Situation Update #02, 15 March 2023
Vanuatu Earthquake and Tropical Cyclones Judy and Kevin

Situation Overview

- The island nation of Vanuatu declared a State of Emergency (SOE) on 5 March 2023 for the whole country after it had experienced two cyclones and earthquakes. The strong winds and substantial rain caused major flooding, damage to infrastructure, and caused power outages and communication system breakdowns across the country. Current priorities are restoring energy/power, communication systems, transport systems, and shelter.

- As of 10 March 2023, the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) in Port Vila reported some 251,346 people (about 80% of the population) and 30,000 households in all six provinces in Vanuatu had been exposed to the impacts of the cyclones. Authorities are assessing the full extent of damages.

- NDMO established focal points for coordinating logistics planning, asset mobilisation, and authorizations. All requests for logistics assistance from agencies responding to the emergency, such as storage, cargo & passenger transportation, procurement, and labour support, must be submitted to the National Cluster Leads first, who will then forward the requests to the NDMO focal points: [https://logcluster.org/document/pacific-vanuatu-national-cluster-leads-15-march-2023](https://logcluster.org/document/pacific-vanuatu-national-cluster-leads-15-march-2023)

- The Pacific Logistics Cluster (PLC) completed a basic Logistics Service Market Assessment (LSMA) by reaching out to logistics companies operating in Vanuatu, offering air, sea, road transport, and warehousing services. Interested organisations can contact PLC ([pacific.clustercargo@wfp.org](mailto:pacific.clustercargo@wfp.org)) to request a detailed assessment with contact information. To date, two organisations requested the LSMA.

Logistics Constraints

Road

- As per the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) update from 14 March 2023, 22% of the arterial road network in five out of six provinces remain inaccessible (Shefa, Tafea, Mampa, Sanma, Penama). Road conditions may be difficult on rural routes and regional highways in parts of Vanuatu.

Air

- Deployment by air to outer islands is limited under the current situation and requires regulatory approval for some airports as per the NDMO update from 12 March 2023:
  - Lamap Airport (Malekula), Craig Cove (Ambrym) Airport, and Paama Airport are deemed at safety risk and temporarily closed for maintenance.
  - Emae Airport and Valesdir Airport are considered at high safety risk and are classified as non-operational due to unsafe runway conditions, therefore temporarily closed.
  - Pele airport (Tongoa) – temporarily closed before TC Judy and TC Kevin due to damages to the runway and drainage system; will remain closed for repair for the next 30 days.

Communication

- Network communication is not fully restored in all areas, largely hindered by the lack of power grid restoration. The capital city, Port Vila, has fully restored network connectivity. The northern part of Vanuatu has little to no network connectivity. Therefore, lack of communication hinders assessments of infrastructure and damages.

[https://logcluster.org/ops/pacific](https://logcluster.org/ops/pacific)
Logistics Operations

Air Transport

- As per the NDMO update on 10 March 2023, the following airports are approved for commercial scheduled passenger services:
  - The Bauerfield International Airport in Port Vila was cleared for commercial operations from 6 March 2023;
  - Tafea: Tanna/Whitegrass Airport, Dilions Bay, Aniwa, Futuna, Mystery Island/Anietyum;
  - Shefa: Port Vila, Lamen Bay (Epi);
  - Malampa: Norsup (Malekula), South West Bay Malekula, Ulei (Ambrym);
  - Penama: Logana (Ambae), Sara (Pentecost), Lonorore (Pentecost);
  - Sanma: Santo Airport;
  - Torba: Gaua (Banks, Mota Lava (Banks), Sola (Banks), Linua (Torres).
- Air Vanuatu has resumed international and domestic flight services to Santo and Tanna islands. Flights to other locations remain suspended. Air Vanuatu is working with the NDMO and Civil Aviation Authority of Vanuatu (CAAV) to resume flights to the outer islands.
- Military helicopter operations are permitted upon request by the Government and/or NDMO under the SOE, provided approval is given by Vanuatu’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and cleared by Customs and Immigration. Commercial helicopter operations from foreign states must obtain approval from CAV for conducting flight operations within Vanuatu.
- Australian Defence Force (ADF) is dispatching two more flights ex Brisbane with humanitarian cargo. Organisations can obtain further information from DFAT focal point coordinating the movements: Jeff Lee (Jeff.Lee@dfat.gov.au). To date, three flights have arrived in Port Vila.
- MFAT has deployed 4th and 5th C-130 flights expected to arrive in Port Vila on Thursday, 16 March 2023, with capabilities and emergency relief supplies included.
- Airlink is looking into international cargo and passenger movement for responders out of Fiji and Australia, while intra-country travel will be considered on a case-by-case basis. For further information, partners can contact bmckeon@airlinkflight.org and claireleow@airlinkflight.org.

Sea Transport

- As per NDMO’s update on 14 March 2023, all of Vanuatu’s seaports (wharves and jetties) are operational.
- Australian Navy vessel HMAS Canberra, with more than 600 ADF personnel, three Chinook (CH-47) helicopters, and medical and humanitarian supplies, was deployed to Vanuatu to support the government-led response, particularly for emergency response and recovery efforts. HMAS Canberra departed Port Vila on 13 March 2023 to transport humanitarian relief supplies to Efate Island.
- French Navy vessel Le d’Entrecasteaux was in Port Vila assisting with the emergency response. It returned to Noumea, New Caledonia, on 15 March 2023. The French Navy can still provide support from Noumea for air transport (helicopter and aircraft), but the request must be channelled through NDMO. Air travel between Noumea and Port Vila takes about two hours.
- Respond Global (https://respondglobal.com/helpr/) provides sea transport to supply medical and other emergency response equipment and personnel. Its HELPR-1 vessel has returned to Port Vila.

https://logcluster.org/ops/pacific
from supplying relief items to outer islands in Shefa Province. For further information, organisations can contact: Rebecca.Weir@respondglobal.com

Emergency telecommunications services

- A telecommunications specialist from WFP’s Fast IT & Telecommunications Emergencies & Support Team (FITTEST) is in Vanuatu to assess on-the-ground needs and support coordination.
- Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) has also deployed critical communications equipment like satellite phones and terminals to ensure the Vanuatu government and responders can access communication tools to coordinate the response. ETC is planning to deploy additional communication equipment to augment the current capacity.
- The ETC Coordinator in the Pacific is liaising with local, regional, and international partners to support Vanuatu in re-establishing communications and identifying resources to deploy. For further information, please contact pacific.etc@wfp.org.

Coordination and Information Management

- The NDMO leads the response’s overall coordination and information management under the national cluster system. The Pacific Logistics Cluster (PLC) co-leads and supports the NDMO’s logistics operations.
- The NDMO is also coordinating requests for logistics assistance to access Australian and French transportation capacities. Organisations are encouraged to contact relevant national cluster leads.
- The PLC deployed two staff to Vanuatu to support on-ground logistics coordination and information management led by NDMO. The team is now embedded into the Logistics Section under the NDMO and supported NDMO in drafting a distribution plan for the outer islands. Moving forward, the team will work with the NDMO to enhance the warehouse management practices in the newly established hub in Port Vila to ensure the visibility of supplies available and improve the overall logistics response.
- Two Mobile Storage Units (MSUs), dispatched before the emergency response for preparedness, arrived in Port Vila on 13 March 2023 and are currently undergoing customs clearance. More mobile storage units, forklifts, generators, etc., are prepositioned by WFP in Brisbane (Australia) and at the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) hub in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), ready to be deployed if needed.
- A regional PLC meeting was held on 11 March 2023, focusing on Vanuatu’s emergency response for information sharing among regional partners to identify needs and gaps in the logistics response and remind partners about the “Donate Responsibly” campaign (https://donateresponsibly.org/).
- Meeting minutes were published on the Logistics Cluster website: https://logcluster.org/document/pacific-region-vanuatu-response-coordination-meeting-minutes-10-march-2023. It was agreed to hold meetings every week – the next one is scheduled for 16 March 2023.
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- Vanuatu’s Logistics Capacity Assessment (conducted in 2017) is available here: [https://dlca.logcluster.org/display/public/DLCA/Vanuatu](https://dlca.logcluster.org/display/public/DLCA/Vanuatu)
- Situation updates will be published on a weekly basis.

### Contacts

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