

## **REGIONAL NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF FUND**

### **Background**

1. The continuing problem of recurring hurricanes and other natural disasters common to island members led to the establishment of the fund. The fund was formalised at the December 1975 SPEC Committee meeting and at the subsequent meeting of the South Pacific Forum. At these meetings it was agreed that member countries make an annual contribution of \$5,000, and the target sum of \$500,000 to be attained over a 12 year period. It was felt that Australia and New Zealand although members of the Forum, should not be asked to make a contribution as they were already assisting members in many other ways.

2. A study was commissioned to develop guidelines for the establishment of a viable fund for island members of the Forum. The study was conducted in January 1976 by a CFTC-funded consultant, James Lewis which covered the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Western Samoa.

### **Objective and Guidelines**

3. Recommendations of the study were accepted by member governments at the Nauru meeting in July 1976. The objective of the fund is to provide member countries with a readily available source of financial relief in the wake of natural disasters. Management guidelines for the fund follow:

- two thirds invested as capital fund with interest accruing to the fund;
- the remaining balance as working fund;
- a third of the working fund be applied as limit on the working fund's use in any one year; and
- a ceiling of a third of the annual allocation be set as the maximum sum available to any one disaster in any one year.

4. Requests are to be channelled through the Forum Secretariat official contacts (Ministries of Foreign Affairs/External Affairs, Prime Ministers Office). Funds are drawn down to assist FICs on the following basis:

- disaster must be natural and extensive damages caused;
- disaster must be declared a national disaster and international appeal lodged for assistance;
- funds are disbursed on the discretion of the SG

5. There is no requirement for acquittal or completion report.