



Technical Note

Assessment visit to Ra Province

Date: 23 - 24/03/2016

Purpose of the visit:

- Realize a quick/partial assessment of the situation of the Ra Province, with particular focus on the situation of Debris / Disaster Waste Management;
- Prepare the implementation of the project “Immediate assistance to re-establish food security in communities affected by TC Winston” (FAO/UNDP/WFP);
- Provide some relevant information to start discussion of an integrated strategy for debris/disaster waste management in response to TC Winston (scaling-up of ongoing projects).

Locations/villages visited:

<u>District/Tikina</u>	<u>Sub-District/Tikina Makawa</u>	<u>Village/Town</u>	<u>Assessment</u>
Nakorotubu	Bureiwai	Dalaiyadua	<i>Quick overview</i>
	Kavula	Nayavutoka	Visit of village Meeting with the population (mainly the youth)
		Nabukandra	Visit of village + agricultural lands Meeting with the population (together with MOA/Director for agriculture extension services)
	Nakorotubu	Verevere, Saioko, Namarai, Naocobau	<i>Quick overview</i>
	Navitilevu	Nasau	Visit of village Meeting with chief’s spokesmen
Saivou	-	-	<i>Quick overview</i>
Rakiraki	Rakiraki	Rakiraki	Meeting with officers of Emergency Coordination Center
Nalawa	-	-	<i>Quick overview</i>

Redactor: Camille Laude

1. Location of visited area

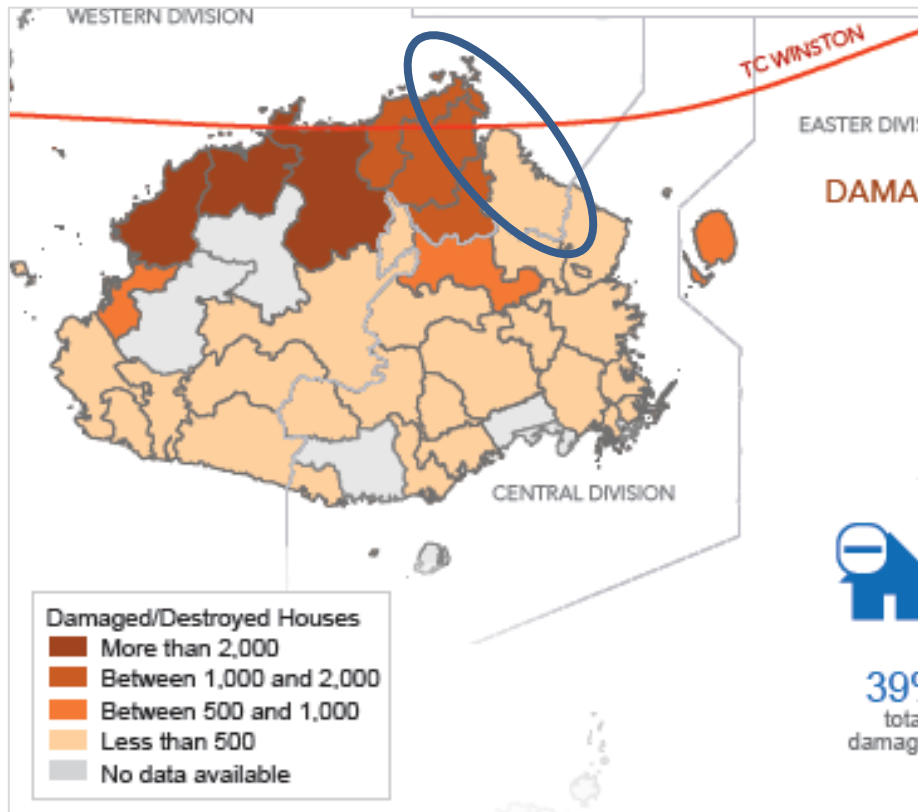


Figure 1 - General location of visited area (circled in blue)¹

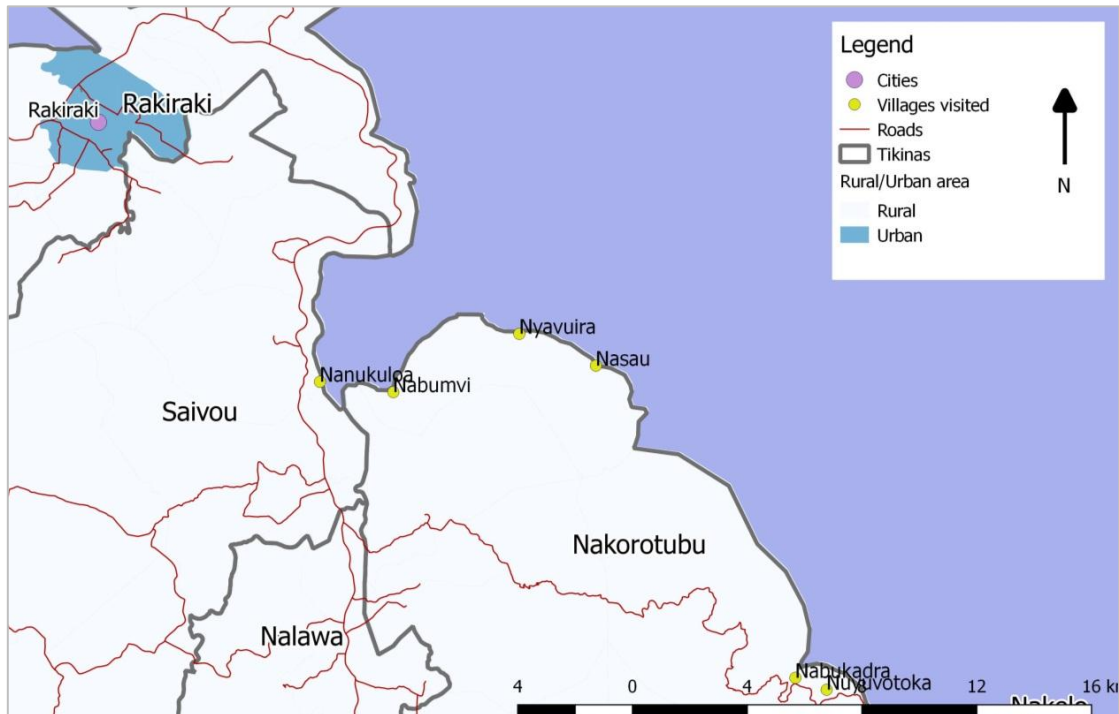


Figure 2 – Location of main villages visited²

¹ Original map from OCHA (FIJI: Tropical Cyclone Winston - Humanitarian Snapshot (as of 17 March 2015))

² Source of layers: SPC Geoscience division (<http://gsd.spc.int/winston/>)

2. Findings

a. Villages (housing areas)

All villages visited were severely affected by the cyclone destructive winds and by the surge waves (villages located in coastal low-lying areas).

The debris from the destroyed houses is being stored and reused as much as possible for construction of temporary shelters (wood / corrugated roof sheets).

The remaining of the debris is often piled up or burned. During the discussions, the communities were made aware of the risk of burning the debris/waste for health (in particular plastic and electrical/electronic waste) and advised to avoid it, but they explained that there was a lack of alternative solutions (need to eliminate temporary storage of debris in the village).



Figure 3 – Debris reused for temporary shelters (Nayavutoka and Nasau villages) / remains of burning of electronics

b. Agricultural lands / farming areas

The farming areas around the village were also severely impacted by the cyclone. The quantity of trees down due to the cyclone is large, and these commercial livelihood assets (Coconut trees / Mango trees / Lemon / Pines), will take a long time to recover. Pine plantations were particularly affected and in some areas almost 100 % of the trees are down.



Figure 4 - Uprooted trees (left: Nayavutoka – right: Nabukadra)

Even if seedlings distributed by the MOA (kasava, etc.) have already been planted, the fallen trees affect directly the recovery effort of the farming communities:

- Access paths to agricultural land and to other key infrastructure (water source, etc.) need to be restored;
- Land need to be cleared first before replanting new trees.

The blockage of the river courses was also identified as a priority issue by the communities:

- agricultural irrigation systems are not functional anymore;
- risk of floods when heavy rains, bringing stones and damaging vegetable farming areas;
- stagnant water increasing the risk of vectors (mosquitos, etc.).



Figure 5 - Blocked irrigation system (Nayavutoka) – Stagnant water (Nabukadra)

c. Priority needs (according to affected communities)

According to the discussions with the community, the priority need is for equipment and machines in order to support:

- Removal of trees from paths and rivers and clearing of farming lands;
- Reuse of the resources available (tree logs) for shelters and future reconstruction.



Figure 6- Logs being processed with chainsaw for construction of temporary shelters (Nabukadra village)

The possibility of implementing Cash-for-Work schemes was also discussed with two communities (*Navaloka/Nabukadra*). In both case there was a general agreement that if monetary value was available, it should be used for some community project / infrastructure instead of direct payment.

Also, in Nabukadra, elders expressed their worry about Cash-for-Work scheme, in particular that it could affect the volunteer spirit of the village, and explaining that money should not be a motivation to clean the village / farming lands.

d. Existing interventions and strategies at the Province level

According to the operation officers at Rakiraki emergency coordination center, the heavy equipment currently made available at the Province level has been used essentially for road clearance, and it does not have the mandate to be used for land clearance. The operation center is currently looking at the following solutions to support debris clearance at a larger scale in the province (both solutions are pending on approval at Government level):

- Provide chainsaws to the communities. Depending on the availability the chainsaws will be distributed to the villages (total: 97 villages) or to the tikinas (total: 19 tikinas);
- Extend support of heavy machinery to clear farming areas, and create condition for dumping of debris from the villages (“Big hole solution”). The team expressed his worry of environmental hazards linked to burying of waste/debris, in particular potentially hazardous waste (batteries, electronics, chemicals, etc.), for which alternative solutions shall be found.

During the visit, a few chainsaws (total: 4³) were distributed by the Ministry of Agriculture to some of the villages, with the understanding that it will be for a short-period before being given to other villages. In parallel other equipment to support debris clearance has also been distributed by NGOs (e.g: Friends).

³ Exact number to be confirmed by Ministry of Agriculture.

3. Recommendations and steps forward

- Discuss general approach of intervention internally, in particular in regard to:
 - o alternative to Cash for Work scheme (providing of tools and adequate security equipment, support to community infrastructure, livelihoods enabling equipment, etc.);
 - o possibility of using the timber available on the ground as an opportunity for (1) reconstruction and (2) alternative livelihood support while other the farms are being recovered;
- Compile additional information about the villages in the Provinces / Tikinas and their level of damage, and discuss with MOA priorities areas of intervention;
- Seek synergies and partnership with shelter initiatives;
- In order to have the wood available (fallen trees) available as an opportunity for alternative livelihood support, several aspects have to be considered:
 - o Need of urgent processing and treatment (fallen trees very vulnerable to parasites);
 - o Need of appropriate tools and products (ex: portable sawmill, insecticide, storage facilities, etc.);
 - o Need of control (type of trees, quantities, market price, etc.);
- Look for alternative solutions to dumping, in particular for potential hazardous waste (electronic, batteries, light bulbs, etc.), and recyclable material among the waste/debris stream (metal, plastic, etc.), etc.