

# DREF operation update



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Vanuatu: Tropical cyclone Vania

DREF Operation n° MDRVU001  
GLIDE n° TC-2011-000009-VUT  
TC-2011-000015-VUT  
Operations update n° 1  
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The International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent response to emergencies. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of national societies to respond to disasters.

### Period covered by this Ops

**Update:** 6 February to 6 March 2011.

**Summary:** On 19 February, a third tropical cyclone (named Atu) very quickly intensified into a category 4 that moved slowly south to the east of Vanuatu. Over 21 and 22 February, tropical cyclone Atu passed through Tafea province, between Futuna and Tanna Islands and just East of Aniwa and Aneitym Islands. This weather system caused further damage to the outer islands of Tafea province. It also stopped all sea freight/transport and many flights were cancelled in the region. Shipments of supplies to regions affected by tropical cyclone Vania were put on hold until tropical cyclone Atu had passed.



Vanuatu Red Cross Society volunteers sorting out relief items for distribution.  
Photo: Vanuatu Red Cross Society.

In addition to IFRC support, Australian Red Cross provided relief items and freight as goods in kind to the value of CHF 35,260. French Red Cross supported VRCS with a WatSan delegate and water quality testing kits to assist in testing the quality of affected water supply source across Erromango Island and parts of Tanna Island.

Initial reports identified needs for 2,500 families (some 14,035 beneficiaries). But after assessments were complete, the number of affected families increased up to 2,978 families (approximately 16,677 beneficiaries). The identified needs were food, agriculture rehabilitation, non-food items and water and sanitation. The

Government of Vanuatu conducted the distribution of food, with the preparation support of VRCS volunteers. The Government of Vanuatu is progressing further agriculture assessments with an aim to distribute seeds and cuttings and provide assistance as required.

IFRC and VRCS coordinated with the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) cluster, led by UNICEF, who developed a joint plan of action for all agencies to address water and sanitation needs. Assessments conducted by VRCS confirmed that water sources had returned to their pre-cyclone quality and there was no need for emergency household water treatment, through water purification tablets. Many water supply systems however were damaged in this as well as previous cyclones and were assessed to determine the extent of repair required. A plan for rehabilitation of the water system infrastructure was agreed with the WASH cluster, to be led by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), which will be supported by VRCS (through funds from and outside DREF, donated by Oxfam) although implemented by the local communities.

VRCS has identified communities in Tafea province which require replacement mosquito nets. They are working with the Ministry of Health malaria programme to coordinate the distribution of nets to these communities.

Assessments also confirmed that the majority of communities were well informed of the approaching cyclone(s) and made appropriate preparations.

The distribution of emergency relief items was completed over the reporting period. To date, the operation has provided 5,288 jerry cans and bars of soap to over 2,600 families in the affected areas. Hygiene promotion materials were distributed with the distribution of non food items.

DG ECHO, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and Netherlands Red Cross has made contributions towards the replenishment of the DREF for the allocation made to this operation.

The operation is expected to be completed by 6 May 2011; a Final Report will be made available by 6 August 2011.

[<click here to view contact details>](#)

## The situation

In just over one month, Vanuatu was affected by three successive tropical cyclones. First on 12-13 January, tropical cyclone Vania as a category 1, impacted Tafea province in southern Vanuatu. The weather system associated with tropical cyclone Vania included prolonged winds and rains causing considerable damage to several staple and cash crops, destroyed livelihoods, and damaged homes, water system infrastructure, roads and schools. As a result, the Vanuatu NDMO has been coordinating the response to tropical cyclone Vania. As part of this coordination, a WASH cluster group was formed by a number of agencies, lead by UNICEF.

On 30 January, tropical cyclone Yasi passed through the Banks Island group in Torba province in the north of Vanuatu, bringing heavy rain, damaging winds and 3-4 meter high storm surge waves.

On 20-22 February, tropical cyclone Atu formed in the west of Vanuatu and built into a category 4 cyclone as it passed through the Tafea province in southern Vanuatu. This second cyclone in the south hit outer island communities with a second blow that further damaged what was left of their staple and cash crops. Communications to these island communities were limited and in some cases not possible at all until such time as rapid assessments teams were able to be flown out to the islands.

## Coordination and partnerships

VRCS continues to coordinate closely with the Vanuatu NDMO and other agencies in deploying joint assessment teams, mobilizing volunteers for food distribution and sharing information. The VRCS team was initially supported in this response by French Red Cross, which has a delegation in-country and IFRC through its global disaster management resources, including the regional office in Suva and Asia Pacific disaster management Unit, located in Kuala Lumpur.

French Red Cross was able to quickly mobilize additional support in the form of a WatSan delegate from New Caledonia who also brought water testing kits. In addition, since 14 February, VRCS has also been supported by an IFRC country team representative in Port Vila.

Relief items have been mobilized quickly in a coordinated manner from the regional warehouses of the French Red Cross in New Caledonia and from Australian Red Cross warehouse in Brisbane.

VRCS primary response has been in support of the WASH cluster response plan, lead by UNICEF. Within this plan VRCS completed assessments of the source water quality and water supply infrastructure on Erromango Island, Aniwa Island and parts of Tanna Island: South West, South and White Sands. Given the challenges of remote access to the affected communities and as part of these assessments, VRCS distributed jerry cans and soap to the affected families during the assessment.

The WASH cluster brought together information from all water supply assessments to prepare a plan for the rehabilitation of water supply systems across the province. The WASH cluster plan will be implemented through a combined programme with UNICEF, ADRA, VRCS, Rural Water Supply and the Tafea Provincial Disaster Committee. VRCS contribution to date has been the provision of logistics resources, procurement of water infrastructure materials (by way of Oxfam funding) and the chartering of sea freight for transportation of materials.

#### **National Society Capacity Building:**

In all locations visited and assessed by VRCS it was identified that communities were well informed of the coming cyclones and prepared appropriately for them: covering water sources, securing loose items (including the removal of guttering from rain water catchment systems) and gathering in secure buildings. VRCS local emergency response and first aid volunteers were actively involved in the preparation of their own communities for the cyclones and assisted in the assessments and distributions after the cyclone. Around 50 VRCS volunteers are involved in this operation and have been insured under the DREF coverage.

During the source water quality testing the French Red Cross delegate trained VRCS staff and volunteers on how to complete water quality testing. These staff and volunteers were then deployed to other locations to undertake testing.

## **Red Cross and Red Crescent action**

VRCS mobilised teams that have completed assessments across Tafea province; Erromango Island, Aniwa Island and Tanna Island (South-West, South and White Sands regions). Assessments completed included: source water quality testing, water supply system damage assessment and community disaster assessments. VRCS covered a population of up to 2,850 households in their assessments. The information has been shared with partners and donors and has helped to have a good coordination in place. Following these assessments VRCS distributed jerry cans and soap to all affected communities assessed to meet water and sanitation needs.

VRCS mobilised five volunteers for three days in Tafea province to assist in the logistics and preparation of distribution of food supplied as part of the Vanuatu NDMO response activities.

VRCS has identified communities in Tafea province who require replacement mosquito nets. They are working with the Ministry of Health malaria programme to coordinate the distribution of nets to these communities.

VRCS are supporting the WASH cluster water supply rehabilitation programme by way of procurement of water infrastructure materials, sea freight of those materials to all islands in Tafea province and the logistics resource to manage this process. This support provides for 39 per cent of the WASH cluster water supply rehabilitation programme budget.

#### **Progress towards outcomes**

Due to the needs identified by the assessment teams and the intervention of other partners, the plan of action has been revised as follows:

<b>Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion</b>
<b>Outcome:</b> The risk of water-related diseases has been reduced through the provision of safe water and hygiene items to 2,906 households in Tafea province for three months.
<b>Outputs (expected results) and activities planned:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the existing coverage with a view of ensuring availability of an adequate water supply.</li> </ul>

- Provide potable water, appropriate sanitation and hygiene promotion for as determined by the assessment to 2,906 households in Tafea province.
- Distribute WASH safety kits to the most affected families: each kit including jerry cans, soap and hygiene promotion material.
- Provide resources to support the Rural Water Supply and Ministry of Health in the rehabilitation of water supply infrastructure.
- Hygiene promotion activities by trained volunteers and provision of hygiene promotion materials.

#### Progress:

- Assessments completed in all locations. The test results for most water sources passed as safe for human consumption with only a few instances of low contamination of bacteria. Due to these reasons, distribution of water purification tablets was cancelled as there was no longer a requirement for emergency household water treatment.
- Water supply systems were damaged by the cyclone and details of repairs required passed on to the WASH Cluster. Donor contributions direct to the WASH cluster activities were suffice for the procurement of supplies.
- VRCS has provided ongoing logistics support to the WASH cluster programme in the form of: assistance in quotations, procurement of supplies and chartering of sea freight for supplies to be sent. Current plans (weather dependant) are for transit for supplies 10-15 March.
- Assessment showed that many locations were without essential hygiene supplies and hence the need for distribution of soap and hygiene awareness materials.
- Ongoing bad weather and tropical cyclone Atu delayed VRCS ability to access locations such as Dillons Bay on Erromango Island and Aniwa Island for assessment. It also delayed transport of relief items to Tafea province.
- Distribution of jerry cans and soap to households completed in Erromango (East) and Tanna (South West, South, South East / White Sands). Good hygiene messages were also distributed and discussed at each of the distribution locations.
- Distribution of WASH kits to households in Erromango (Dillons Bay) and Aniwa Island planned for 10-15 March.

	Households	Population*	<i>* population estimates for some regions</i>		
Erromango	299	1726			
North Erromango	180	1039			
South & Dillons Bay	119	687			
Total Tanna	2446	10071			
South West Tanna	128	1300			
South Tanna	439	2062	<i>2 villages (52 households) not included in assessment</i>		
SE Tanna/White Sands	1879	6709			
Aniwa	161	527			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2906</b>	<b>11371</b>			
<b>Jerry Cans</b>					
	<b>Received</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>Despatched</b>	<b>Distributed</b>	<b>In stock</b>
VRCS DP Stock	600				600
Australian Red Cross	5000				0
PIROPS	1200				948 <i>in stock Port Vila</i>
Tanna		4892	4892	4892	
Erromango North		360	548	375	173 <i>in stock Ipota</i>
South & Dillons Bay		238			<i>despatch due 10th March</i>
Aniwa		322			<i>despatch due 10th March</i>
	<b>6200</b>	<b>5812</b>	<b>5440</b>	<b>5267</b>	<b>1721</b>
<b>Soap</b>					
	<b>Required</b>	<b>Despatched</b>	<b>Distributed</b>	<b>In stock</b>	
Erromango North		432	288	144	<i>in stock Ipota</i>
Tanna	4892	5000	5000	0	

South & Dillons Bay	238	<i>despatch due 10th March</i>
Aniwa	322	<i>despatch due 10th March</i>
<b>Mosquito Nets</b>		
<b>Received</b>		
Australian Red Cross	700	

- During assessments household information was collected. Distribution of jerry cans and soap was made to households in the above region as based on the needs assessments. In some cases, the number of households as listed by VRCS was different to those listed by provincial authorities. For example, on Aniwa Island the number of households as recorded by VRCS was 45 more than that of provincial authorities. Many of the uncounted households were widow/single mother households were not included in the provincial authority count.
- Distribution of WASH kits has differed depending on locality. On Erromango Island VRCS distributed direct to households understanding the logistical difficulties of the region. In Tanna distribution was made in each village to the head of the family or their nominated representative.

### Challenges:

- Tafea province provides for many logistical difficulties with poor weather resulting in many flights cancelled and sea freight delays. Locations such as Dillons Bay on Erromango Island and Aniwa Island were unreachable until 26 February at which time VRCS were able to charter a small flight. Some areas in Tanna were completely inaccessible due to poor road conditions exacerbated by the weather. VRCS assessment teams were unable to reach these locations; however distribution teams two weeks later were able to ensure distribution made it to them.

### Relief distributions (basic food and non-food items)

**Outcome:** The essential household needs of 2,906 households are met within three months in Tafea province through the distribution of food and non food-items (i.e. mosquito nets and hygiene kits), as determined by the assessment findings.

- Support to ongoing needs and capacity assessments.
- Train volunteers on distribution procedures.
- Develop beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance.
- Distribute relief supplies and control supply movements from point of dispatch to end user.
- Replenishment of pre-positioned relief stocks.
- Provide essential volunteer resources to support the Vanuatu NDMO in the distribution of food.
- Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reporting on relief distributions.

### Progress:

- The number of beneficiaries has increased from 2,500 families to 2,906 due to more accurate information available from the assessments.
- 35 volunteers have been trained in assessment activities and distribution.
- Jerry cans and soap were distributed to 2,906 households in the affected region, population information based on that captured during the assessments.
- For distribution, all goods were transported accompanied by VRCS volunteers. Distribution was managed in the field by either VRCS staff or local ERT trained volunteers. All volunteers active in the distribution were trained by VRCS prior to the distribution.
- VRCS was able to replenish their disaster preparedness stock of 600 jerry cans which were used in the first phase of distribution under this DREF.
- VRCS mobilised volunteers in Tafea Province to assist local authorities in the preparation of distribution of food items from 26 February-4 March.
- An evaluation of this operation is being prepared to:
  - Examine if the DREF operation has achieved its goal, objectives and expected results.
  - Assess key achievements, challenges and areas of success, as well as areas for improvement within the operation and make recommendations to replicate or improve future disasters response.
  - Identify lessons learned and good practices for sharing.
- Rapid emergency assessment completed on Aniwa Island Saturday 26 February following tropical cyclone Atu. VRCS team members met with local volunteers and the village chief to discuss the effect of both tropical

cyclone VAnia and tropical cyclone Atu. Food security and agriculture were reported as the greatest need with staple and cash crops significantly damaged by the two cyclones.

- VRCS has identified some communities in North Erromango and two villages in Tanna whose mosquito nets are more than three years old and hence due for replacement. It aims to distribute 360 nets for 180 families. However, detailed assessments highlight that the majority of households have and use mosquito nets. This is due to an ongoing malaria programme run by the Vanuatu Ministry of Health. For this reason, VRCS has delayed the distribution of mosquito nets to ensure that its contribution helps in meeting the objectives and priorities of the Ministry of Health in the above-mentioned communities. The Ministry of Health would like to ensure that distribution by VRCS is fully coordinated within their programme so there is no overlap and to ensure there is no confusion by beneficiaries in regards to the different manufacture of the nets and the organization distributing the nets.

**Challenges:**

- Logistics and communication issues continued to be a challenge throughout the response effort. For example, due to a shortage of fuel on the island, the VRCS volunteers carried their loads of empty jerry cans and hygiene products overland, walking for up to five days to reach all the communities in the affected area.
- As noted above, there is delay in the distribution of mosquito nets. The national society is closely coordinating with the Ministry of Health to ensure that its activities complement on-going malaria prevention and control efforts and to agree on distribution mechanisms.

## How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by [Strategy 2020](#) which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

## Contact information

**For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:**

In Vanuatu Red Cross National Society:

- Jacqueline de Gaillande Secretary General, phone:+ 678 27258 email: [redcross@vanuatu.com.vu](mailto:redcross@vanuatu.com.vu)

Pacific Regional Office for the International Federation, Suva:

- Aurelia Balpe, Head of Pacific Regional Office, phone: +679 331 1855; email: [aurelia.balpe@ifrc.org](mailto:aurelia.balpe@ifrc.org)
- Ysabeau Rycx, Regional Disaster Management Coordinator, phone: +679 999 2509; email: [ysabeau.rycx@ifrc.org](mailto:ysabeau.rycx@ifrc.org)

Federation Asia Pacific zone office, Kuala Lumpur:

- Daniel Bolanos, Operations Coordinator, Phone: +60 3 9207 5728, mobile: +601 2283 7305, email: [daniel.bolanos@ifrc.org](mailto:daniel.bolanos@ifrc.org)
- Alan Bradbury, resource mobilization and PMER coordinator, Phone: +603 9207 5775, email: [alan.bradbury@ifrc.org](mailto:alan.bradbury@ifrc.org)

Please send all pledges of funding to [zonerm.asiapacific@ifrc.org](mailto:zonerm.asiapacific@ifrc.org)

- Patrick Fuller, zone communications manager Phone: +6012 230 8451, email: [patrick.fuller@ifrc.org](mailto:patrick.fuller@ifrc.org)
- Jeremy Francis, regional logistics coordinator, Phone: +6012 298 9752, fax: +60 3 2168 8573, email: [jeremy.francis@ifrc.org](mailto:jeremy.francis@ifrc.org).

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