HIGHLIGHTS

UNICEF Pacific Representative, Mr. Sheldon Yett, presented his credentials to the Prime Minister of Vanuatu, Hon. Charlot Salwai Tabimasmas

To date 73 per cent of children under five have been registered, while 86 per cent of children under 18 years have their birth recorded in the national birth registration system

3,318 people including 1,427 women and 497 children benefitted from a project targeting 15 peri-urban communities in Port Vila through a UNICEF contract with World Vision to support Department of Water WASH recovery plans

34 schools on Tanna that are awaiting rebuilding of TC Pam damaged classrooms received replacement UNICEF tented learning spaces to ensure uninterrupted schooling, a collaboration between UNICEF, Ministry of Education & Training and World Vision

50 participants were trained in the Community Facilitation Package (“Children are our Future”) as part of pilot-testing of the Child Protection materials due for release in early 2017

155 youth volunteers trained in child protection by UNICEF and its partners, Ministry of Justice & Community Services, Ministry of Youth, Sports Development & Training, and the Vanuatu National Youth Council participated in the National Games held in December during which they disseminated messages on respect and child protection

UNICEF Vanuatu Field Office together with key partners and 300 children joined countries around the world to celebrate UNICEF’s 70th anniversary with a sports festival

The UN Resident Coordinator and the Vanuatu Prime Minister together with the UN Coordination Officer for the Joint Presence Office visited the Shepherds Islands of Tongoa, Tongariki, Mataso, Buninga and Makira
Overview

Ongoing support by UNICEF to both the Vanuatu National Recovery TC Pam plan and longer term development activities within line Ministries is to be fully embedded in the 2017 Business Plans of respective Ministries. This aims to reinforce Government systems by reflecting support ‘on plan and on budget’. Benefits include greater ownership, mutual accountability, transparency and commitments in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Health, Nutrition, Education and Child Protection.

The Prime Minister’s Office unveiled the draft Vanuatu National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP), “Vanuatu 2030: The Peoples Plan” on 16 November. UN Agencies, including UNICEF, were a part of the consultative validation process. Requests have been made to the PM’s Office for logical frameworks to facilitate more substantive reviews and input into the broad framework and to better understand the monitoring plans and structure.

Within the emerging UN Pacific Strategy, UNICEF Pacific has embarked on a five-year (2018-2022) Multi-Country Programme Document (MCPD) for approval by the UNICEF Executive Board in September 2017. This is informed by a Situation Analysis of Children and aligns with national sustainable development plans. It will guide programming priorities and commitments across the 14 Pacific Island Countries over the next five-year period. An accompanying Country Programme Management Plan detailing operational requirements including technical and financial capacity is under development to ensure achievement of aspirations outlined in the MCPD.

Mr. Sheldon Yett, UNICEF Pacific Representative to the 14 Pacific Island Countries including Vanuatu, presented his credentials to the Prime Minister of Vanuatu, Hon. Charlot Salwai Tabimasmas on 5 December. Mr. Yett thanked the government of Vanuatu for their continuous support and discussed the new five year country programme which begins in 2018. In response, the Prime Minister thanked Mr. Yett for UNICEF’s commitment to better the lives of children in Vanuatu and sent assurances to work with development partners including the UN to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

The UN Resident Coordinator and the Vanuatu Prime Minister together with the UN Coordination Officer for the Joint Presence Office visited the Shepherds Islands of Tongoa, Tongariki, Mataso, Buninga and Makira on 3 December. The visit provided an opportunity to open multi-purpose community halls and fishing centres with the handover of accompanying fishing and sewing gear. The project supports building of Ni-Vanuatu resilience by helping communities diversify their livelihoods following cyclone Pam (2015) and the effects of El Nino. Partnerships with local NGOs and commercial banks provided opportunities for skill building of local communities.

Vanuatu Association of Sports and National Olympic Committee (VASANOC) and Olympic Solidarity partnered with UNICEF to host a day of fun activities, for about 300 children on 18 November to commemorate UNICEF’s 70th anniversary and Universal Children’s Day. The sports festival aimed to increase children’s knowledge of their own rights and the shared UNICEF / Olympic values of respect, fair play, and caring for the environment. The activities also raised awareness around healthy living and aimed to increase the interest of children in the national sports federation development programme. With a theme of ‘playing to learn and learning to play’, different sports federations under VASANOC ran activity stations offering: archery, basketball, cricket, football, hockey, rugby, netball, and athletics for the children. Key partners including Ministry of Education & Training, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Youth, Sports Development and Training, Civil Registry and Vital Statistics, the Just Play Programme, UNICEF Pacific Ambassadors – Vanuatu Beach Volleyball Team, and non-government organisations including Oxfam set up awareness booths to inform children on key issues.

The United Nations Country Team convened a strategic prioritization retreat in Suva, Fiji in early November to determine the UN Pacific Strategy outcome areas for the 2018-2022 cycle. Aligned with the National Sustainable Development Plans (NSDP) of the 14 PICs, the new framework identified the following possible priority areas for UN intervention: economic growth and poverty reduction; water security, food security and sanitation; basic services – inclusive of health, education and protection; and environment, climate change and disaster management. Emerging issues include Vanuatu’s graduation from a Least Developing Country (LDC) status and related challenges. Cross cutting issues include: monitoring and evaluation and ICT; gender equality and equity; disaster and emergency planning, and preparedness; and coordination.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

A WASH in Schools (WinS) concept paper submitted to New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) through the UNICEF New Zealand National Committee has been approved. UNICEF begun recruitment of a consultant to develop a five-year project that will commence mid-2017 and be implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Education & Training (MoET) in Penama Province. A complementary WASH in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Centres initiative funded by Dubai Cares, a United Arab Emirates-based global philanthropic organization working towards providing children with access to quality education, will also be implemented in Penama province. These two projects will formally roll-out UNICEF’s 3-star approach in the Penama province with a possibility of scaling up to national level in the future.

An extension to the Water for Life Project targeting Tanna Island in TAFEA Province has been approved. The additional time permits on-site technical input by CARE through an addendum to an ongoing Programme Cooperation Agreement for WASH recovery activities in Erromango, Aniwa and Tanna.

With MFAT recovery funding, UNICEF together with World Vision, CARE and OXFAM are implementing WASH recovery contracts for the Department of Water (DoW). Geographically, World Vision works in Port Vila peri-urban areas and South Tanna, CARE works in Erromango, Aniwa and Tanna, and OXFAM works in Epi and Emau. UNICEF provides technical assistance to the project in the above mentioned areas.

Under this recovery commitment, a total of 3,318 people (including 1,427 women and 497 children) in 15 communities benefitted from a WASH recovery project in peri-urban Port Vila through repairs conducted on 302 water access points by World Vision, funded through UNICEF support. World Vision completed community rain water harvesting packages to 89 households and two churches. In addition, four large rain water harvesting systems were completed in three communities together with the distribution of information education and communication materials that included messaging on water preservation and tips of water use during droughts. World Vision continues to progress with their DoW WASH recovery contract in South Tanna.

Also under the DoW contract, 25 Drinking Water Safety and Security Plans (DWSSP) and 10 Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation (PHAST) community trainings were undertaken in Epi by OXFAM (MFAT funded through UNICEF). The PHAST trainings covers problem identification, problem analysis, planning for solutions, selection of options and planning for new facilities and behaviour change initiatives. Topics covered in the DWSSP trainings included water management committees and their functions, description of current water systems, risk assessment of current systems, improvement plan for the community systems, operation, monitoring and maintenance, and water management procedures.

In Erromango, Tanna and Aniwa the CARE recovery partnership with UNICEF incorporates PHAST and DWSSP trainings and water and sanitation upgrades. CARE has also integrated menstrual hygiene management (MHM) into its WASH recovery for schools in Tafea province.
UNICEF supports CARE to ensure girls stay in school, a key focus of menstrual hygiene management (MHM). Absence of a clean toilet at school solely for girls’ use is a big concern to female students, even more so when they menstruate. Many girls opt to stay at home rather than risk embarrassment at school. This was the major issue raised by most school girls when asked by CARE about barriers to their school attendance. To celebrate World Toilet Day on 19 November CARE worked with school children, teachers, school management and their respective communities to spread messages on ensuring toilets are clean, safe and private spaces. The event in Tanna included the official hand over of the new school toilet facility, with the girls’ toilets being designed to accommodate menstrual management needs. Fun activities through the day focused on good hand washing practices and skills needed to build an improved latrine.

UNICEF in collaboration with Tufts University is conducting a study of the water use elements of the DWSSP utilizing data from both Oxfam and CARE who have been implementing DWSSP. The study aims to determine the effectiveness of both Oxfam and CARE approaches to DWSSP implementation to allow comparison and lessons in taking the approach to scale in Vanuatu.

With UNICEF emergency funding, the DoW and the Department of Public Works completed an extension to the Luganville water system (to Banban outside Luganville town) and rehabilitation of community water systems in South, Central and North West Malekula. The Lamap water system constructed by ADRA utilizing MFAT funding is still in progress with a completion date of March 2017. World Vision is moving ahead to develop a water system in East Malo with a completion date of December 2017. Complications surrounding the water source and in securing alternative spring-based water supplies caused delays in the project.

The WASH consultancy in UNICEF Vanuatu Field Office (VFO) in support of sectoral assessments, Information Management and WASH in Schools will see a change as the incumbent leaves Vanuatu after two years. A UNICEF funded TA for the development of the national water policy has been identified and will begin January 2017 as a secondee to MoLNR/DoW. UNICEF is currently seeking funding for a request from the Ministry of Health (MoH) for the development of a national policy around hygiene and sanitation.

Health and Nutrition

The First Annual Review Meeting on the DFAT funded Reproductive Maternal Newborn Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) – a UN Joint Programme was conducted with high level participation from the government. Represented were: Prime Minister’s Office (Health sector analyst), Ministry of Health (DG, Directors of Public Health and Curative services and key technical experts), Provincial Health Management teams from all 6 provinces (Provincial Health Managers, RH focal points, Hospital Chiefs) and RMNCAH coordinators of 4 pilot provinces. Professional institutions (Nursing School), NGO and UN agency representatives, as well as donor agencies were represented at the consultation. As a managing agency for RMNCAH, UNICEF participants included the UNICEF Pacific Representative and the Chief of UNICEF Vanuatu. As Joint Programme members (UNJP), WHO and UNFPA colleagues participated at the event where the first National RMNCAH strategy and implementation plan for 2017-2020 was launched by MoH. The RMNCAH Strategy targets and indicators have been aligned with NDSP and the National Health Sector Strategy for 2017-2020. The meeting and launch of the National RMNCAH strategy were well covered by local media.

The health sector business plan, with incorporation of the RMNCAH UNJP inputs for 2017 at the national and decentralized levels, was discussed and improved at the event. Discussions were around lessons learnt from 2016 implementation, priorities identified by bottleneck analysis, and recommendations made during presentations and discussions. MoH presented its’ new policy to expand the RMNCAH approach to all six provinces of Vanuatu in the 2017 MoH Business plan (beyond the existing four provinces of Sanma, Penama,
Malampa and Shefa), reiterating its request for support to Torba and Tafea provinces under the RMNCAH UNJP framework. In consultations with MoH, the UNJP agencies agreed to support the two additional provinces through building of local capacity in core technical areas during 2017.

Implementation of the immunisation programme outreach activities for the third quarter of 2016 has been completed in all six provinces. Currently MoH is planning for the first quarter of 2017. Supportive supervision visits on Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) activities has to date reached 62 health facilities across five provinces, with Torba planned for 2017. The quality and accountability of supportive supervision has greatly improved through the use of electronic forms via mobile smart phones.

The contractor’s report on installation and repair of solar chill refrigerators was received with verification conducted on 80 per cent of the sites. The quality of the work has been high and only a few needed some minor rectification. The overall national capacity of health facilities with working cold chain has increased to 80 percent. 90 per cent of the cold chain equipment is solar powered.

Education

A further 48 replacement tents have been shipped to Tanna and distributed by World Vision in close collaboration with the Provincial Education Officer to 34 schools that include 14 ECCE Centres, 17 primary schools and three secondary schools. Since schools are closing for the Christmas break, these replacement tents will be kept in boxes for use in the new school year which begins in February 2017. Collection of old tent canvases is being undertaken and disposal is under negotiation with a Chinese company on the ground.

The last 20 replacement tents have arrived in Port Vila. Six will be used by the recovery project on Tanna to house displaced students while reconstruction is taking place at schools. A further four are to be used by the recovery project in Shefa Province. The remaining tents have been assigned by MoET to four schools that have requested tent replacement.

Joint monitoring visit to schools on Penama included staff from School Based Management, Zone Curriculum Advisor (ZCA), Coordinator from the provincial office and Vanuatu Education Sector Programme (VESP) Communication Officer. One finding from the visit was the extremely high percentage of overage children in ECCEs and grades 1 and 2. In three of the schools visited, about 90 per cent of children were over the age for their class. One of the most cited reasons was that parents held children back at home and only sent them to schools when they felt they had reached the age to attend, not the recommended age in national policies. This also suggests a lack of awareness on the importance of education and particularly on children being in the right class for their age.

Implementation of the Vanuatu School Based In-service Teacher Training (VANSBITT) is progressing well. The modules aim to improve literacy through teachers’ engagement with children on fun activities including reading aloud to them in class. Since training of the ZCAs, staff in 19 out of 67 schools have completed the module and are implementing the strategies in their classes. Feedback from teachers who have applied the strategies through reflective journals, report higher levels of engagement by students. One of the teachers noted that classroom management was no longer an issue as the children were participating and engaging well. It was suggested to Principals that professional development of staff through Vanuatu School Based In-service Teacher Training (VANSBITT), be included in the schools’ Annual Workplan for 2017.

Child Protection
The first **National Child Protection Policy 2016-2026** was officially launched by the Prime Minister on the International Day to Eliminate Gender Based Violence on 25 November. The Ministry of Justice & Community Services (MoJCS)-led policy that was supported by UNICEF strengthens institutional and coordination arrangements at the national, provincial and community level for prevention and response to violence against children. It guides implementation of child protection systems through standard-setting and capacity-building of service providers while ensuring monitoring of the implementation.

The 2016 annual review and 2017 work plans for Vanuatu Child Protection Programme have been completed. This was undertaken through bilateral meetings with key partners (7-10 November) and a half day workshop on 11 November that brought together all stakeholders to discuss 2016 achievements, challenges and opportunities for 2017. Government partners will reflect these activities in their respective 2017 Business Plans, and final 2017 Work Plans will be shared before the end of December.

MoJCS, Ministry of Youth, Sports Development & Training (MoYSDT) and trained facilitators of the UNICEF supported Community Facilitation Package (“Children are our Future”) undertook two workshops on Tanna with a total of 50 participants. Further community workshops in Luganville and Santo rural are planned for early 2017. At the end of February 2017, all facilitators will be brought together to review the pilot training aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect.

The inter-sectoral coordination among civil registration, health, education and youth and sport development has significantly increased the rate of birth registration in Vanuatu particularly through UNICEF supported mobile registration campaigns after cyclone Pam. To date 73 per cent of children under the age of five have been registered, while 86 per cent of children under the age of 18 years have their birth recorded in the national birth registration system. The 2017 plan will include documentation of the mobile registration and multi-stakeholder registration experience as well as a review of the challenges to current birth registration processes.

In 2016, the MoYSDT continued to engage with youth for the collection of responses to a study on violence against children in Vanuatu. In October and November, MoYSDT reached out to 509 children including 222 girls in three provinces, namely, Penama, Sanma and Torba, through football-related activities, while addressing a range of development issues, including child protection.

MoYSDT, MoJCS and UNICEF conducted a two day workshop for 155 young people in Luganville, Santo. These young leaders provided support during the National Games to ensure the safety of participants and spectators, logistical arrangements, and child protection awareness. Young people disseminated two key child protection messages at the National Games: “Mi rispektem yu, yu rispektem mi” (“I respect you, you respect me”) and “Proteksen blong ol pikinini hemi nambawan responsibiliti blong yumi evriwan” (“Protection of children is the responsibility of everyone”). Youth leaders and volunteers signed a Child Protection Code of Conduct as their work during the national games involved children.

**Operations**

The UNICEF Vanuatu Field Office received contingency supplies valued at USD 14,990 for education. Due to the incompletion of school classrooms, UNICEF released a total of 96 school tents to replace the deteriorated existing tents, with World Vision distributing the tents to the schools.

Results of the seismic assessment of the UN Joint Presence Office conducted early 2016 have triggered the move of four UN agencies to a suitable single-storey leased facility in December. In parallel, the UN JPO is in discussion with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & External Trade (MoFAET) to recruit and position someone
within government. The consultant will undertake an internal review of the government to honour the hosting agreement and present a Government Options Paper for review by the Council of Ministers in early 2017.

UNICEF continues to work with government fiscal systems, an approach that is accompanied by a risk management approach of both field monitoring of activities, regular interval spot checks and financial audits by a 3rd party. Four Ministries participated in the recent audit exercise (MoLNR, MoH, MoET and MoIA). UNICEF is working with government counterparts to systematically address and strengthen systems based on audit recommendations.

Funding

UNICEF Pacific and its field office in Vanuatu appreciate 2015-2016 funding from Andorra, Australia, Estonia, France, Japan, Lithuania, New Zealand, Russia, the United Kingdom, the Oceania Football Confederation and the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. As per donor intent and conditions, some funds were used for cyclone relief and other funds are still being used for recovery and for longer term development work. The contributions of thousands of people to UNICEF National Committees for Australia, France, Hong Kong, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the USA were crucial to cyclone Pam relief. Donors who have permitted flexible re-orientation of funding to address the current El Nino challenges are highly appreciated. The Japanese Committee for Vaccines is a longstanding and critical partner. UNICEF Pacific is also grateful to donors who contribute every year at the global level to our core resources and to thematic areas within the UNICEF Global Strategic Plan.

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UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Osnat Lubrani, and the Prime Minister of Vanuatu, Hon. Charlot Salwai, opening a multi-purpose community hall during their visit to the Shepherds Islands of Tongoa, Tongariki, Mataso, Buninga and Mikara on 3 December 2016. UNICEF Pacific/2016/ Olul