



HELP Announcement

Call for urgent support to the disaster affected countries from the Volcano Eruption in the Kingdom of Tonga and Tsunami

High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP)

January 23rd, 2022

The submarine volcano eruption of Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha’apai and ensuing tsunami on January 14th, 2022 resulted in wide and serious impacts to countries and people in the Asia-Pacific Region. The Kingdom of Tonga in particular was gravely impacted by the volcanic ashes and tsunami. As we know from lessons and experiences of past disasters, the information available at this point is only partial and the full and complete picture will only be revealed later. Hence, HELP warns that the total loss in terms of human lives and properties, and the full impact to the economy and society in the region might be far larger and more severe than what has been reported so far.

HELP calls for urgent and full support by all countries and the leaders of the international community to the affected countries, particularly for the Kingdom of Tonga. The people in affected countries are in urgent need of not only essential goods such as water, food, and shelter, but in terms of materials, energy, and funds to survive and start restoration of their lives and livelihoods. We ask the UN, IFIs and humanitarian agencies to convene and coordinate emergency relief efforts by willing donors, institutions, and volunteers. We ask the UN Secretary-General to call for support to the affected countries by the international community.

The disaster occurred under a raging COVID-19 pandemic. The affected people, rescuers, field workers and all stakeholders must be protected from the threat of the pandemic. HELP Principles to Address Water-related Disaster Risk Reduction under the COVID-19 Pandemic (<https://www.wateranddisaster.org/covid-19/>) were drafted to properly address the co-occurrences of disasters and COVID-19. We call for governments and organizations that are engaged in disaster relief, recovery, and reconstruction activities of this disaster to refer to the succinct and practical 7-page report, to minimize the threat of the pandemic while at the same time being engaged in their rescue, relief and recovery activities in the affected area.

HELP is engaged in supporting the affected countries by utilizing its member network of governments, international organizations and civil society. We sincerely hope that people and the society of the Kingdom of Tonga and other countries, with the help of the international community, will quickly recover and build back better from the disaster.

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