



Government of Samoa

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **TSUNAMI EVENT**

The Government continues to provide primary health care, food, water and basic household items to those evacuated to established evacuation centers. Financial and in-kind assistance continues to pour in from local church organizations, business community, schools and individuals. Proceeds and goods from the radio-thon held by Samoa Quality Broadcasting and MCIT's Radio 2AP were presented to the National Disaster Council to assist with relief efforts.

***The Declaration of Disaster that was issued for the last 48 hours has been replaced by a Proclamation of Emergency.***

Polynesian Airlines has assisted Samoans in American Samoa through the provision of discounted airfares and has offered the use of Faleolo Airport for naval services and releasing of cargos. Exemptions have been put in place to waive normal entry requirements for goods to enable the expeditious release of assistance to government's disaster control center.

International agencies and governments (NZ, Australia and China) have also provided assistance through the provision of medical personnel and supplies, food, water and shelter, transportation and other experts. Samoa's other development partners have also relayed their planned assistance towards relief efforts and expected to arrive in the next day (Japan, United States, EU, ADB).

The revised estimate of damage to infrastructure, public and private properties is around SAT\$380million.

The Government of Samoa plans to hold a national funeral service to commemorate the lives of the tsunami victims, with planned burial at its public cemetery at Tafaigata on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> of October 2009. This has been put back from Tuesday as earlier indicated to accommodate requests from families of the deceased that reside overseas that wanted to be present to pay their respects. This service will be held under the coordination of the National Council of Churches. In the meantime a special service for the victims will be held at the Methodist Church at Matafele on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> of October 2009.

At the time of print, 135 deaths and 310 injured have been confirmed by the Ministry of Police. 117 of the deceased have been identified as Samoan nationals. Identification of other casualties continues with forensic team assistance as the latest discovered corpses have decomposed. Search continues for eight (8) people believed to be missing.