				
Secretary Marine, Harbour and Ports	22555		24267	
Chairman, TANGO	24115		24245	
Director, Education	22655		23866	
Director General Red Cross	21360		22970	
General Manager Telecommunications Commission				
OIC NDMO (Executive Officer)	23100		23102	

## 8.2 NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

Name	Organisation	SubGroup	Telephone (Office)	Facsimile	Postal Address
Pilimi 'Aho	NDMO	Overall Mgt	23100	25440	
Tau'aika	Defence	Planning	23099	23934	
SionePetelo	Defence	Planning	32149	23934	
SalaotePatelo	Education	Planning	22655	23866	
Pamela Lino	Red Cross	Planning	21360	22970	
Lisia Muller	Central Planning	Planning	21366	24260	
Fotu	Works	Planning	23100	25440	
Saimone Vuki	Labour and Commerce	Planning	23688	23887 or 25410	
Soane Patolo	Civil Aviation	Planning	24045	24145	
Sunia Vikilani	Marine and Harbours	Planning	22555	24267	
Simione Silapelu	TANGO	Education and Awareness	24115	24245	
Sione Talanoa	Police Force	Education and Awareness	23233	23266	
Jeffery Walsh	M.A.F	Education and Awareness	23038	24271	
Lelea Tu'itupou	Health	Education and Awareness	23200	24291	
Leonaitasi Lolohea	Works	Education and Awareness	23100	25440	
Kelepi Mafi	Lands and Survey	Mitigation	23611	23216	
Paea Havea	Meteorological Service	Mitigation	23401	24145	
Makanesi Vaipuna	Water Board	Mitigation	23299	23518	
Seventeen Toumo'ua	Works	Mitigation	23100	25440	
Uilou Samani	Lands and Survey	Mitigation	23611	23216	

## 9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities listed hereunder, represent those which pertain to this National Disaster Management Plan. Specific roles and responsibilities for responses to known hazards are contained within the operational response plans for those hazards.

### 9.1 DEFENCE FORCE

- Commander to serve as National Disaster Controller;
- provide HF Radio network;
- provide and maintain the national operations room facilities;
- reserve officers to support initial emergency relief assessment process; and
- provide a representative to the NDMC, CCG and national working group.

### 9.2 POLICE FORCE

- assist with the initial emergency relief assessment process;
- provide back-up radio communications; and
- provide a member to the NDMC and national working group.

### 9.3 MINISTRY OF WORKS

- provide a leader for the mitigation and planning sub working groups;
- lead the disaster assessment process and compile a full assessment report for Cabinet; and
- provide a representative for the NDMC and CCG.

### 9.4 TANGO

- provide a representative to each of the national working group sub groups;
- support the initial emergency relief process;
- support disaster management training on outer islands; and
- provide a representative to the NDMC and CCG.

## **9.5 LANDS AND SURVEY**

- provide a representative to the NDMC and national working group; and
- participate and support disaster mitigation programme activities.

## **9.6 WATER BOARD**

- provide a representative to the NDMC and national working group; and
- participate and support disaster mitigation project activities.

## **9.7 HEALTH**

- provide a representative to the NDMC, and national working group; and
- conduct sentinel monitoring of potential health problems following a major incident.

## **9.8 RED CROSS**

- provide a representative to the NDMC, CCG, and national working group;
- support the initial emergency relief assessment process; and
- provide support to disaster management training activities.

## **9.9 DISTRICT AND TOWN OFFICERS**

- support the identification and design of disaster management programmes;
- disseminate warning messages within areas of responsibility and ensure community members understand their meaning together with action to take;
- initiate initial emergency relief assessment within their areas of responsibility;
- serve as the disaster management focal point for their respective district or town; and
- other activities in support of disaster management and emergency response that may be requested by the NDMC or NDMO.

## **9.10 EDUCATION**

- provide a representative to the NDMC and national working group; and
- identify schools for use as emergency shelter.

## 9.11 MINISTRY AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

- provide a representative to the NDMC and national working group; and
- participate and support in disaster mitigation project activities.

## 9.12 CIVIL AVIATION (INCLUDES METEOROLOGY)

- provide a representative to the NDMC, CCG and national working group
- establish procedures for the clearance of personnel during relief operations
- participate and support disaster mitigation projects

## 9.13 MARINE AND HARBOURS

- provide a representative to the NDMC and national working group.

## 9.14 TONGAN BROADCASTING

- provide a representative to the NDMC and national working group;
- support the national education and awareness campaigns through broadcasting of information; and
- establish procedures for the monitoring of broadcasts during stage three of the plan.

## 9.15 CUSTOMS AND QUARANTINE

- develop and enforce procedures associated with the clearance of disaster relief supplies; and
- provide a representative to the NDMC.

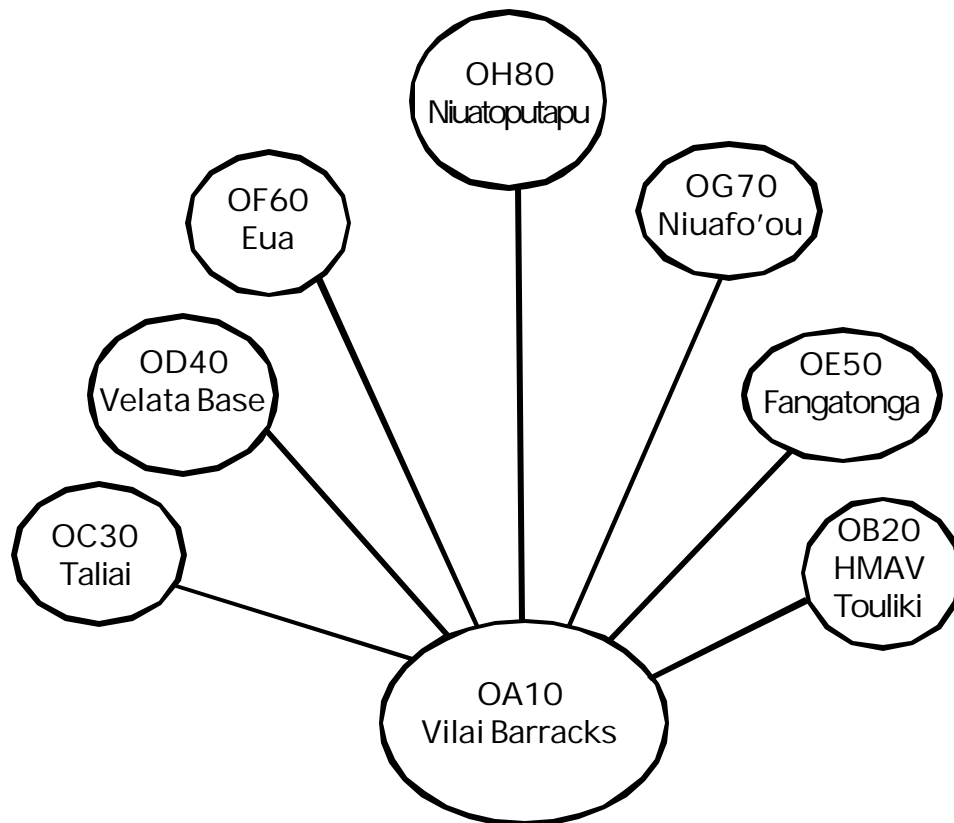
## 9.16 FINANCE

- provide a representative to the NDMC and CCG;
- manage the financial aspects of relief operations including the recording of donor contributions; and
- prepare a financial record of expenditure following major operations.

## 10. COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

The Tongan Defence Force will provide the primary communication links with the outer Islands. This will be co-ordinated from within the Communications Centre - Defence Headquarters. The Police communications network will serve as a back-up to this system, as there may be difficulties with reaching some remote areas.

The Defence Force network is detailed below. Frequencies for use during an operation will be determined and disseminated by the Communications Officer once the centre has been activated by the National Controller.



HF Radio Network



# **Annex 1**

# **CYCLONE RESPONSE PROCEDURES 1997**

# AMENDMENTS

The Chairman  
National Disaster Management Committee  
Ministry of Works  
Nuku'alofa, Tonga

[illegible]

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 THE SEASON

The Tropical Cyclone season officially commences each November and extends through to April the following year. Because they are seasonal and subject to being reasonably well predicted, Cyclones enable pre-planned measures to be formulated, and community preparedness programmes developed before the start of each season. It should be noted that cyclones may form and pose a threat outside of this period.

## 1.2 AIM

The aim of these procedures is to detail the preparedness and response arrangements for the cyclone threat to Tonga.

## 1.3 AUTHORITY

The authority for this plan is the National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC).

## 1.4 RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS

These operational procedures are to be read together with the National Disaster Management Plan, and should be used by all Departments, Agencies and Organisations as the basis from which internal response procedures are developed.

## 2. CYCLONE PREPAREDNESS

### 2.1 PRE-SEASON ACTIVITIES

Past cyclones have created severe problems upon the essential facilities of Tonga, and whilst some damage may not have been avoided, it is clear that through the implementation of some basic pre-cyclone season preparedness action, a great deal of damage could have been prevented. Electricity supplies are the worst affected, and as this service impacts upon so many other services, prolonged disruptions due to severe damage can cause hardships for many.

By November each year, the Tongan Electricity Board, with the support of District and Town Officers, are to implement a tree lopping and trimming programme within communities and along the major roads systems, so as to protect power lines from the dangers of falling trees and thus reduce the potential for damage.

Other preseason preparedness measures which are to be completed by November each year under the supervision of the NDMO, include the following:

- Review and update plans, contact lists, and operational procedures.
- Conduct briefing sessions for all Ministries, Departmental Heads, District Officers, Town Officers, and other Organisations on cyclone related issues – eg. prognosis for the season, a refresher on procedures including warning, activation, and alerting systems.
- Update and implement education and awareness programmes including visits to outer islands, schools and the private sector.

### 2.2 DURING THE SEASON

During the cyclone season, preparedness activities should focus upon those issues which are aimed at keeping all Ministries, Departments, Agencies, NGOs and the Communities aware of the potential for cyclone development, and also reinforcing operational procedures and systems. This includes:

- The broadcasting of education and awareness messages on radio and television.
- The periodic dissemination of situation reports (SITREPS) to provide an overview of regional weather patterns and the potential for cyclone development.
- Establish a visual display containing daily weather charts, satellite photographs, appropriate education and awareness material (such as the community alerting system).

## 3. RESPONSE FUNCTIONS

### 3.1 CENTRAL CONTROL GROUP

The Central Control Group (CCG) is responsible to the NDMC for the activation of these procedures, and for the management of operations associated with these procedures. Its composition is:

- Commander, Tongan Defence Forces (National Disaster Controller)
- Director, Ministry of Works
- Commander, Police Force
- Manager - Meteorological Service (pre - impact phase)
- Director, Foreign Affairs
- Director, Finance
- Deputy Director, NDMO

The membership of this group would be expanded during the post impact phase to include key organisations directly associated with the problems and operational requirements at hand.

### 3.2 METEOROLOGICAL WARNING SYSTEM

The Meteorological Service will issue cyclone advices appropriate to the given threat, ranging from cyclone alert for the initial information stage to tropical cyclone warning for the highest state of threat. More specific details of each message are as follows:

#### 3.2.1 Cyclone Alert (issued every six hours)

Issued when a developing depression or tropical cyclone is close to the Tongan Islands. Gale force winds are not expected within 24 hours but may occur within 48 hours.

#### 3.2.2 Cyclone Warning (issued every six hours)

Issued when there is imminent threat of a tropical cyclone affecting the Tongan Islands or part thereof. Such warnings will contain information pertaining to the predicted wind strengths which could be expected in specific areas. Such wind strengths are detailed in the following categories.

- **Gale Force Winds:** are issued every six hours when the wind speeds are expected to reach gale force intensity (34 - 47 Knots) within the next 24 hours.
- **Storm Force Winds:** issued every three hours when mean wind speeds are expected to reach storm force intensity (48 - 63 Knots) within the next 24 hours.

- **Hurricane Force Winds:** issued every three hours increasing to hourly as the threat increases, and mean wind speeds are expected to exceed 63 Knots within the next 12 hours.

**NOTE:** The unpredictability of cyclones are such that direction of movement and speed of onset may alter dramatically and without warning. It may be that the normal transition through the stages will in such cases be expedited.

### 3.3 COMMUNITY ALERTING SYSTEM

The timing of the first cyclone warning message is often crucial as it could have a bearing on how effective the placement of the initial community alert will be. The importance of reaching the public, even at the risk of false alarm, will normally outweigh the desirability of waiting until a more precise or accurate warning can be given.

The major objective of community alerts is to ensure that the level of community preparedness is equal to the level of existing threat. This is achieved by structuring community action against some form of warning device or measure. The system uses colour codes as a mechanism for alerting the community, and in doing so eliminates the recurring problem of community members not understanding the technical jargon used in warning messages.

Television and radio are the primary links or form of communication with the community, and therefore disaster authorities should aim at reviewing the community alert status to coincide with the listening audience being at its peak (Viz a Viz. news programs).

The following is a list and brief description of the community alert stages used in the Tongan Islands, a more detailed explanation can be found on the supporting public education material:

#### 3.3.1 Blue Alert

(Linked to Cyclone Warning - Gale Force Winds)

This is the first stage of preparedness and signifies that:

- The cyclone threat has developed/increased and that gales may start to affect the islands within the next 24 hours.
- Initial preparations should commence, and increased monitoring of the cyclone track should begin.

#### 3.3.2 Yellow Alert

(Linked to Cyclone Warning - Storm Force Winds)

Second level of preparedness. The significant factor associated with this stage is that the threat has further increased with gales and or destructive winds posing a significant risk within the next 6 - 12 hours.

- Final preparations should be completed.
- Schools will close.
- Safety shelters will open.

### 3.3.3 Red Alert

(Linked to Cyclone Warning – Hurricane Force Winds)

Highest state of readiness:

- Cyclone impact with risk of destructive winds is imminent.
- All departments, business offices and stores will close.

Community alerts will be placed by the CCG on Tongatapu, and by District Officers on outer islands. An alert status should apply to the entire Island.

## 3.4 CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS AND OFFICES

The Ministry of Education is responsible for co-ordinating the closure and re-opening of all schools within Tonga. The District Officers will assist in this process by liaising with the CCG and implementing the closure order.

In many instances it will be the District and Town Officers together with school Principals that will make the initial decision, as local weather conditions may call for an earlier decision on such matters. All schools will close upon the placement of a Yellow Alert.

Where possible, the CCG will aim to place a yellow alert at times which will enable less disruption and maximum protection to school children. All Government Offices should structure their preparedness plans to enable closure to be completed upon the announcement of a Red Alert. Essential persons only should remain beyond this time.

## 3.5 TERMINATION OF ALERTS

The CCG, will following consultation with the respective damage assessment teams, issue instructions to cancel the community alerts in place.

## 3.6 RESOURCE AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The CCG is responsible for the coordination of all major government, private and donor resources assigned to a cyclone operation. This will ensure that duplication of effort is avoided, and that resources are utilised in an efficient and effective manner.

The CCG is responsible for requesting additional financial support for disaster response operations, and as such are also responsible for the management and accountability of such funding. Authorisation must be obtained from the CCG prior to committing funds for expenditure. Accounts which have not been previously approved will be returned to the individual or department for payment.

This procedure will ensure firstly, that the available funds are being committed to those requirements which are considered as high priority, and secondly, it will avoid unnecessary expenditure on items which may already be available from other sources.



## **4. NDMC AND CCG RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **4.1 STAGE ONE - READINESS (LINKED TO GALE WARNING)**

Procedures to implement action should be developed at National and Island level as appropriate:

- Disseminate Meteo message to District and Town Officers, supported by either verbal or written comments to provide more information and clarification which will lead to more effective and appropriate decision making
- Conduct NDMC meeting and provide briefing on current situation and prognosis for future development - Implement readiness stage
- District and Town officers to brief Government and NGO organisations on outer islands
- Establish schedule for ongoing meetings of the NDMC if required
- Maintain ongoing liaison with the Meteorological Department
- Increase frequency of pre-recorded education tapes.

### **4.2 STAGE TWO - STANDBY PHASE (LINKED TO STORM WARNING)**

- Conduct meeting of NDMC
- Activate the CCG - determine meeting schedule.
- Implement the Standby Phase.
- Check on preparedness of departments and other organisations.
- Instigate verbal/written briefing for District and Town Officers.
- Maintain frequency of broadcast of pre-recorded education tapes.
- Commence live radio broadcasts (1 - 2 daily).
- Review situation with regard to the closure of schools (if applicable).
- Ensure damage assessment teams are on standby.
- Gauge necessity for safety shelters- place shelter managers on standby.

### **4.3 STAGE THREE - ACTIVATION (LINKED TO HURRICANE WARNING)**

- CCG briefing - Implement Activation Phase.
- Brief District and Town Officers - obtain preparedness status from outer islands.
- Close Government Offices (if applicable).
- Increase live radio broadcasts (2 -3 daily).

- Ensure relocation to safe shelters is completed.
- Issue situation report on preparedness status to UNDHA – SPPO for redistribution to key organisations and missions.

**Note:** Careful consideration of prevailing weather conditions should be taken when deciding on the closure of schools and opening of safety shelters. Release of government employees should be gradually implemented to enable them to make preparations at their own homes. Most essential personnel only should be left on duty until final closure of the offices.

#### 4.4 POST IMPACT – DISASTER RELIEF PHASE

- Activate damage assessment teams.
- Establish contact with outer islands.
- Continue with radio broadcasts to ensure the communities remain calm and are aware of what action they can take to assist authorities.
- Obtain preliminary assessment of situation on effected outer islands.
- Issue situation report to Minister and Cabinet.
- Issue situation report to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and UNDHA –SPPO for redistribution to donors, missions and aid agencies.
- NDMC meeting – briefing with all departments, NGOs and missions.
- Assessment of disaster relief needs.
- Determine requirement for international assistance – Inform (1) Minister and Cabinet and (2) UNDHA –SPPO of decision.
- Maintain liaison with District and Town Officers and coordinate assistance as determined necessary.
- CCG, District and Town Officers to establish relief coordination system to facilitate effective receipt, recording and distribution of relief supplies where necessary.

#### 4.5 RECOVERY PHASE

- NDMC to prepare damage report and report to Government.
- Conduct recovery operation in accordance with normal Government procedures.

# NOTES

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