FIJI SOUTH PACIFIC SEVERE STORM DETECTION AND WARNING SYSTEM PROJECT (SPSSD/WS)

by

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In August 1986, a South Pacific Severe Storm Detection and Warning System (SPSSD/WS) was installed by NASA at the Fiji Meteorological Service (FMS) in Nadi, Fiji. The SPSSD/WS Project was funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (U.S. AID) and administered through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The system consists of a 6.1 meter parabolic dish antenna, a satellite ground station, computer and image processing facilities. The system allows tracking of all South Pacific tropical cyclones with real-time, high resolution reception of visible and infrared cloud images from both the Japanese Geostationary Meteorological Satellite (GMS) and the U.S. Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite (GOES-WEST).

Training was also provided in system usage and operations. A course in Satellite Meteorology was also conducted at FMS by NASA. On August 19, 1986, the system was formally accepted and handed over officially to the Fijian Government.

In December 1986, the U.S. AID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) commissioned an evaluation of the SPSSD/WS. The report recognized the system as one of the most advanced of its kind in the Pacific Basin; that it has functioned

successfully since installation with only minor interruptions, and that it has become the prime tool in supporting the FMS' role as the regional tropical cyclone warning center for the Southwest Pacific. However, the report also noted that there are needed enhancements to the system. This, therefore, led to a follow-on program with U.S. AID.