

Oceania Regional Response Team
American Samoa (South) Pacific Standing Meeting
April 24, 2007

Opening Remarks

Olo Robert A. Tagovailoa
Acting Disaster Assistance Coordinator
Territorial Emergency Management Coordinating Office (TEMCO)
Department of Homeland Security
Government of American Samoa

Talofa:

On behalf of the Acting Director for American Samoa's Department of Homeland Security, Mr. Mike Sala, it is an honor and my pleasure to provide the opening remarks for the ORRT meeting from our territory.

We are extremely pleased to be part of this endeavor. I would like to extend greetings to the federal agencies of the National Response Team (NRT) and other federal agencies that are able to join us via teleconferencing from Hawaii and California. I would also like to extend greetings to my Pacific Region neighbors from Hawaii, Guam, CNMI, and other Pacific Island territories and nations. I want to thank Ms. Andra Samoa, the CEO of the American Samoa Power Authority (ASPA) for making this venue available for this event.

We trust that this gathering will continue to build upon our mutual understanding of the common issues and challenges we face in strengthening our capabilities for response, planning, training, and coordination of oil and hazardous substance incidents within our Oceania Region.

We are grateful for the opportunity to have ORRT to protect public health, safety and the environment of American Samoa. In particular, we are grateful of the efforts by ORRT to ensure that resources and expertise of the federal government will be available immediately for oil spills and hazardous substance releases, should any be beyond American Samoa's response capability. Also we are grateful that cleanup activities are timely and efficient, thus minimizing the impacts on human health and the environment within our territory.

As the newly established American Samoa Department of Homeland Security (ASDHS), we are totally committed in supporting the mission of the ORRT. ASDHS is looking forward to working in partnership with the Federal-On Scene-Coordinator (FOSC), the Regional-Response-Teams (RRT), and the National Response Team (NRT), to ensure coordinated, efficient and effective support is made available to all hazardous substance incidents in American Samoa.

In addition, we are also looking forward to participating in the response, preparedness and training activities related to pollution incidents in our territory. It is vital for our local government to work in partnership with the local US Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment and the US Environmental Protection Agency to enhance our response and preparedness capability for pollution incidents within our territory.

Finally, I am looking forward to a great meeting - sharing information with federal agencies and my good neighbors from the Pacific Region.

Thank you,

Soifua