



## Fast Facts

**Country:** Vanuatu

**Duration:** August 2011 to July 2014

**Implementing UN Agencies:** UNICEF; UNDP; FAO

**Other Implementing Partners:** The National Advisory Committee on Climate Change, national ministries, provincial governments, NGOs, community-based organizations

**Budget:** \$3,003,022.66

**Key Words:** Climate adaptation; disaster risk reduction; improved governance; food security

## BACKGROUND

The unique geographic situation renders the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and natural disasters. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Vanuatu, a small island developing state comprising of 80 low lying islands where climate change and natural disasters not only undermine people's livelihood and dignity but also threaten the country's existence. Faced with growing internal displacement as a result of rising sea levels and coastal flooding, the impacts of climate change and natural disasters also salinize fertile soil and fresh water supplies and threaten food and water security of the most

vulnerable. At the same time, unprecedented typhoons, earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions inundate these communities with devastating loss of housing, infrastructure and public health, as well as loss of life. Despite the Government's concerted adaptation efforts in the face of these multiple and overwhelming threats, the loss and damage already faced by Vanuatu far outstrips the country's capacity for recovery. Consequently, a comprehensive approach is needed to strengthen communities and build their resilience to better cope with the risks and hazards related to climate change and natural disasters.

## PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the project is to enhance the resilience and coping capacity of vulnerable communities in Vanuatu to respond to adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters. The project also aims to gather lessons learned from experiences in Vanuatu to be shared with other PICTs. To this end, the project will: (i) support and monitor 12 communities to develop disaster risk reduction and management plans and activities; (ii) develop the capacity of six provincial

governments as well as selected communities to mainstream community resilience and people-centred coping mechanisms into local development, governance and decision making processes; (iii) improve food production, processing, storage and marketing; (iv) increase access to safe water; and (v) establish a mechanism to monitor and disseminate information on climate-related disaster risks.

### BENEFICIARIES

The project directly benefits 39,700 people residing in the country's 12 most vulnerable communities. Special attention is given to ensure that all Vanuatu's ethnic groups are engaged in the project.

Furthermore, approximately 300 representatives of Government and civil society organisations will benefit from capacity development initiatives.

## APPLYING THE HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH

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As the consequences of climate change and natural disasters are multiple and often devastating in nature, a comprehensive and integrated approach that helps to reduce their social, economic and environmental impacts must be at the centre of disaster risk reduction strategies. With this in mind, the project applies a multi-sectoral strategy that brings together a range of actors from across different sectors to address the interconnected issues of local governance, land planning, income generation, poverty reduction, food security, nutrition, water management and sanitation.

Moreover, by applying human security's context-specific approach, interventions under this project are tailored to local capacities and resources. For example, UN agencies, national and local governments, NGOs, international donors and representatives of civil society organisations have come together to share their knowledge of the local context and to identify, map and prioritize human security threats across Vanuatu. As a result, the project's activities respond to the

specific needs and vulnerabilities in Vanuatu and utilize the available local capacities and resources on the ground.

Additionally, to prevent natural hazards from becoming widespread disasters, a protection and empowerment framework is applied to integrate top-down policies and programmes with activities that build resilience at the community level. For example, training is provided to provincial government officials to develop local policies and budgets which better take into account disaster risk reduction and to coordinate the many actors involved in responding to natural disasters. Meanwhile, vulnerable communities are engaged in the formulation of local action plans and community-based activities that aim to build their long-term resilience to climate change. These initiatives, combining top-down and bottom-up responses, will be integrated in the form of local development plans, which will be developed for each of the 12 participating communities.