Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

A state of emergency remains in effect on the island of Ambae until 13 July as the activity of the Manaro Voui volcano remains unpredictable. On 7 June, the threat level of the Manaro Voui volcano is categorized as “major unrest state”, and was lowered from volcanic alert level three to level two; with the danger zone now limited to a 2 km radius from the active vent. Parts of Ambae Island have been blanketed with ash for weeks, and although volcanic activity has recently decreased, light ashfall continues to be experienced in some northern parts of the island. In previous weeks, the ashfall had increased the risk of landslides, two of which were triggered by heavy rain and destroyed all houses in two affected communities. Residents in the most ash-affected communities left their homes and evacuated to designated safe zones. Some 2,000 residents remain displaced on Ambae living with host communities or in evacuation centres on the island.

On-island evacuation centres are reported to have up to 50 people sharing sanitation facilities, however, no disease outbreaks have been recorded to date by health colleagues. Two major health facilities are still operating on Ambae

1 National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) Situation Update 17, Ambae Volcanic Activity, 29 May 2018
Island, and mobile government emergency health teams, continue to support displaced people and those in high risk locations through daily outreach activities.

**Humanitarian Leadership and Coordination**

From 13 April, until 13 July 2018, the Government of Vanuatu has declared a state of emergency covering Ambae Island to allow for a phased relocation of all Ambae residents to safe areas. The government published a Response and Early Recovery Humanitarian Action Plan, which adopts a three-phased approach to address the emergency: the short-term emergency phase (April-June); the intermediate term (July-December) and the long term (2019-2020). The NDMO is tasked to manage the short-term emergency phase and the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) will assume leadership of the intermediate to long term phases. The NDMO is working with respective government-led clusters to coordinate both on ground response and planning. UNICEF is supporting the clusters for WASH, Education, Gender and Protection, and Health and Nutrition. The Pacific Humanitarian Team has provided support for Logistics (via WFP), Information Management (via OCHA) and Resettlement (via IOM).

On a voluntary-basis, assisted relocation of Ambae Island residents to Maewo Island is being planned by the Government, with four permanent relocation sites currently identified with a total area of over 1000 hectares. Authorities in Vanuatu are currently establishing how many people will be seeking relocation to Maewo.

The four permanent relocation sites identified are on the nearby island of Maewo, which has a total land area of over 1,000 hectares. These are Sanason (south), Ulu and Naruru (central) and Loloruku (north). Loloruku has access to water within two kilometres of the site, whilst the other sites require roads to be built. The number of families that can be accommodated is currently being determined, with UNICEF supporting the government’s WASH team’s efforts to assess the sites. UNICEF stands ready to support respective Ministries in preparing these sites prior to any resettlement occurring. The relocation will be voluntary and arranged on a community basis; meaning that during the transfer, the protection and safety of vulnerable community members (children, elderly, female-headed headed households, and those with special needs) will be prioritized and facilitated by the Police and the Vanuatu Mobile Force (VMF). Traditional government services will be provided to both those who decide to relocate and people who remain on Ambae. Continued services on Ambae are likely to be scaled back and redistributed to Maewo and this will become clearer once the number relocating is finalised.

### Estimated Population in Need of Humanitarian Assistance
(Source: 2016 mini-census figures)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start of humanitarian response:</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population in Need</td>
<td>11,600</td>
<td>5,893</td>
<td>5,707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children (Under 18)</td>
<td>5,220</td>
<td>2,652</td>
<td>2,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children Under Five</td>
<td>1,659</td>
<td>843</td>
<td>816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children 6 to 23 months</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant and lactating women</td>
<td>360</td>
<td></td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school students</td>
<td>937</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school students</td>
<td>2,669</td>
<td>1,356</td>
<td>1,313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) learners</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ambae Volcano Safety Map Source: Vanuatu Meteorology and Geohazards Department, 7 June 2018
Humanitarian Strategy

On 1 June, the Government of Vanuatu released a Guidance Note for Partner Agencies, clarifying the government’s intention to facilitate voluntary relocations of Ambae island residents to land identified on nearby islands; where they will be allocated land on which to develop a ‘second home’. Some may choose to permanently relocate to these new sites. The evacuation is a close collaboration between national and provincial governments.

UNICEF’s strategy will be aligned with government priorities and will cover both the communities remaining in Ambae and those households moving to permanent relocation sites. UNICEF is supporting respective ministry counterparts in the development and adjustment of sectoral response plans, including supply requirements.

UNICEF’s commitments to Ambae include both longstanding development related activities and support to returnees from the last evacuation; these will be adjusted in consultation with donors, national and local government partners. For example, planned upgrading of rainwater catchments in Ambae’s primary and secondary schools may be partially re-directed to off-island schools accepting Ambae students. Support to resettlement sites, following initial fast-track activities, will be absorbed with the existing long term commitments to the province.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Education

Some 600 Ambae secondary school students were relocated in late May and early June to boarding schools on Aore, Maewo and Santo islands. Some secondary schools have yet to relocate and it is unclear at this stage whether they will relocate due to the voluntary nature of the relocation. Primary school and ECCE centre relocations will be determined later in June when NDMO have completed on-island community consultations. The MoET is currently working to grant fee exemptions for Ambae and host community schools.

- 10 tents from the 2017 evacuation have been reassembled, with support from Vanuatu Red Cross Society volunteers, to support host schools on Santo and Malo islands.
- 20 school in a box kits have been provided to schools in Aore, Maewo, Malo, Pentecost and Santo islands to benefit over 600 displaced secondary school pupils.
- 14 recreation kits and 1,400 pieces of soap distributed to support host schools and temporary learning spaces on Ambae Island only. The Provincial Education Office have assisted with the distribution. Monitoring planned for June will determine numbers of children that benefitted from this.
- 18 new UNICEF tents shipped to Maewo Island in anticipation of the need to prepare shelter for relocated primary schools and ECCE centres. Vanuatu Mobile Forces have been assisting with assembly of a number of these at Gambule and Sulua schools for use as classrooms and dormitories.
- UNICEF is working with the MoET to support the shelter needs of teachers from relocated schools in all the aforementioned locations.
- UNICEF is currently working with the MoET Facilities Unit and the MoH to develop appropriate sanitation solutions for host schools, the majority of which have a severe lack of WASH facilities to meet the needs of the additional students.

Child Protection

UNICEF is continuing to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYSD) in organizing protection teams that are being deployed to Ambae and Maewo to initiate psychosocial activities (PSS) for children, establish/re-establish protection referral systems and provide assistance to vulnerable groups. This is being done in close coordination with the MoET, Save the Children and Just Play for PSS activities in schools on Ambae; with plans for PSS activities also to be conducted on Pentecost and Maewo. UNICEF-supported PSS activities are ongoing at schools on Ambae.

UNICEF provided technical assistance to the Gender and Protection cluster in the development of CPiE messages for use on Ambae.

During the 2017 evacuation, UNICEF provided materials to the Civil Registry Office needed for issuing identity cards (ID) that allowed for more than 4,000 cards to be issued. These materials continue to be used by the Civil Registry
Office on Ambae, where efforts are being made to complete provision of IDs to all residents with more than 2,500 ID cards issued on Ambae in May. ID cards are important to access services during the relocation process.

UNICEF visited the Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) in West Ambae in May and provided technical assistance to support coordination efforts. UNICEF also supported the delivery of information and public messages to evacuation centres in West Ambae.

Health & Nutrition

Dry cough, skin infections, diarrhoea, and ash related conjunctivitis and influenza are amongst the common health conditions reported by outpatient clinics for the affected population on Ambae. No death has been reported.

As of 31 May, the number of children under five years admitted to hospital has fluctuated between 5 and 9 in Lolowai and Nduidui hospitals. Improvements are needed for routine public health, MCH and EPI, and some other clinical services (e.g. psychosocial counselling, rehabilitation and dental services) for on-island evacuees, which are suffering mainly due to human resource shortages. The Ministry of Health (MoH) is working to address a number of issues to improve services including: procurement of an ECG, cardiac monitor and personal protective equipment; establishing improved internet access at clinics; human resource assistance in the EOC, laboratory and pharmacy; repairs to a doctor’s house; and hardship allowance for staff deployed.

UNICEF is working with health sector partners, including the MoH and WHO to assess the health and nutrition needs of children under five years and mothers. With a 26 per cent stunting rate in the country as a whole, children are likely to be particularly vulnerable in emergency contexts. The assessment will help determine the requirements for nutrition supplies, including growth monitoring devices and Vitamin A supplements and therapeutic foods for children with severe acute malnutrition.

Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH)

Access to safe water on the island has been challenging, even prior to the recent ash fall. The western part of Ambae traditionally faces an intense dry season between July and November, with little potable groundwater and no surface water. In several locations, there is a heavy reliance on rainwater harvesting, a practice compromised by the ash, which has settled on the roofs and gutters used to collect rainwater. In 36 per cent of samples taken during recent water quality testing there has been notably high (> 1.5 mg/L) fluoride concentrations, which exceed recommendations for children over a long period. However, given the geology of Vanuatu’s islands, this is common for the groundwater sources and is largely unrelated to the current volcanic activity. Some 50 per cent of samples have shown one or more elements which, although not considered a significant health risk, discolor and change the taste of water.

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UNICEF provided funding for the management of WASH supplies delivered by donors to a staging post on Santo Island. The materials were provided by the FRANZ partners and delivered to Santo. The WASH team has utilized NDMO-organized boats to transport materials to relocation sites on Maewo Island.

UNICEF is supporting the Department of Water Resources (DoWR) in the hiring of contractors to coordinate and prepare relocation sites on Maewo. This work will commence once the land tenure is secured by the Government.

UNICEF has supported the DoWR in completing assessments and designs of six direct gravity fed water systems on Ambae. Hiring of contractors for the rehabilitation of these systems on Ambae was put on hold following the government decision for relocation to be on a voluntary basis. The senior level government Relocation Task Force has approved rehabilitation/construction of at least three of the six water systems serving safe zones of Ambae with the work due to put out to tender by the DoWR.

UNICEF provides the MoH with hygiene and dignity kits for the population of Ambae, as well as support for WASH in health care facilities.

A total of 2,420 pieces of soap were provided to host schools and temporary learning spaces in Ambae (1,400) and other islands (1,020).

1,000 WASH and dignity kits for displaced secondary school students are currently pending customs clearance in Port Vila.

UNICEF is working with the Education and WASH clusters to support WASH facilities in schools with improved rainwater catchment systems. Water tanks and guttering have been sent to three host schools in Sanma during the reporting period.
Communications for Development (C4D)

- UNICEF provided inputs, in consultations conducted by the NDMO, to develop standard messaging for communities on the movement of people. The NDMO is distributing these at the community level through various mediums including through chiefs, authorities, churches and partners.
- UNICEF continues to support the clusters in messaging and communication materials primarily in the WASH, Gender and Protection and Education sectors.
- UNICEF is supporting coordination between agencies working on PSS including the Ministry of Youth, Sports Development, Ministry of Education and Training, Save the Children and other agencies active in this area. Coordination between agencies working on PSS helps to ensure there is no overlap in activities, that gaps are identified and met and that information and PSS resources are discussed and shared.

Media and External Communication

- International media have interviewed UNICEF staff regarding UNICEF’s support to children and families affected by Manaro Volcano, including Radio Australia’s Wantok Sevis (Tok Pisin).
- UNICEF staff visited Ambae and Santo islands on two occasions during the reporting period. Stories and photos were collected and shared through the UNICEF Pacific social media pages, including on the distribution of UNICEF WASH and dignity kits as well as the preparation and movement of Ambae secondary school students to Santo.
- Since April 2018, through social media, UNICEF Pacific has reached: Facebook - 46,087 people (total of 10 posts); Twitter - 32,629 people (total of 28 tweets) with the hashtag #StrongerThanManaro having been used by 75,047 people. The total number of people engaged through social media, since the most recent volcanic activity began, is 153,763.

Security

On 7 June, the threat level of the Manaro Voui volcano on Ambae is at “major unrest state” and was lowered from volcanic alert level three to level two. Furthermore, the danger zone is now limited to 2 km radius from the active vent. The small scale eruption in Lake Voui has now ceased. A Joint Police / VMF team has been deployed for the duration of the three-month state of emergency enacted on 13 April, and will be providing security and assistance during the voluntary relocation of the Ambae Island residents. The main threats currently posed to residents and actors on the island relate to natural hazards including flooding, landslides, ash inhalation and ash fall.

Funding

In May, the government announced a total budget deficit of US$93 million for the Ambae response, and US$55 million for the TC Hola response. For Ambae, the deficit was broken down into US$6 million for the immediate phase, US$14 million for the intermediate, and US$73 million for the long term. However, with the relocation now being voluntary, these figures will be subject to revision once the number of relocations and relocation sites are known. Once final humanitarian needs have been determined and agreed on with the Government, UNICEF will also review its response and funding requirements.

UNICEF acknowledges the generous contributions from the governments and people of New Zealand and South Korea, as well as the support from the New Zealand National Committee for UNICEF. We also wish to thank partners who have contributed to Global Humanitarian Thematic (GHT) funding, which has enabled UNICEF to flexibly respond to humanitarian needs arising from the volcanic activity on Ambae in a timely and efficient manner.

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