Highlights

- A state of emergency is in place for Shefa Province, Vanuatu, and is likely to be extended to Tanna, Tafea, Malampa and Penama Provinces as previously inaccessible and incomunicado areas are reached and assessed.
- Communications connectivity is still very limited but plans underway for emergency services and repairs
- At least 34 schools are in use as evacuation centres
- 3,296 people are in evacuation centres (NDMO) but registration confirmation needed (OCHA)
- Water restored to up to 80% of Port Vila but in other areas, waterborne diseases such as diarrhea are a major risk
- Hospitals & supplies incurred serious damage; 2 UNICEF tents set up; supplies arrived and more en route
- Tanna Province reported deaths and massive destruction; aerial assessments carried out on 16 March show destruction of homes, buildings and crops on the Shepherd Islands (NDMO)
- UNICEF, WHO, MoH organised for six teams to be deployed throughout the reachable parts of Port Vila to start measles vaccination on 17 March. Up to 6 additional teams are expected to be trained and start by the end of this week focusing on integrated measles response (e.g. vitamin A distribution, bednets, etc). Santos and PV remain high priorities in terms of measles given the previous number of confirmed and suspected cases.

½ of population likely affected
including 60,000 children

- 37-38 evacuation centres
- 2865 people in Efate
- 216 people in Penama
- 215 people in Torba
(Source: NDMO 16 March)

Thousands more with damaged homes staying with friends, relatives

Schools/teaching suspended

- 34 schools confirmed in use as evacuation centres

UNICEF Needs*
USD 3,000,000
*subject to revision after Assessments completed
Overview and humanitarian needs

On the evening of 13 March, Tropical Cyclone Pam intensified into a Category 5 storm which hit Vanuatu, including the capital Port Vila. The storm caused significant damage, particularly in the central and southern parts of Vanuatu. The island nation of 264,700 people is heavily reliant on subsistence agriculture, fishing and tourism.

There is a lack of reliable data beyond Port Vila; roads and bridges are damaged. Helicopter inspections of Santo, Lumbai and Lamuka suggest limited damage. Aerial assessments by an alliance of France, Australia and New Zealand military (FRANZ) are underway to guide priorities for immediate relief as well as assessment missions in the coming days. An aerial survey was done for the north of Shefa province, which showed that the majority of household had been destroyed, with a large storm surge having passed across low lying islands. The New Zealand military flight inspected the Tanna airfield today, and plan a trial landing there tomorrow. There is no updated official information on injuries or fatalities, which still stands at 20 confirmed injuries and six fatalities in Port Vila.

Commercial flights resumed on Monday 16 March, and humanitarian workers and supplies are arriving to supplement the pre-positioned supplies and those brought in by the FRANZ flights, while stranded families, including tourists, will be able to depart.

The town of Port Vila is slowly regaining functionality with a fuel station and a few shops opening for limited periods. Supermarkets were selling off fresh and frozen foodstuffs at discounted prices due to the lack of electricity and refrigeration. Mobile coverage continues to be intermittent, and Internet access is reliant on a few slow connection points; however plans are in being made for recovery.

The National Disaster Management Office has a coordination structure of humanitarian clusters in which UNICEF participates. Pending information and initial assessment, these clusters are working to define suitable estimates against which to plan capacity, supply and financial needs.

There are at least 37-38 evacuation centers, mainly located in schools and churches, in Efate and six in Torba and Penama, with a total of 3,296 (NDMO) – 3,300 (OCHA) persons sleeping in them and accessing some limited food distribution. The numbers are in flux and registration is difficult as most people are not there during the day as they are out trying to recover possessions, guard land and find food and health care. An initial assessment of conditions and needs in these evacuation centres in Port Vila was carried out on 15 March and results are due shortly.

With the little information available, especially from Tafea Province, it is clear that substantial support for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) will be required. Water supply in the capital Port Vila is back in perhaps 80% of areas. However, concerns continue to be raised regarding water safety, and provision of clean water to unserved areas and general WASH services in crowded places such as evacuation centres, is urgent. It is also urgent to assess needs outside of Port Vila.

Health infrastructure has been severely damaged, including the national hospital in Port Vila. UNICEF has dispatched health emergency kits from prepositioned stocks in Fiji, to complement the supplies maintained in Port Vila, and other partners have also flown in supplies: more are needed. Disease outbreaks are a concern, particularly for diarrhoea. Malnutrition is also a concern as there are food shortages and damage to root crops. With a measles outbreak just a few months ago, it is crucial that the just started measles campaign is successful and rolls out to the whole country. A cold chain and supply assessment is a priority for the rest of Efate and other provinces.

Humanitarian leadership and coordination

The Prime Minister of Vanuatu has declared a state of emergency for Shefa province (where the capital island is located), and is likely to expand this to other affected provinces pending rapid assessment data. The NDMO is prioritizing logistics, roads and communications as a prerequisite to generating a clear picture of impact and needs. The Government emphasizes that data collection and information management are critical to planning the response.
The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) is coordinating the response with support from numerous agencies and bilateral arrangements between Governments and major partners. The Emergency Operation Center (EOC) is functional with 24 hour radio broadcasts relayed throughout the country, and monitoring supported by the Vanuatu Humanitarian Team (VHT) members. Two UNICEF staff members have been assigned support roles within the EOC. A United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team arrived in Port Vila on 16 March as well as staff from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). This additional capacity will be placed at the disposal of NDMO.

UNICEF’s response

**Education**

Save the Children is expected to support the Ministry of Education with Cluster leadership, supported by UNICEF. To date, over 28 schools are being used as evacuation centres in Efate and six in Torba and Penama. There is structural damage to a majority of schools in these provinces and therefore a need to set up temporary schools and WASH facilities. Tents, school-in-a-box kits and early childhood kits are being supplied by UNICEF to set up safe temporary learning and recreation spaces for children. A temporary school lunch programme is being considered.

**Health and nutrition**

WHO is supporting the Ministry of Health with leadership of the Health and Nutrition Cluster, supported by UNICEF and partners. Priority activities include: a measles immunization campaign by UNICEF, WHO, the Ministry of Health (MoH) and NDMO; an initial nutrition assessment, especially in evacuation centres for infant feeding; sharing the joint statement by WHO and UNICEF on infant feeding in emergencies, in order to protect children’s health from unhygienic practices associated with infant formula and other breast milk substitutes in emergencies.

Vila Central Hospital, Northern Provincial Hospital were both seriously damaged. MoH, WHO, UNICEF health and WASH staff visited the National Referral Hospital to assess damage to the buildings, equipment and supplies. All wards in the old part of the hospital are damaged and patients were relocated. The morgue is completely non-functional and UNICEF has provided body bags. UNICEF provided two tents, one for patient assessment and a clinical services tent, while medical surge staff has begun to arrive to diagnose and treat patients.

The central medical store was affected, as well as the central cold storage facility where vaccines are kept. The health colleagues in Port Vila continue to work on the EPI cold store facilities to restore and secure the cold chain.

A first additional stock of emergency health kits and essential medicines is scheduled to arrive in Port Vila on 16 March. A list of urgent supplies for an estimated 100,000 affected people was prepared by UNICEF in collaboration with WHO and MoH. The monitoring of potential disease outbreaks was established by WHO, and UNICEF is adding identification of at-risk groups to the surveillance.

Preventing the spread of measles is a high priority for UNICEF support. UNICEF, WHO and Ministry of Health staff have worked tirelessly before and after the Cyclone to organise an immunization campaign. Six teams will be deployed throughout the accessible areas of Port Vila to start measles vaccinations on 17 March. Up to six additional teams are expected to be trained and will start by the end of this week, focusing on integrated measles response including vitamin A distribution and bed nets. Santo Espiritu Island and Port Vila remain high priorities in terms of measles vaccinations, given the previous number of confirmed and suspected cases.
Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

UNICEF is co-leading the WASH response with the Directorate of Geology Mines and Water Resources (DGMRW) and supporting the health response. Save the Children (SCF) have confirmed they will provide an education cluster coordinator. The gender and child protection cluster has reviewed child protection needs, in particular concerns for unaccompanied children and around child/gender based violence. Reports have come in from the Mele and Beverly Hills neighbourhoods in Port Villa, which currently have no access to water. They have separate piped water supply systems that are not functioning due to lack of power. UNICEF assessed both areas and will support establishing an emergency water supply in collaboration with DGMRWR and the fire department. Water tanks will be positioned at strategic locations and supplied with water by the fire department, which is accessing fire hydrants from UNELCO.

Child protection

For the protection cluster, UNICEF is dispatching 60 recreation kits to support child friendly spaces and temporary learning spaces. This will bring to a total 69 recreation kits (9 already in Port Vila) to reach a total of 6,210 children (90 children per kit). There have been reports of domestic violence, mostly between adults in evacuation centres. The 28 Port Vila evacuation centers were assessed on 15 March and results will be shared shortly. UNICEF will provide support to these centres if water trucking is required. Additional technical expertise has been deployed from UNICEF Pacific and the East Asia and Pacific regional office to support key interventions, including psycho-social support for children. Essential supplies to set up safe spaces for children are being dispatched to complement available stocks in Port Vila.

Communications for communities

In the aftermath of disasters like Cyclone Pam, it is essential to support widespread multi-media and interpersonal campaigns to inform affected families about essential precautionary measures to protect their health and safety. Immediate needs include production and distribution of communication materials, including print and other media. Digicel has provided funds for some free cell phone use and has restored most service to Port Vila and is working to reconnect other areas of the country (OCHA).

The NDMO has a communication plan in place which includes:
- Radio: pre-recorded messages with VBTC national radio
- TV: advert prepared for airing on national TV when this is functional
- Mobile phones: emergency text messages with updated information will be sent to all TVL and Digicel phone users.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation staff are working with Vanuatu BTC to operationalize this plan once radio broadcasts are working again.

Supply and logistics

Bauerfield International airport opened again for commercial flights on 16 March. A number of shipping vessels are due to arrive Vanuatu from 16 March onwards. A light aircraft relocated to New Caledonia for the duration of the cyclone has returned to Port Vila and will begin functioning between the islands. The FRANZ alliance is operating cargo flights from various locations in Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia.
UNICEF has been working with NDMO, WFP and other partners on a logistics plan for smooth distribution of humanitarian supplies from designated hubs.

Tuvalu, Solomon Islands, and Kiribati

TUVALU

A state of emergency has been declared in Tuvalu, following tidal surges caused by Cyclone Pam. Communication with the outer islands continues to be a huge concern with power shortage and satellite phones running out of charge.

Food security is an issue - pulaka pits (where crops grow) have been destroyed, and livestock killed. No impact to schools or early childhood centres have been reported, although some health facilities have been destroyed in the northern islands. Schools and dispensaries are acting as evacuation centres. A damage assessment team left on 16 March to conduct a rapid assessment.

Following past droughts in Tuvalu, UNICEF and Secretariat of the Pacific Community have been collaborating on WASH assessments. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), in collaboration with Tuvalu Red Cross, will be airlifting WASH supplies on 17 March. The flight will include 50 hygiene kits and 50 water containers. In collaboration with IFRC, UNICEF will provide additional supplies including soap, water containers and purification tablets.

An initial assessment of Temotu province is being conducted. The government of Solomon Islands have released SBD 3.5 million (US $450,000) in funds to respond to the situation in Temotu province. However, additional funding may be required depending on the assessment report.

UNICEF will provide support in the following areas – child protection, education, health and WASH - and will continue to work in relevant clusters to respond to all affected children and families.

KIRIBATI

Four metre high waves were experienced in Kiribati on 13 March, causing extensive damage to the Dai Nippon Causeway, resulting in its closure to all traffic. Hospital patients have been transferred to a gymnasium on Bairiki. There have been no reports on the numbers affected or extent of damage so far. A small consignment of basic emergency supplies had been mobilised prior to the event to complement existing contingency stocks and will reach Kiribati by 24 March.

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