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# Women's Weather Watch – Fiji: TC Ella Morning Update (12th May, 2017) (</index.php/en/actions/archive/554-women-s-weather-watch-fiji-tc-ella-morning-update-12th-may-2017>)

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## Still Watching the Weather:

TC Ella is still a category 2 cyclone as of this morning. Speaking to femLINKpacific, Stephen Meke, Senior Forecaster at Fiji Meteorological Office, said the cyclone is expected to weaken as the day progresses. It's expected that TC Ella will have significant effects on the North of Fiji, including Cikobia and surrounding areas. He also said the forecast currently expects winds will be picking up from tomorrow morning and rain to fall a little heavier pick up later tonight.

The series of out-of-season cyclones including TC Ella is a sign that communities now have to be on alert and prepared at all times according to Sunia Ratulevu, Acting Director of the National Disaster Management Office, who spoke to femLINK this morning. TC Donna and Ella, he said, are examples that underscore that climate change is happening.

For femLINK's network of Rural Women Leaders, this means amplifying the ongoing call for a gender inclusive approach to disaster preparedness, response and recovery as Salome Raqiyawa from Nalalawa says:

“We need gender equality in every areas of life especially in decision-making, from grassroot level to divisional and national level. Most of the time, what women see, men don’t see... women do everything especially during and after natural disaster.”

Ratulevu also noted that the NDMO is pleased with communities response to the weather alerts, adding that they were aware of some communities in the North had already evacuated in preparation. He said the resilience of the nation depended on the resilience of the communities.

### Women are First-Responders:

According to Adi Vasulevu, convenor in the Northern Division including Rabi, Labasa is bracing for the worst but has yet to see much change in the weather.

Vasulevu also noted concern as she is unable to connect with rural women leaders via mobile to women in villages in rural Macuata, specifically with our established networks in Dogotuki and Lagi.

However, what she has been able to ascertain is that women are watching for any change in wind speed as they prepare food crops should the situation take a turn for the worse.

Further connecting with femLINKpacific’s network of rural women leaders from around the country, it is clear that women need information to be able to prepare and mobilise their communities.

According to Fane Boseiwaqa, convenor for Ba/Tavua/Rakiraki, while the sun continues to shine, women leaders are continue to mobilise to ensure that they have water, food and secure homes.

She added that while the area currently have access to a few national radio stations, she has noticed a positive trend of continued weather reporting which includes radio show hosts discussing the developments with TC Ella as well.

For women leaders like Salome Raqiyawa from Nalalawa, however, living in a gulley means her community doesn’t have easy access to information but when she receives the Women’s Weather Watch SMS messages she is able to support her family and community’s preparedness plans as these are also shared with the village headman as well.

Sarojini Goundar, representative of the Nasivi Women's Group from Tavua, and Urmila Prasad, an advisory councillor from Rakiraki, both reported that their communities has been actively preparing. However, Goundar shared concerns that some families had had to borrow money to purchase preparedness supplies.

While TC Ella looks to show signs of easing, communities, including Nila Rao’s networks, are hoping the rain continues to some extent.

She explained yesterday that it had been dry for weeks and now with some rainfall, women leaders are able to water their food gardens again.

*Listen to the full podcast: <http://bit.ly/2pDpLHq> (<http://bit.ly/2pDpLHq>)*