

Village of Savaia recognised

"...it is very touching to be present today and receive this certificates and presents from you. And we pray to God and hope that we would not experience another Tsunami... but at least we now know what to do in the event of another one" – Tusanilefaiiao Iosefatu Reti



READY FOR A TSUNAMI: Savaia villagers with officials yesterday during a ceremony to recognise the village.

The village of Savaia has been recognised by the U.N.E.S.C.O. Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (I.O.C.) as Samoa's first Tsunami Ready community.

The recognition was conferred yesterday during a ceremony at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (M.N.R.E.).

Samoa is the first Pacific Island Country to implement the program.

The C.E.O. of M.N.R.E. and Chair of the Disaster Advisory Committee, Ulu Bismarck Crawley, congratulated Savaia.

"The Tsunami Ready program is critical in identifying gaps in tsunami preparedness and response at the village level and to guide the implementation

strengthening programs," he said.

"Savaia has been selected as the pilot village for this program as it has already completed the community disaster and climate risk management program and had participated in the I.O.C.'s Exercise Pacific Wave 2017 (P.A.C.W.A.V.E.17). This program will be up-scaled to become a multi-hazard readiness recognition program for Samoa."

To achieve the recognition, Savaia had to meet 10 guidelines covering hazard assessment, tsunami signage, evacuation mapping and planning, education and outreach, and 24hrs x 7days communications and response planning.

The achievements were put into action through a community

part of I.O.C.'s P.A.C.W.A.V.E.17.

The U.N.E.S.C.O.-I.O.C. Tsunami Ready pilot is performance based community recognition programme modeled after the U.S. N.O.A.A. National Weather Service's successful TsunamiReady® Program.

Tusanilefaiiao Iosefatu Reti spoke on behalf of the village.

"This is indeed a proud moment for Savaia, because never before have we realized how important it is to prepare for disasters such as Tsunami," he said.

"As I was just saying (previously in Samoa) in 2009, when the alarm about the Tsunami came, our people ran to the sea to watch the wave... now we know it is not the sea but the higher grounds that we should be going to."

privileged to be selected for this pilot program, and we want to extend to U.N.E.S.C.O. and to Dr Kong (the I.T.I.C.) our sincere appreciation as well as M.N.R.E. and all who helped us in this program. We hope that we contributed something in some way to the development of this program, so to assist you in your endeavors and with other villages that you will be looking into.

"But for today it is very touching to be present today and receive this certificates and presents from you."

And we pray to God and hope that we would not experience another Tsunami... but at least we now know what to do in the event of another one. So thank you very much and God bless!"