

GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
VANUATU
MINISTRY OF CLIMATE CHANGE
ADAPTATION, METEOROLOGY,
GEO-HAZARDS, ENVIRONMENT
& ENERGY & NDMO



GOUVERNEMENT DE LA
RÉPUBLIQUE DE VANUATU
MINISTÈRE DE L'ADAPTATION AU
CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE, LA
MÉTÉOROLOGIE, LES RISQUES
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Statement by the Government of the Republic of Vanuatu

Excellencies, warm greetings from the Republic of Vanuatu. On behalf of the Prime Minister, Hon. Bob Loughman Weibur and the people of the Republic of Vanuatu, it is my honour to bring you this statement.

Like many island nations in the Pacific and other regions, Vanuatu is exposed to a high number of natural hazards, and has already started experiencing the negative impacts of climate change, especially in relation to the increased frequency and severity of natural disasters. In an average year nearly 65% of Vanuatu's population is exposed to natural hazards and about 30% have been displaced by natural disasters at some point.

Vanuatu was hit by a category 5 Tropical Cyclone, Pam a category 5 in 2015, which caused damage reaching VUV (Vanuatu Vatu) 63.2 billion (USD\$600 million). In 2020, the situation was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and a category 5 Tropical Cyclone Harold, affecting more than 158,000 people, representing 43% of the population. The resulting total loss and damage associated with TC Harold and COVID-19 was estimated around VUV (Vanuatu

Vatu) 60 billion (around USD 523.4 million), that's around 54% of the country's GDP.

Despite the many challenges encountered, Vanuatu is more committed than ever to strengthen the resilience of our people in reducing disaster risks. Vanuatu has continued to progress towards achieving the anticipated outcomes, goals, and targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. This was possible because of the continuous support and assistance of our many development partners and the international and regional community.

Over the last 7 years Vanuatu has taken measures to integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change measure into our legal framework and national planning process, which to name a few include:

- The Vanuatu National Sustainable Development Plan 2016 –2030
- The National Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy (CCDRR) 2016 – 2030 (version 2)
- The National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement
- The Disaster Risk Management Act 23 of 2019
- The National Disaster Recovery Framework
- The Vanuatu Recovery Strategy 2020-2023
- The enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions Investment Plan
- The Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy Implementation Plan 2022-2025

Vanuatu has formalized the establishment of Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management institutional arrangement within the Government's system. This shows the Government commitment in its initiatives towards addressing climate change and disaster impacts by strengthening its institutional and human resources arrangements.

It is important to also highlight that through this Policy directive, disaster risk reduction and Climate Change adaptation actions and responsibilities across Government Sectors, Local Government, Non-Government Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, Private Businesses and Communities are well emphasized.

Vanuatu has reviewed and updated its DRM legislation namely the Disaster Risk Management Act 23 of 2019 which formalizes the national and sub national Disaster Risk Management arrangements formalization of all Community Disaster and Climate Change Committees based at the sub-national level and that was established in the scattered 82 Islands of Vanuatu. These committees at the Island Level will deliver much needed Disaster Risk Management support and assistance to local communities to enhance disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

While Vanuatu have recognized its progress and success in promoting and implementing the Sendai Framework, there are also impeding factors that have challenged the capacity and capability of the Government of Vanuatu in addressing disaster risks and climate change impacts.

These challenges range from monitoring and evaluation of Disaster Risk Reduction Programs and actions across all sectors that would improve our understanding on how Vanuatu have over the years contributed to reducing risks, the implementation and enforcement of legislations and Policies, the principles and concepts of Disaster Risk Reduction being embedded in practice and operation at all level, to the exacerbating frequency and intensity of disasters, Climate Change impacts and the recent Covid-19 outbreak coupled with our limited funding opportunity, limited technical human resources

capacity and capability, which sometimes undermine our national efforts to reducing disaster risk and enhancing resilience amongst our people in Vanuatu.

Vanuatu is and will always be at the frontline to confront disaster risks and climate change impacts that over the past years have increased in intensity and frequency affecting countries throughout the world and particularly, Small Islands Developing States. Our resilience to disasters and climate change impacts will not only solely rely on Government's efforts, but also through collective efforts at all levels from the community, sub national, national, regional, and global levels.

We believe that Disaster Risk Reduction is everyone's responsibility and therefore a strong partnership and cooperation between public and private organisations, development partners, regional and global organizations is of utmost important to the Government of Vanuatu to realize its sustainable development goals and aspiration of creating a better disaster risk-informed and resilient Nation.

Excellencies, allow me to reaffirm the Government of Vanuatu's commitment to manage disaster risk and promote risk-informed development to achieve the sustainable and risk resilient development and its persistent efforts towards the implementation of the Sendai Framework at all levels. I also wish to express our renewed commitment to the implementation of recommended actions from the on-going midterm review.

I thank you all.