WHO continues to support the Ministry of Health of Vanuatu in assessing and responding to the urgent health needs left by Cyclone Pam in coordination with international partners and aid organizations.

The number of deaths caused by Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu is currently 11, based on the figure provided by the Government of Vanuatu. This number is expected to increase further as more information becomes available.

The latest estimates indicate that 14 000 homes were destroyed in the cyclone and 166 000 people have been affected across the five provinces of Shefa, Tafea, Penama, Malampa and Torba.

The Government of Vanuatu has identified shelter, water, health and food assistance as the current priorities for the emergency response.

WHO is providing the Ministry of Health with a health assessment to help prioritise the health needs and inform how it deploys its health and emergency resources.

The Ministry of Health with support from WHO is coordinating the work of several foreign medical teams that are providing health care and emergency response services in various parts of the country.
• Medical personnel, emergency responders, search and rescue staff and supplies continue to arrive to aid in the health response.

• A shipment of health kits arrived yesterday with enough medication to provide basic primary health care to a population of 100 000 people for three months. These supplies are being distributed to health facilities now.

• In Tuvalu, no deaths have been confirmed to date. About 350 people have staying in five evacuation centers on the islands of Nui and Nukufetau. WHO is supporting the Government of Tuvalu to help ensure it gets the resources it needs for the health response.

HEALTH ASSESSMENT AND RESPONSE

Vanuatu

Assessments of health facilities by the Ministry of Health with support from WHO have been completed in the hard hit provinces of Shefa and Tafea, and are ongoing in Melampa and Penama.

21 health facilities out of a total 118 have been assessed and 15 of them suffered significant damage. Repairs are underway now.

Villa Central Hospital

• The Vila Central Hospital (VCH) is the main tertiary hospital in Vanuatu and it was significantly damaged and potions of it were flooded.

• Repairs have been ongoing to restore the hospital’s capacities.

• Laboratory capacity is being strengthened. The facility can now test for dengue fever and malaria, and is expected to soon be able to test for leptospirosis and rotavirus.

• Mental health assessment services are being set up to support people suffering from emotional trauma following the disaster.

• WHO continues to advise the Ministry of Health and its child and maternal health program on appropriate nutritional support for patients.

• There is a shortage of medical staff. The Ministry of Health with support from WHO, are working to address this problem.
Disease Surveillance:

- The risk of infectious diseases outbreaks persist following the cyclone, due to poor sanitary conditions, overcrowding in evacuation centres and limited medical care. Cases of diarrheal disease continue to be reported in many places.

- The Ministry of Health, with support from WHO, has expanded its syndromic surveillance to a total of eight sites across health facilities and evacuation centres. An additional eight surveillance sites are being set up now.

- Surveillance finding from the Vila Central Hospital are reported every day, while the other centres report their findings on a weekly basis.

- Following a Ministry of Health assessment, supported by the WHO, two early warning surveillance systems have been set up on the southern island of Tanna.

- The syndromes included in the surveillance system are:
  - Acute fever and rash
  - Prolonged fever
  - Influenza-like Illness
  - Watery diarrhoea
  - Acute jaundice syndrome
  - Malaria
  - Dengue fever

Disease Prevention

- The Ministry of Health with support from UNICEF and WHO are now conducting an immunization campaign to protect children from measles, tetanus and polio.

- Mosquito nets are being distributed to at-risk areas to help protect people from mosquitoes carrying malaria and dengue fever.

- The Ministry of Health, supported by WHO, continue to follow up on and assess reports of diarrheal disease outbreaks.

- The Ministry of Health, supported by WHO, continue to communicate prevention messages to the public via the radio every day. These messages focus on measles vaccination, diarrheal disease prevention, nutrition and protecting against malaria and dengue infection.

Treatment

- The Ministry of Health with support from WHO is working to ensure the injured get access to essential health services. These services include emergency and trauma care, maternal and child care, tuberculosis treatment and other acute and chronic disease treatments.
Health Infrastructure

- WHO is supporting the Ministry of Health in rebuilding damaged or destroyed health infrastructure by providing assistance in assessing and repairing health facilities and cold storage systems.

Coordination

- WHO continues to provide coordination support to the Ministry of Health throughout the response by:
  - Co-chairing with the Ministry of Health the Health Cluster group leading the health response;
  - Supporting management of case loads and patient flow at Vila Central Hospital; and
  - Providing administrative support for the registration and assessment of incoming foreign medical teams.

Tuvalu

- The Government of Tuvalu has declared a state of emergency and has requested assistance from the international community.

- No deaths have been confirmed to date.

- About 350 people have been staying in five evacuation centers on the islands of Nui and Nukufetau.

- Electricity and communications systems are still down in many places.

- The Government of Tuvalu has urgently requested water, medical supplies, insect repellent to protect against mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue fever, shelter and food.

- WHO is supporting the Government of Tuvalu to ensure it gets the resources it needs for the response.

- WHO is coordinating the deployment of specialists, including an environmental health specialist and an expert in water and sanitation.

CONTACT

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