

## **Vanuatu - Cyclone Pam**

### **ETC Situation Report #01**

**Reporting period 14/03/2015 to 15/03/2015**

#### **Highlights**

- Category 5 Cyclone Pam struck Vanuatu with winds peaking around 320kmph causing widespread destruction.
- Internet, radio and GSM communications offline across the country with the exception of the capital, Port Vila, which has intermittent services in areas around the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO).
- The Government of Vanuatu has requested international assistance. The humanitarian community is mobilising to support urgent needs.
- ETC Coordinator and Technical Specialist have deployed to Vanuatu to conduct assessments with partners and coordinate the inter-agency ICT response.

#### **Situation Overview**

Tropical Cyclone Pam struck Vanuatu (population 234,000), affecting the capital of Port Vila, as an extremely destructive category 5 cyclone on the evening of 13 March at around 11 p.m. local time. The cyclone's eye passed close to Efate Island, where the capital is located, and winds are estimated to have reached 250kmph with gusts peaking at around 320kmph.

While information from the provinces and outlying islands is still unavailable, the situation in Port Vila indicates that many homes made of natural and local materials are damaged or destroyed.

It has been reported that Cyclone Pam destroyed all mobile towers except one in Port Vila resulting in a complete lack of communication between Efate and both north and south provinces. There has also been damage to the HF radio at NDMO preventing them from communicating with any provinces or emergency services or sending community announcements.

Preliminary estimates suggest that up to 80% of power lines are down in Port Vila and will not be fully restored for several weeks. The Port Vila Airport terminal and towers sustained damage and the airfield is badly flooded and will not be able to accept civilian flights for as long as two weeks



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## Key Challenge

- With communications networks offline across most of the country, the full extent of the damage is still largely unknown.

## Updates

- The ETC has not yet been officially activated in response to Cyclone Pam, however given the extent of damage international support will be required to restore communications services. The ETC has deployed a Coordinator and Technical Specialist to Vanuatu to conduct assessments and coordinate the inter-agency ICT response in collaboration with partners.
- Five Telecoms Sans Frontieres (TSF) responders are en route to support UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) and the NDMO, carrying 7x BGANS, routers, access points and satellite phones. TSF aims to provide basic satellite communications services to humanitarian.
- NetHope has 6x Ku-band VSATS in Cebu, Philippines that it has offered to the ETC to support the response.
- Global VSAT Forum member and emergency.lu partner, SES, is working with national provider Digicell to deploy an additional 20MB down/ 8MB up over C-band VSAT to support restoration of communications services.
- Two emergency.lu responders have deployed in partnership with International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP) to support the UNDAC team. The team is bringing BGANS and satellite phones. Two Rapid Deployment VSATs, and staff to support, are on stand-by in Luxembourg if required by the inter-agency response.
- Three Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) responders will deploy to support UNDAC. They will bring BGANS, satellite phones and a generator.
- The World Food Programme (WFP) is packing 16 generators to deploy to support power needs.
- Dedicated information-sharing space has been created on the ETC website: <http://ictemergency.wfp.org/web/ictpr/emergencies2015/cyclone-pam>. Organisations involved in the ICT response are encouraged to share updates with the ETC community to support the overall humanitarian response.

## Meetings

- The next Global ETC teleconferences on the Cyclone Pam response will be held on **Tuesday 17/03/2015 at 10:00 UTC**. To be added to the invitation list, email: [Vanuatu.ETC@wfp.org](mailto:Vanuatu.ETC@wfp.org).
- ICT responders operating on the ground in Vanuatu are encouraged to share their contact details with [Vanuatu.ETC@wfp.org](mailto:Vanuatu.ETC@wfp.org) to facilitate local coordination.



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## Contacts

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## Acronyms

BGAN	Broadband Global Area Network – <i>portable global satellite internet network with telephony</i>
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
GSM	Global System for Mobile communications
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
TSF	Telecoms Sans Frontieres
UN	United Nations
UNDAC	UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination
WFP	World Food Programme

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the ICT Emergency website: [www.ETCluster.org](http://www.ETCluster.org)

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact: [Vanuatu.ETC@wfp.org](mailto:Vanuatu.ETC@wfp.org)