



## **VANUATU: HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR WARNS OF SECONDARY EMERGENCY**

**Port Vila, Vanuatu (30 March 2015)** – Tropical Cyclone Pam swept through the archipelago of Vanuatu on 13 March 2015, wiping out homes and infrastructure, destroying the electricity network and razing crops in the mainly agricultural country. The Humanitarian Coordinator for Vanuatu, Ms Osnat Lubrani, visited Tafea Province on Saturday to see the effect of the cyclone on a vulnerable population.

“It is heart breaking to see the extraordinary scale of devastation,” said Ms Lubrani. Tafea was one of the most severely affected provinces when Tropical Cyclone Pam made landfall two weeks ago.

“While we can already see the positive impact of the Government-led emergency relief operation, we still need to scale up efforts to ensure all islands are provided with food, water, shelter and medical care,” Ms. Lubrani said. “The emergency is not over yet.”

Referring to the strength of the people of Vanuatu Ms. Lubrani continued, “At the same time I am also impressed by the resilience of the people who are already beginning to rebuild their lives with the help of local authorities and the international community.”

Ms. Lubrani warned that a secondary emergency could hit Vanuatu. The cyclone destroyed more than 90 per cent of crops, leaving a population that heavily relies on subsistence agriculture without a source of income and the possibility of long-term food insecurity. “One of the women I met told me that they are in urgent need of income, having nothing to sell on the local market and no money to even buy soap,” Ms. Lubrani said.

Ms. Lubrani met with provincial authorities, assessed damage to local infrastructure and visited one of the relief distribution sites. “We will continue to stand by the side of the people of Vanuatu and I call on the international community to support our work on the ground,” Ms. Lubrani said. The United Nations and partner non-governmental organizations have started to provide families with seed kits to ensure long-term food security, and will support the government in restoring community infrastructure and reviving economic activities.

The United Nations is seeking US\$29.9 million to cover the needs of 166,000 cyclone-affected people for three months. To date US\$6.4 million has been pledged since the launch of the Flash Appeal on 24 March but more support is required.

Two weeks after Tropical Cyclone Pam struck Vanuatu the humanitarian response reached all 22 storm-affected islands of the country, despite significant logistical challenges due to the geographic spread of the archipelago.

***For further information, please contact:***

***Karina Coates***, Public Information Officer, OCHA Regional Office for the Pacific (ROP), Vanuatu: [coates@un.org](mailto:coates@un.org), Cell +679 777 1433.

***Silke von Brockhausen***, Communication Advisor, UNDP, Vanuatu: [silke.von.brockhausen@undp.org](mailto:silke.von.brockhausen@undp.org), Cell +1 9173735063.

***Orla Fagan***, Regional Public Information and Advocacy Officer, OCHA Regional Office Asia Pacific (ROAP), Bangkok, [fagano@un.org](mailto:fagano@un.org), Cell +66 89 9447623.