



AERIAL SURVEILLANCE REPORT – AMBRYM AND AMBAE VOLCANO

Date: Saturday 16th September 2017

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Introduction

The NDMO organized a fly over of Ambrym and Ambae to observe the volcanic activities on these two islands and also observed the possible impacts after the alert levels for the two volcanoes were raised to 3. The flight was organized using a private airline company Air Taxi.

The flight took off at 8.10am from Port Vila and arrived on Ambae at 9.30am. At 10 am the flight was over Ambrym and arrived back in Port Vila at 10.45am.

The team that went on this aerial surveillance was from VMGD Geo-hazards, NDMO and a Member of Parliament from Ambae.

Observation

Wind direction was South Easterly with lots of cloud cover over the islands. The mission was hoping that cloud cover could clear over the volcano craters to get a clear view of activities coming out from the craters.

Ambrym

The Ambrym volcanoes are active for many years and evidence of this can be seen on the changing vegetation cover on the island and particularly on the North West side of the island. Possible impacts was really hard to tell from the air and this needs proper ground assessment and monitoring. No view of the volcanic crater was possible due to cloud cover.

Ambae

The Ambae volcano became active in 2005 and changes in vegetation are still not as pronounced as on Ambrym. The aircraft went circled the island (where people are residing) and noticed no obvious impacts on vegetation. This will require a more detail ground assessment and continuous monitoring of activities. Again, no view of the volcanic crater was possible due to cloud cover.



The only sign of activity from the Ambae volcano was a strong sulphur dioxide (rotten eggs) smell in the aircraft close to North, North West of Ambae.

Way Forward

1. For the VMGD Geo Hazards Unit to continue monitoring the activities for these volcanoes and giving updates to the NDMO, Provincial Governments of Penama and Malampa Provinces and the public;
2. Penama and Malampa Provincial Disaster and Climate Change Officers to continue working with the Provincial Governments of Penama and Malampa Provinces to develop and review Contingency Response Plans for Penama and Malampa;
3. The NDMO in Vila to work together with PDCCOs (Penama & Malampa) to review these Contingency Response Plans;
4. PDCCOs (Penama & Malampa) to work together with Area Council Secretaries on Ambae and Ambrym to get on site updates and feed this through the Provincial Government and NDMO (Vila); and
5. For VMGD to draft a letter for DG MoCC to CEO Air Vanuatu, requesting if Air Vanuatu Pilots can assist with fly overs on normal flights close to volcano craters to get a clear view picture that could assist with monitoring of these volcanoes.