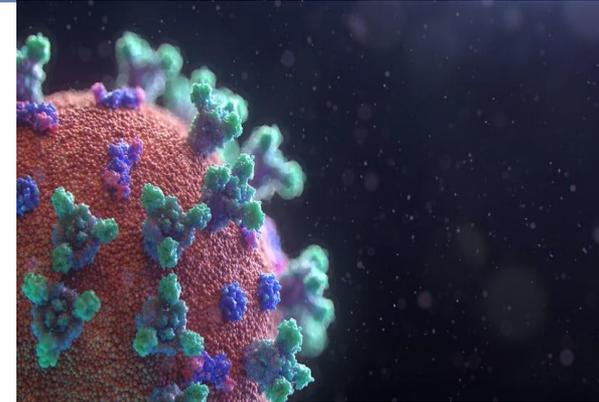


COVID-19 and climate change: Impacts, risks, and responses for SIDS

Patrick Pringle, Climate Analytics

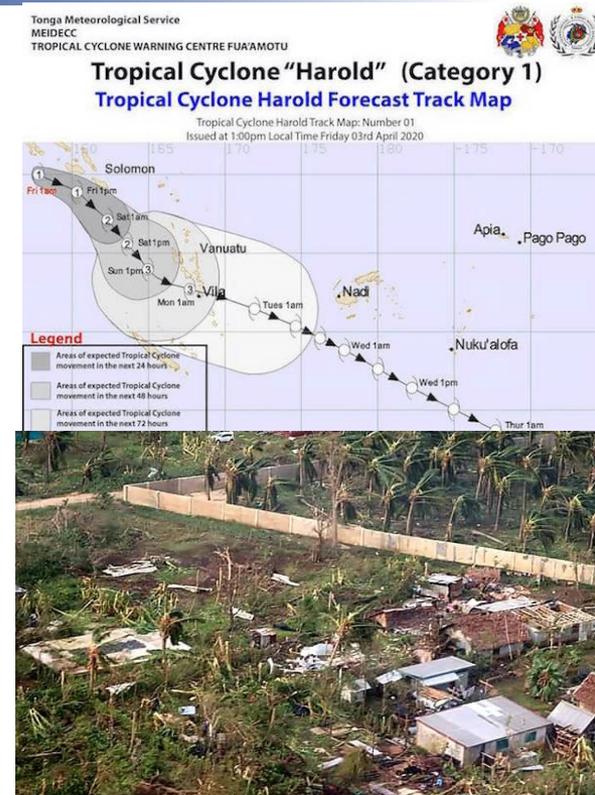
24 June 2020

- Rapid and early shutdown = direct health impacts minimal
 - Cases: French Polynesia (60), New Caledonia (21) Fiji (18), PNG (9)
 - Globally, two-thirds of countries with no COVID-19 cases are from our region
- Deep and sustained economic impact
 - Near decimation of tourism sector in many countries
 - Tourism accounts or 87% of GDP in Cook Islands and Niue and Vanuatu over 40% of GDP; Fiji 35% of employment



Impacts on Climate Action in SIDS

- Economic implications
 - for national budgets and internal resources for climate change
 - Increased vulnerability of communities to climate change
- Dealing with compounding crises
 - Cyclone Harold hit the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and Tonga in April 2020
 - The risk of disease transmission rises as people pack into emergency shelters
 - Disaster response hampered - travel restrictions, contamination fears and development partners' domestic priorities



- The erosion of capacity
 - Competing priorities and multiple hats in PSIDS
 - E.g. Government staff have CCA and DRR responsibilities
 - Reduced recruitment, training opportunities
- Impacts on efficiency and effectiveness
 - Communication with donors, colleagues and external experts more difficult over prolonged period
 - Delays in implementation
 - Travel to outer-islands still difficult; events postponed, external consultants not available
- Climate negotiations – delays (e.g. COP26) and competing priorities

- Update vulnerability assessments and make best use of existing data
- Map feedback loops and understand the impact of COVID-19 on climate change action at systems level
 - E.g. How does Covid-19 impact on community level vulnerability, natural resource exploitation, or food security?
- Better knowledge enables smarter deployment existing resources and to seek additional funding



- An opportunity for prepare and complete proposals
- Climate-proof economic stimulus packages
 - Can relatively easily incorporate resilience-building activities
- Shovel-ready projects will be important in recovery
 - But need to consider climate change not just employment and economics



- Disruptive change = opportunity to reflect and do things differently
- *“Things will never be the same again”* - can crisis trigger transformative action?
 - Pacific needs to explore radical solutions to reshape economies and energy systems
 - Or fall into ‘quick and dirty’ short-termism?
- Green COVID-19 recovery strategies with clear plans for prompt implementation are required



- [*COVID-19 another shock for vulnerable countries facing multiple crises*](#) (by Manjeet Dhakal)
- [*Facing Covid and climate, Pacific island capacity stretched*](#) (by Paddy Pringle)
- [*Coronavirus underscores small islands' climate vulnerability*](#) (by Adelle Thomas)
- [*Responding to a global crisis - the coronavirus pandemic and the climate emergency*](#) (by Carl-Friedrich Schleussner, Matthew Gidden, Kim Coetze)