Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council

Updates for CBI Newsletter

1. Response to COVID – 19 and Tropical Cyclone Harold

The business communities globally including the Pacific Islands have been profoundly affected by the global virus pandemic. In Fiji, the Tourism sector has been adversely affected and the Fiji economy is facing uncertainty as the Tourism sector contributes nearly 40% to Fiji’s gross domestic product – about FJ$2 Billion, and directly or indirectly, employs over 150,000 employees in various industries. Apart from the tourism sector, employers in Fiji from other sectors have either laid off workers, reduced hours or reduced days, while some have terminated contracts or made employees redundant.

The recent Tropical Cyclone Harold that hit Fiji on Thursday 9th April 2020 has created further challenges for businesses in Fiji. There has been destruction of utilities and infrastructure to parts of Fiji, affecting those self employed population and further impacting their social wellbeing and health, as well as the vulnerable communities who rely on farming and fishing as sources of income. There was a State of Natural Disaster declared by the Fijian Government in three Divisions in Fiji for 30 days.

The Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council (FBDRC), one of the nine councils under the umbrella of the Fiji Commerce & Employers Federation (FCEF), played a critical role as the business representatives at the National Disaster Management Office and Advisory Service, with support through its various focal points from the business sectors and the non-government organisations.

The roles and activities of FBDRC are highlighted below:

a) Coordinate Private Sector engagement with government and partners on resilience building, response and recovery activities
b) In collaborations with FCEF and Business Link Pacific, prepare Business Continuity Plans for SMEs.
c) Call out to members to provide their point(s) of contact that FCEF can liaise with. MSMEs were encouraged to come on board as well, during the current pandemic and also during disaster periods
d) Provide awareness and information sharing on COVID-19 (risks and prevention) to members through emails, social media and creating a tab (COVID-19 Resources) on the FCEF website.

e) Began populating a private sector information sheet for preparedness and response. This will assist FCEF and Government to identify business focal points from different sectors, i.e. FBDC Information Sheet
f) Help map out key service providers in essential industries to assist in preparedness and response
g) Partnering with ILO to support TC Harold Recovery work in five communities in the Yasawa Islands.
h) Worked very closely with the National Disaster Management Office, and development partners to provide a list of suppliers from the Private Sector for relief and recovery work.

2. 47 Trainers - BCP Training of Trainers

The Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation (FCEF) through the Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council (FBDRC) and the funding support through USAID Ready organised and coordinated a Business Continuity Plan Training of Trainers in the Western, Central, Eastern and Northern Division in Fiji. The training was held in Nadi on the 25th of February 2020, in Suva on 26th of February, and in Labasa on 28th of February, 2020.

Through the assistance of the USAID Ready team, and collaboration with the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office, the trainer, Ms. Ainslie Ryder was available to conduct the training in Fiji and had successfully trained 47 trainers.

FBDRC will be following up and monitoring these trainers for the success in their training and to also expand the impacts of this training for outreach specially to those businesses that need the support and capacity building.

3. Elections of New FBDRC Chair & Vice Chair

On the 26th of June, 2020, the Fiji Commerce & Employers Federation conducted the election of the new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council. The two new elected officials are:

**FBDRC Chair – Mr. Michael (Mike) Spencer**
**General Manager – Paradise Beverages (Fiji) Ltd**
The FCEF Board and Secretariat wishes well to the new leadership of FBDRC.

FCEF CEO, Mr. Kameli Batiweti acknowledged the hard work and tremendous contributions of the past leadership and outgoing Chair, Ms. Morika Hunter and Vice Chair, Mr. Leonard Chan.

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