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Information bulletin Tuvalu: Drought

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Information Bulletin n° 1
GLIDE n° DR-2011-000146-TUV
27 September 2011

This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Tuvalu Red Cross with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), has determined that extended external assistance is not required, and is therefore not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this time. The current partners of Tuvalu Red Cross in the Pacific will support as required.

[<click here to view the map of the affected area, or here for detailed contact information>](#)



TRCS local volunteers with community men emptying water containers into the community water cistern.
Photo: Tuvalu Red Cross

The situation

Tuvalu, a country of nine islands north of Fiji has a population of about 10,000 people with almost 50 per cent living on Funafuti, which is the capital island. The country depends mostly on rain water with some islands having access to ground water. Since early this year, all islands in the group have been suffering from lack of water due to the LaNina effect, which has impacted the islands' agriculture and daily water consumption.

Nukulaelae, an island south of Funafuti has reported that the island is very low on fresh drinking water and has requested the government for assistance.

Below are some statistics of Nukulaelae from the Island Council report submitted to the NDMO (national disaster management office):

- Population: 358.
- 90 per cent of population is being rationed with 40 litres per family per day.
- Number of water tanks: 190; number of plastic water tanks: 108; number of water cistern: 7; Number of damaged water cisterns: 6; Number of emptied water tanks: 80.
- Total amount of water remaining in tanks and cisterns: 127,833.17 litres (including reserves with Island Council Cisterns and tanks: 57,194.56 litres) for drinking and cooking.
- Well water is a bit salty and is used only for bathing and washing. Animals cannot drink from it also.
- One qualified island nurse.
- The island nurse on, 21 September, reported that four children and three adults are suffering from diarrhea and vomiting.
- The island nurse also reported that about 50 per cent of the people don't boil their drinking water despite awareness efforts to do so.

Tuvalu government has three desalination plants. One is in used in Funafuti, one in Nanumaga (an island in the north) and one in Motufoua High School in Vaitupu. The usage of the two desalination plants in Funafuti and Nanumaga are already overstretched due to existing water shortage. It is planned that if a desalination plant is needed in Nukulaelae, the desalination unit at the school will be mobilized to Nukulaelae.

Availability of water seems to be critical which is impacting the local crops (giant taro, bread fruits and coconuts). Main resources in the island are fishery and farming.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Tuvalu Red Cross Society mobilized three regional disaster response team (RDRT) trained members from their own National Society to be part of the assessment team that was dispatched to the Nukulaelae Island, arriving on the morning of 24 September. The team also consisted of personnel from other relevant authorities. TRCS had initially mobilized 50 of 20 litres collapsible water containers and 50 of 20 litres hard case water containers to be brought along during the assessment.

Sixteen volunteers together with the Tuvalu Red Cross Society Secretary General were available on hand to assist the team. Fourteen local volunteers have been mobilized to participate in the household survey as part of the assessment. Two local team leaders and two RDRT trained members organized four teams to assess up to 70 – 80 households (total number of households on the island). The table below provides further information following household assessments in the villages of Nukulaelae – Menigi and Betio.

	Menigi	Betio	Total	
No. of people	182	151	333	
No. of children (2-16 yrs)	63	42	105	
No. of babies (0-2 yrs)	8	6	14	
No. of females	85	76	161	Not including babies
No. of males	89	66	155	Not including babies
No. of people with disabilities			4	
No. of sick (diarrhea and vomit)			7	
No. of pregnant women			1	8 months' pregnant

Fifty (20 litres) case containers and 75 (20 litres) collapsible containers were used to transfer around 10,000 litres of water from the boat (boat capacity is able to carry up to 12,000 litres) to the islands' water tanks under the supervision of NDMO. Due to lack of water containers in the TRCS containers, all the water containers used were brought back to Funafuti to stand by in case of another water emergency.

Most houses are either out of water or very low on supply and are depending on community rationed water which is 40 litres per family a day. General information from the Public Works Department stated that with the rationed amount, the community will have a minimum of about two weeks with the remaining water and addition water provided by the team.

Currently TRCS is also requesting support from partners to re-supply 1,000 of 20 litres of collapsible water containers, 600 hygiene kits and 500 tarps (hygiene kits, tarps are part of TRCS's pre-cyclone season/drought prepositioned plan).

The IFRC regional office is assisting TRCS in mobilizing emergency items, coordination and information sharing at regional and global level. TRCS is currently awaiting detailed assessments by the other sectors before putting together a plan of action.

New Zealand Red Cross is ready to re-supply or supplement any non-food items and further support to the desalination process as needed. French Red Cross is ready to assist as needed with non-food items. Australian Red Cross has also indicated its readiness to financially support replenishment, and assist in the logistic chain and with appropriate human resource as needed.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **Tuvalu Red Cross Society:** Tataua Pese, Secretary General; phone: +68820706
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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGOs\) in Disaster Relief](#) and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by [Strategy 2020](#) which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
 2. Enable healthy and safe living.
 3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.
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